



MANDAN, HIDATSA & ARIKARA NATION

Three Affiliated Tribes * Fort Berthold Indian Reservation
307 5th Avenue New Town, ND 58763
Tribal Business Council

Office of the Chairman
Mark N. Fox

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

The Honorable M. Camille Calimlim Touton
Commissioner of the Bureau of
Reclamation
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland and Commissioner Touton,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Three Affiliated Tribes (TAT) of the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in North Dakota, also known as the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation, to urge the U.S. Department of Interior and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) to support the enactment of the Dakota Water Resources Act Amendments of 2024 (DWRAA), as part of the Fiscal Year 2025 appropriations process. Among other matters, the DWRAA would provide \$275 million in appropriations authority to complete the construction of the Fort Berthold Rural Water System (FBRWS) in line with Executive Order (EO) 14112 – Reforming Federal Funding and Support for Tribal Nations To Better Embrace Our Trust Responsibilities and Promote the Next Era of Tribal Self-Determination.

As you know, the FBRWS is a vital project that TAT has been working on with the USBR for 24 years to provide safe and reliable water to meet the municipal, rural, and industrial needs of our tribal members and residents across our Reservation. The project was first authorized by Congress in 1986 and additional funds were provided in 2000 after the USBR and TAT worked collaboratively to identify significant unmet needs. Unfortunately, the funding authority provided by Congress in response to these collaborative studies has been insufficient, leaving us unable to complete the FBRWS and serve our full Reservation population and economy. This not only impedes the well-being of our Tribal members and residents today but also their well-being well into the future.

The FBRWS is not only essential for the health and well-being of our people. It also promotes the economic development and growth of our region. The Reservation has experienced a significant increase in population and water demand due to the development of our energy and trust resources of oil and gas in the Bakken Shale Formation. The

increase in population and water demand brings both opportunities and challenges to our community. Without being able to complete the FBRWS, we will be unable to adequately address the environmental and social impacts of the energy sector, as well as diversify our economy and create jobs in other sectors, such as agriculture, tourism, and manufacturing.

We appreciate your leadership and commitment to advancing the infrastructure and water security of Indian Country. We urge you to support the authorization of \$275 million to TAT for the FBRWS. This will fulfill the federal trust responsibility to our tribes and honor the promises made by the United States government when it flooded our ancestral lands to create Lake Sakakawea.

Thank you for your continued support of this critical issue. We look forward to working with Interior and the USBR to secure the necessary resources to complete the FBRWS and meet the needs of our growing community.

Sincerely,



Mark N. Fox
Chairman, Three Affiliated Tribes