

AK-CHIN INDIAN COMMUNITY

Community Government

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The Honorable John McCain
241 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Kyl
730 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Please vote NO on the Barrasso Amendment to the Cobell Settlement (Senate Amendment Number 4313)

June 16, 2010

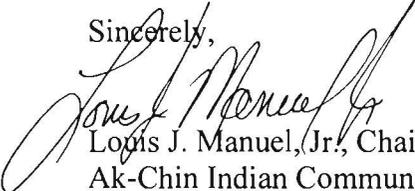
Dear Senators McCain and Kyl:

On behalf of the Ak-Chin Indian Community, I am writing today to urge you to oppose the Barrasso amendment that would nullify the settlement of the long-running *Cobell* trust case. For years, Congress has repeatedly urged the parties to reach a settlement rather than continue this difficult, very costly, and protracted litigation. On December 7, 2009, the parties reached an agreement to settle the *Cobell* trust case. The settlement agreement includes the distribution of \$1.4 billion directly to individual Indians, the creation of a \$2 billion fund to purchase highly fractionated interests in trust lands that stymie and slow the government's management, and sets aside up to \$60 million for educational scholarships for Indian children. This is a win-win and is an historic opportunity to turn the page on this sad and continuing chapter of federal-Indian relations.

Legislation enacting the *Cobell* settlement has already passed the House as part of the American Jobs, Closing Tax Loopholes Act, H.R. 4213. Senator Barrasso has filed an Amendment (Senate Amendment Number 4313) to the *Cobell* settlement which will nullify the entire agreement if passed. The settlement agreement itself states that any changes to its terms will render the agreement null and void. Furthermore, Attorney General Eric Holder and Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar have written a joint letter stating in no uncertain terms that Senator Barrasso's Amendment absolutely voids the agreement. The *Cobell* plaintiffs agree that the changes will destroy the agreement.

When the Barrasso Amendment comes up for a vote as early as tomorrow, June 16, do not let the chance to resolve this historic settlement pass by. Please vote NO on the Senator Barrasso Amendment. Already far too many Indian beneficiaries have passed without seeing any measure of justice. If Senator Barrasso's Amendment passes, it will be a lost opportunity to achieve a fair settlement for Indian Country. Thank you, in advance, for your support.

Sincerely,


Louis J. Manuel, Jr., Chairman
Ak-Chin Indian Community