

Letter of Support for the BIA Acceptance of Excess Federal Properties for the Ho-Chunk Nation

October 22, 2012

In 1988, Ho-Chunk Nation, a federally recognized Indian Tribe indigenous of Wisconsin, filed a timely land claim for excess property at the Badger Army Ammunition Plant through a no-cost transfer process called a Public Benefit Conveyance. These lands lie within the heart of Ho-Chunk's aboriginal territory in a district containing significant and numerous historical, traditional, cultural and sacred resources to the Ho-Chunk people.

In the many years since that time, the Nation has actively participated in collaborative and cooperative efforts with community members, farmers, environmentalists, sports-persons, conservation groups, historians, and all levels of government to promote and achieve the restoration and protection of the environment and cultural resources of these lands – often on land parcels that have or will be transferred to others including the State of Wisconsin, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local government.

Nonetheless, on August 22, 2011, the Bureau of Indian Affairs issued a letter refusing to accept the transfer of over 1,500 acres of land held by the U.S. Army on behalf of the Ho-Chunk Nation, stating that it would not incur the costs necessary to conduct its own environmental assessment.

We believe that the United States has a responsibility to fulfill its trust responsibility and assure the transfer of surplus properties to the Ho-Chunk Nation. Through its claim, the Ho-Chunk Nation hopes to promote and enhance Nation's programs for historic and cultural resource protection, natural resource enhancement, education, employment and economic development.

We further believe that the United States should provide the Nation with the funding and resources necessary to conduct independent scientific analysis which will protect and enhance the Nation's stated interests to safeguard cultural, historic, and archeological resources, and to protect and restore both the human and natural ecological environment.

For all of these reasons, we support the Ho-Chunk Nation's efforts to acquire the former Badger lands in trust for the benefit of the Nation and its people.

Sincerely,

Laura Olah, Executive Director, Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger, Merrimac, WI

John E. Peck, Executive Director, Family Farm Defenders, Madison, WI

Edie Ehlert, Co-Coordinator, Crawford Stewardship Project, Ferryville, WI

Dvija Michael Bertish, Rosemere Neighborhood Association, Vancouver, WA

Joan Brown, OSF, President, Partnership for Earth Spirituality, Albuquerque, NM

Kimberlee Wright, Executive Director, Midwest Environmental Advocates, Madison, WI

Mavis Belisle, Director, JustPeace, Dallas TX

Hiroshi Kanno, President, Concerned Citizens of Newport, Wisconsin Dells, WI

Ronnie Cummins, Director, Organic Consumers Association, Finland, MN

Marcia Halligan, Kickapoo Peace Circle, Viroqua, WI

Don Timmerman and Roberta Thurstin Timmerman, Casa Maria Catholic Worker, Milwaukee, WI

J. Gilbert Sanchez, Director, Tribal Environmental Watch Alliance, Santa Fe, NM

Al Gedicks, Executive Secretary, Wisconsin Resources Protection Council, Tomahawk, WI

Diane Farsetta, Executive Director, Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice, Madison, WI

Liz Bruno, collective member, Groundwork Madison, Madison, WI

Wilbur Slockish, Jr., Columbia River Education & Economic Development, The Dalles, OR

Cecilia Zárate - Laun, Program Director, Colombia Support Network, Madison, WI

Jim Oyler, Principal Chief, United Tribe of Shawnee Indians, A United States Treaty Tribe, KS

Kathleen Logan Smith, Executive Director, Missouri Coalition for the Environment, St. Louis, MO

Pamela Miller, Executive Director, Alaska Community Action on Toxics, Anchorage, AK

Jim Albertini, President, Malu 'Aina Center For Non-violent Education & Action, Ola'a (Kurtistown), HI

Jesse N Marquez, Executive Director, Coalition For A Safe Environment, Wilmington, CA

Drew Wood, Executive Director, California KIDS Indoor Air Quality, CA

Ricardo Pulido, Executive Director, Community Dreams, CA

Irene Senn, Coordinator, Religious Coalition for the Great Lakes, St. Francis, WI

Sarah Stoll, President, Wisconsin Audubon Council, Madison, WI

Karen Etter Hale, Executive Secretary, Madison Audubon Society, Madison, WI

Jerry Viste, Executive Director, Door County Environmental Council, Fish Creek, WI

Warren Porter, Professor of Zoology, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI

James A. Dunning, Retired Ho-Chunk Nation Employee, Eau Claire, WI

Stella Storch, OP, CSA Justice Coordinator, Fond du Lac, WI

Herbert J. Bernstein, Institute for Science and Interdisciplinary Studies, Amherst MA

Lenny Siegel, Executive Director, Center for Public Environmental Oversight, Mountain View, CA

Mike Helbick, Program Director, Peace Action Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI

Doris Bradshaw, Defense Depot Memphis Tennessee – Concerned Citizens Committee, Memphis, TN

Mable Mallard, Community Right To Know Committee, Philadelphia, PA

Doris Bradshaw, Military Toxics Project, Memphis, TN

Craig Williams, Director, Chemical Weapons Working Group, Berea, KY

Elizabeth Crowe, Director, Kentucky Environmental Foundation, Berea, KY

David B. McCoy, Executive Director, Citizen Action New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM

David Keith, President, Valley Citizens for a Safe Environment, MA

David Keith, Community Co-chair, Westover Restoration Advisory Board, Granby, MA

Guy Wolf, Co-Chair, Coulee Progressives, La Crosse, WI
Renie Wong Lindley, Executive Director, Hawai'i Peace and Justice, HI
Cecilia A. Gillhouse, Executive Director, UNIDOS Against Domestic Violence, Madison, WI
Steve Starkey, Executive Director, OutReach, Madison, WI
Steve Hiniker, Executive Director, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, Madison, WI
Maria Powell, PhD, Community-based Participatory Organizer & Researcher, Midwest Environmental Justice Organization (MEJO), Madison, WI
Bill Ahrens, Mining Impact Coalition, Ashland, WI
Bill Ahrens, Penokee Hills Education Project, Ashland, WI
Frank Lea, President, Glynn Environmental Coalition, Brunswick, GA
Steve Watrous, Board of Directors, Midwest Coalition Against Lethal Mining, Milwaukee, WI
Emily Dickmann, Board of Directors, Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools, Madison, WI
Mike Schade, Campaign Coordinator, Center for Health, Environment & Justice (CHEJ), VA

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