

**Chairman Opening Statement: James P. Moran**

**Native American Public Witness Day**

House Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations

March 23, 2010

9:30 a.m.

Good Morning, and welcome to all of our witnesses and guests for our first public witness hearing.

This morning, and again this afternoon, we will hear from many of our partners and friends in the Native American community. I want to especially welcome those of you who traveled long distances to be here today. We look forward to your testimony.

I think this quote from the Constitution of the Iroquois Nation sums up why many of you have traveled here today and why this subcommittee believes your testimony is so valuable:

“Look and listen for the welfare of the whole people, and have always in view not only the present but also the coming generations, even those whose faces are yet beneath the surface of the earth.”

I, and my colleagues on this subcommittee, know there are significant challenges facing the Native American community today, including the availability of health services, access to quality education and crime. Through the appropriations process we will continue to take steps to address these challenges.

I am proud that last year this subcommittee was responsive to many of the issues Native Americans raised at the public witness hearings and provided an historic 10 percent increase in the Bureau of Indian Affairs’ budget, funding the bureau at \$2.6 billion.

And, I was pleased to see the Obama administration submit a significant increase in the Indian Health Services budget request this year. The request is \$4.4 billion, \$350 million more than 2010 levels.

Now for some important housekeeping items: I want to remind all witnesses, you have only five minutes total to deliver your statement and answer questions. We will watch this timer closely to ensure we hear from everyone on the schedule. When the orange light comes on, you have only one minute left and should begin to wrap-up. When the red light comes on, your time has expired.

Of course, your entire prepared statement will be included in the final hearing record.

Before we get started, Mr. Cole, do you have any comments?

I am also sure Mr. Dicks would like to say a few words welcoming the witnesses.

And, Mr. Simpson, do you have any comments?

Our first witness is Henry Cagey, Chairman of the Lummi Indian Nation. Chairman Cagey, welcome.