



THE CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES
OF THE FLATHEAD NATION
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A Confederation of the Salish,
Pend d' Oreille
and Kootenai Tribes

General Government
Joint Appropriations Subcommittee
Honorable Ryan Osmundson, Chair
Senator Janna Taylor, Vice Chair
64th Montana State Legislature
Capital Building
Helena, Montana

January 20, 2015

TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBERS:

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Carole Lankford - Vice Chair
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RE: House Bill 2 - General Appropriations Act; Indian Country Economic Development and Montana Indian Language Preservation Program

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) and members have benefitted greatly from the Department of Commerce Indian Country Economic Development funds (ICED) and the funds dedicated to language development and preservation.

The funds provided through the ICED program have provided for 85 jobs and 34 tribal member owned businesses on the Flathead Reservation. These numbers show that reservation communities within Montana also aspire to be entrepreneurs and business owners and when given the opportunity to succeed, they do.

For example, a tribal member entrepreneur was able to construct an educational toy that features the Salish language. This particular business is unique in that it advances both economic and cultural integrity of our community. This is but one example of the innovation that these funds support and we have not yet realized the full potential of what these kinds of funds can bring about.

With the language preservation funding, the CSKT have used the funds to support fluent speakers, develop materials and connect learners to the speakers. The CSKT have used the state funding for multiple educational objects such as training adult speakers and developing age appropriate tools for the "pre-school language learner." We believe that this approach will produce the greatest results as it reaches all age levels.

With continued funding, our Tribes will continue to link speakers and learners in an effort to build a large and vibrant community of Native speakers and to encourage native entrepreneurs to dream and achieve. Through economic development funding we are finding ways to preserve our language. Our joint efforts will help preserve one of our states greatest cultural resources—native languages.

The funds the State has provided to the CSKT Tribes has filled a need and complemented our language preservation efforts. The CSKT commends the efforts of our elected representatives in valuing the diverse cultural wealth in the great State of Montana.

Respectfully submitted,


Vernon Finley, Chairman
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes