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**Public Testimony on HJ 15 in Support of the Federal Recognition of
the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana**

BEFORE:

**The House Joint Senate Energy and Telecommunications
Committee
Montana State Capitol Building
Room 317**

Tuesday, March 10, 2015 - 3:00 p.m.

**Testimony From: Gerald J. Gray, Sr., Director, Montana Indian
Language Preservation Pilot Program,
Little Shell Tribal Native Languages (Cree, Chippewa & Michif)**

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and Committee members

My name is Gerald J. Gray, Sr.

I am the Director of the Little Shell Tribal Native Languages program.

My Father was a Little Shell Tribal member and my Mother was a
Blackfeet Tribal member.

In my testimony before you today, I want to explain *how the Federal
Recognition Benefits the State of Montana.*

First I want to tell you a story about when I was working as the School
Superintendent of Rocky Boy Public School, Rocky Boy, Montana:

There was a non-Indian gentleman working as the ***Bureau of Indian Affairs Tribal Education Director*** who was always complaining about how he was tired of paying his taxes for Indian programs. I thought this was extremely odd, extremely unprofessional and golly because he was working for an Indian Education program, living in subsidized government housing for BIA employees; and was being paid from program monies meant to benefit Indian youth.

I was tired of listening to him complain about paying his taxes for programs for Indians so I asked my twin brother to contact the University of Montana Economics Department and see if there was a Economics Professor who would be willing to come to Rocky Boy and conduct a study to determine how much total Federal money was coming onto the reservation and how much this was costing each tax payer in Hill County.

The University of Montana Economics Professor conducted his study and his final finding was for the total amount of Federal money coming on the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation for such programs as Health Services, Housing, Reservation Infrastructure Improvements (i.e. roads, etc.) and other Federal monies coming into the Tribe and the public school system, ***for a family of four would cost the Hill County Tax Payer one half of one cent. And most important the Economist stated the this Federal Money coming onto the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation regenerates it self nine times within the local and surrounding economy!***

My twin brother and I had a copy of the Economic Study with us the next day and happen to bump into this gentleman in the Tribal Café at noon one day and my brother provided this gentleman with a copy of the study, explained to him how the study came about and why. He then proceeded to give this gentleman a dime and said "Here is a dime for your Tax Money, you are paid up for the next twenty years, now please shut up about paying your tax money for Tribal programs of Indian people on the Rocky Boys Reservation!"

Why do I tell this story? I tell you this story because often we as Indian people hear this sort of thing and people have a misconception about

how much it costs them in Taxes as their share for Federal Taxes for Indian programs.

Often the overwhelming majority of people do not stop to think about how Federal dollars coming into their area benefits them and the local and surrounding economy.

HOW DOES THIS FEDERAL MONEY BENEFIT THE STATE OF MONTANA?

The basic cost to set up the Administrative Structure (Operation) for the Little Shell Tribe when given Federal Recognition would cost anywhere from 38 to 76 million dollars OVER A FIVE YEAR PERIOD.

This Federal money Re-Generated 9 Times would mean 342 to 684 million dollars over 5 years to begin with. This does not included the Federal funds that would come to the Little Shell Tribe for Health and Human Services, Housing, Education and other Federal programs!

A Win Win Situation for All

Montana should have been benefitting from these Federal Funds for the Little Shell Tribe for all of these past years!!

Thank you for allowing me to testify and support the passage of HJR 15 in support of Federal Recognition of the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana.