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June 5, 2009

The Honorable Ken Salazar  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

We write to request the Department of Interior's assistance in ensuring the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes' new Justice Center has sufficient funding for annual operations and maintenance once construction of the new facility is completed, currently expected at the end of 2009.

Long a need for the tribes' law enforcement operations and to upgrade outdated facilities, the tribes have committed approximately \$4 million and have undertaken a \$15.9 million loan to construct the new Justice Center. It is our understanding that the tribes have worked with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) on the design, planning, and construction process to ensure that the facility meets federal requirements. An Environmental Assessment has been completed for the Justice Center and approved by the BIA.

The new Justice Center will serve a critical function in improving public safety and law enforcement services on the Fort Hall Reservation. However, without dependable funding for operations and maintenance, it will be difficult for the tribes to fully utilize the new building. It is our hope that the BIA can provide the tribes with annual base funding for this purpose. Cost estimates by the tribes for operations and maintenance of the new facility are approximately \$400,000 per year.

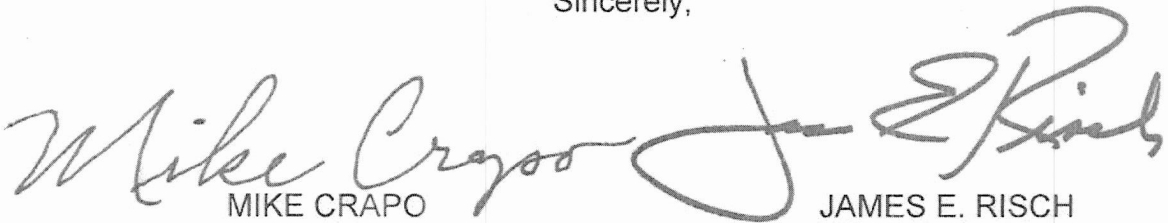
As you know, the buildings currently housing the tribes' court system, jail, and police station are overcrowded and suffer from serious structural and mechanical deficiencies, posing threats to life and safety. The current justice buildings lack sufficient electrical wiring, causing lack of capacity for telephone systems, computers, information systems, and case management.

Over a decade ago, the BIA informed the tribes that they must vacate the current justice facilities. In response, the tribes took it upon themselves to construct a new Justice Center. We have been informed that the tribes have requested that

the BIA commit to providing operations and maintenance funding for the new facility but these efforts have met without success. We are hopeful that the Department can accommodate this request.

Thank you for your efforts on behalf of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, and we look forward to hearing from you on the Department's efforts to address this situation.

Sincerely,




MIKE CRAPO  
United States Senator

JAMES E. RISCH  
United States Senator



MIKE SIMPSON  
Member of Congress



WALT MINNICK  
Member of Congress