



CENTRAL COUNCIL

*Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska*

320 W. Willoughby Ave., Suite 300 • Juneau, AK • 99801  
907.586.1432 • Fax: 907.586.8970 [www.ccthita.org](http://www.ccthita.org)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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William Martin

## Tribe Expresses Concerns to President Obama

On November 5, 2009, following President Barack Obama's opening of a historic Tribal Nations Conference in Washington DC, Tlingit Haida Central Council President William Martin expressed concerns and requested assistance regarding serious issues facing Alaska Native tribes. As the National Congress of American Indians Alaska Area Vice President, Martin brought up issues such as serious erosion problems in many rural communities caused by global warming. In addition, many villages lack basic infrastructure and live in third world conditions.

"I appreciate President Obama following through on his commitment to meet with tribal leaders to develop an agenda for Indian Country," said President Martin. "I look forward to working closer with his Administration on strengthening tribal sovereignty to support fishing and subsistence rights, building sustainable economies, improving infrastructure of basic services in Alaska's villages, and increasing resources to combat the high rate of suicide in Alaska."

At the conclusion of President Martin's remarks he stated that Alaska is a great land, and that the people of Alaska stand united in extending an invitation to President Obama to visit Alaska.

Representatives from hundreds of federally recognized tribes attended the conference, which took place at the Department of Interior. Before signing a presidential memorandum, President Obama touched on moving forward and forging a better future, current challenges, and of bringing real and lasting change for Native Americans. The memorandum directed every Cabinet agency to provide a detailed plan on how they are going to improve tribal consultation. During the conference tribal leaders participated in discussion panels led by Cabinet secretaries on economic development and natural resources, education, health, housing, and public safety.

Tribal leaders are encouraged by President Obama's guarantee that tribal consultation is a top priority, and that his Administration will follow up on issues brought forth during the Tribal Nations Conference.

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To view the full opening remarks for the Tribal Nations Conference, please visit: <http://www.whitehouse.gov>.

Media Contact:

Jodi Garrison

Ph: 907.463.7123 | Fax: 907.463.7316

Email: [jgarrison@ccthita.org](mailto:jgarrison@ccthita.org)