**Letter Expressing Support for Continued Funding for and Support of**

**the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA)**

**April 15, 2022**

**Dear [Elected Representative Name]**

I am writing to express my strong support for the ongoing funding of the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA).

The hospitality industry is an incredibly important one for the American economy, supporting 9.5 million American jobs and accounting for nearly 3 percent of the entire GDP (at pre-pandemic levels.)

Tourism is also an incredibly competitive industry, with many regions, destinations, and attractions competing for the same visitors. Very few single communities have the budgets or human resources to be self-sufficient in their tourism outreach, which is why destination marketing organizations (DMOs) such as convention & visitors bureaus and state tourism agencies are so important.

**(Under) Representing Native Tourism**

Historically, Native tourism has not been included in the promotional efforts driven by these associations. In 1998, to help mitigate the lack of inclusion, Tribes came together to form AIANTA, an association charged with providing technical assistance and training, and other resources to Native communities involved in tourism.

**AIANTA Needs Your Support**

Nearly 25 years after its formation, AIANTA continues to compete on an unlevel playing field. For example, the FY 2021 American Rescue Plan Act included funding for the Economic Development Administration (EDA) specific to Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation with $750 million of EDA’s American Rescue Plan funds going towards communities that rely on the travel, tourism and outdoor recreation sectors.

That funding included $510 million in non-competitive awards to help states and U.S. territories quickly invest in marketing, infrastructure, workforce and other projects to rejuvenate safe leisure, business and international travel. None of that funding went to AIANTA, the only organization specifically dedicated to advancing American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian cultural tourism in the United States. This is despite AIANTA’s repeated request for equity and inclusion in the distribution of these funds.

**[Your Name or Company Name]** fully supports AIANTA’s efforts to provide technical assistance and training to the Native hospitality industry. AIANTA, as the only national organization specifically dedicated to advancing cultural tourism in Native Nations and communities, is ideally suited to support the intent of EDA to “assist indigenous communities to recover economically from the coronavirus pandemic” through outreach, marketing and training access points.”

I am asking you to consider utilizing NATIVE Act funding to support the work of AIANTA, the only national program that supports the industry in its entirety.

For more information, please view [**AIANTA’s Impact Report**](https://www.aianta.org/about-aianta/), andlearn more about the [**Impact of the Native Tourism Industry**](https://www.aianta.org/o-meakwa-aianta-impact/) and the [**Economic Impact of Native Tourism**](https://www.aianta.org/research/state-of-indian-country-tourism/).

Best Regards

**Name, Title, Organization**

cc: Hannah Peterson, AIANTA

hpeterson@aianta.org

**Additional Resources**

(please remove in your outreach)

Contact Your House Representatives

www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative

Contact Your Senate Representatives

www.senate.gov/senators/senators-contact.htm

Contact the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs

www.indian.senate.gov/about-us/committee-members

Contact the Senate Committee on Appropriations

https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/about/members

Contact the House Committee on Appropriations

appropriations.house.gov/