

to waters rising from global warming. Many Tribal nations are relocating entire communities before they're lost for good.

Climate change also erodes our ability to exercise our inherent and treaty-reserved rights to hunt and fish by ravaging our subsistence resources and their life-giving habitats.

Pervasive droughts caused by changing weather patterns constrict our ability to harvest traditional foods and medicines, while our sacred sites grow ever more vulnerable to wildfires, flooding and erosion.

And as the administration's National Climate Assessment explains, Tribal economies, which depend on our "self-determined management of water, land, natural resources and infrastructure," are being impacted "by changes in climate."

Tribal nations have long understood Mother Earth's delicate balance and the sacred charge we have to nourish her as she does us. We developed finely tuned management practices to steward the natural world so it could continue nurturing all living things ...

... from controlled burns to reduce wildfire damage ...

... to water conservation strategies to offset prolonged droughts.

Despite significant legal and policy barriers that complicate our efforts to carry out this hallowed commitment to stewardship, Tribal nations are leading.

From Blue Lake Rancheria in California to the Passamaquoddy Tribe in Maine to the Native Village of Kotzebue in Alaska, we are developing climate action solutions and coalitions that provide common-sense blueprints for the world to follow.

NCAI supports Tribal nations' climate action efforts, from advancing their consensus priorities at the U.N. to advocating for Tribal water settlements in an age of increasing water scarcity.

We are leading on climate action because we recognize future generations will either revere us for our bold initiative in this moment or condemn us for the doomed planet we've left them.

Simply put, we can no longer afford deniers. We need doers – doers committed to working together as one to save our planet for all.

We need the U.S. government to lead with us.

Yet today we find that government broken.

The shutdown is a sobering reminder of the failed state of our partisan politics. Given climate change and the other monumental challenges this country faces, America can no longer afford a government fixated on settling political scores and pandering to corporate interests. Indian Country certainly can't.

We must cleanse our governance of the politics of racism and fear, the rhetoric of winners and losers, false narratives about "zero sum" economics that fuel inequality – and all else that divides us.

Our leaders in Congress and the administration must come together to place the fate of our children and grandchildren – including Native ones – ahead of rigid dogmas and their own campaign coffers. We must – and will – hold them to that standard.

While considered by some a lost art, bi-partisanship is the only proven path to meeting this nation's challenges. The recent Farm Bill is a prime example of the good that comes to all when our leaders put nation before party.

The Farm Bill and recent Tribal energy legislation also affirm that Indian Country's issues are not partisan issues. They are America's issues. They transcend political party. Every member of Congress and the administration has a duty to faithfully execute the government's legally mandated trust and treaty responsibilities to Tribal nations, no matter who voted for them on Election Day.

In 2019, performing that duty means ...

... avoiding another shutdown ...

... fully repairing the damage the last one caused, including doing right by not just federal employees, but federal contractors who serve Indian Country ...

... and authorizing ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS for the BIA and Indian Health Service, so we are insulated against partisan gridlock from here on out. As fellow Tribal leader Aaron Payment said during the shutdown, we "pre-paid in full" with our lands for federal programs and services, and now the government's "mortgage payment is due." From now on, we want that payment guaranteed on time, every time!

Performing that duty to uphold the federal trust and treaty responsibilities also means ...

... enacting a clean Carcieri fix to bring long-overdue certainty to the land-into-trust process ...

... stemming the tide of violence against Native women by strengthening the Violence Against Women Act, passing Savanna's Act, and including Tribal nations in Victims of Crime Act funding ...

... and protecting the Indian Child Welfare Act, for our Native families have suffered the agony of having our children ripped from us for far too long – an agony that, sadly, Indigenous migrant families along our southern border now share with us.

Performing that duty also means ...

... ending the assault on our unique political status, notably allowing states to interfere in Tribal provision of Medicaid services ...

... investing substantially in Tribal infrastructure – on Tribal terms ...

... Passing the Indian Community Economic Enhancement Act and Native American Business Incubators Act, which will strengthen our ability to build diversified economies ...

... properly implementing the Farm Bill and 477 workforce development law ...

... combatting the growing number of hate crimes against Native people ...

... ensuring a complete count of Native people in Census 2020 ...

... and repairing the "Broken Promises" reported by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights by fully funding the federal government's trust responsibility ...

Finally, performing that duty means ...

... committing to appointing federal judges who understand and respect the unique political and legal status of Tribal nations ...

... confirming a permanent IHS director, when we've been without one for four years, which is outrageous ...

... and ensuring the Interior secretary doesn't just pay lip service to Tribal sovereignty, but upholds it in practice. The federal government's trust responsibility is not discretionary!

In closing, to the U.S. government, I promise that:

NCAI will be there every step of the way, partnering with you and holding you accountable, just as we have since 1944.

To our elected leaders and the American people, I invite you to:

Become Indian Country's allies! Learn from us about our histories, governments and contemporary life! Engage with us to understand what respect for Native people entails and how you can help us achieve our goals for thriving Tribal cultures and communities.

To Indian Country, I remind you that:

The National Congress of American Indians is your D.C. watchdog. We have your back in protecting Tribal sovereignty and fighting for your priorities. Always have, always will!

To Tribal leaders, I implore:

Now more than ever, NCAI needs your voices, your guidance, your wisdom, your partnership and your help if we are to collectively forge our chosen pathways to vibrant futures. Our people can afford no less in this time of great uncertainty – and great opportunity.

May God bless all of you and may God bless Indian Country. Thank you.

General Council Meeting

Saturday, May 4, 2019 • 1 p.m.

Siletz Tribal Community Center

Siletz, Oregon

Call to Order

Invocation

Flag Salute

Roll Call

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes

Programs

Minors' Trust – Kiddie Tax

Tribal Members' Concerns

Chairman's Report

Announcements

Adjourn

Services, continued from page 1

- Contact your local CHA –
- The CHA will determine if you meet the criteria for Life Alert (examples: live alone, health condition, etc.)
- The CHA will assist you in applying for Life Alert at no cost through community options. If you do not qualify for Life Alert at no cost, the Siletz Community Health Clinic will cover the cost.
- You can reach the community health advocates at:
 - Siletz – Amy Garrett or Hannah Glaser at 541-444-1030
 - Salem – Cecilia Tolentino at 541-390-9494
 - Eugene – Adrienne Crooks at 541-484-4234
 - Portland – Verdene McGuire at 503-238-1512