

October 21, 2021

The Honorable Debra Haaland
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland:

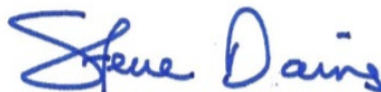
The tribal nations of Montana have seen violent crime and substance abuse reach a level that surpasses Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) law enforcement's ability to sufficiently respond. I request that BIA hire and transfer more law enforcement personnel to Montana to assist with providing security in our communities.

As you are aware, Indian Country is fighting an ongoing crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women (MMIW). Tribal members make up 6.7% of Montana's population, yet are 26% of our missing persons cases. Our state's Indian Reservations are hurting, and tribal leadership find themselves desperate for additional resources to help mitigate these crises that occur all too often. You recently made a statement regarding the ongoing MMIW crisis and how you "grieve for so many Indigenous women" who have not been given the same platform as the heartbreaking Gabby Petito case. I agree, and Montana needs the Administration to fulfill its responsibility to provide adequate resources to protect these communities if we are to make any progress in this fight.

While the Tribal nations found in Montana are sovereign nations, the United States Government's treaty responsibilities to ensure tribes' safety and security remains intact, and must be accounted for. As you know, MMIW Bike-Run USA 2021 participants ended their trek with a meeting with Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, Bryan Newland. During the meeting, Blackfeet Nation Chairman Tim Davis and Fort Belknap Indian Community Councilman Jeff StiffArm discussed the need for additional resources, sharing their own painful personal stories of loss, failures to investigate and conditions exacerbated by the pandemic. I urge you to ensure that our tribes receive the additional resources that are required to make sure their fellow tribal members are healthy and safe. Public safety is a vital component to the well-being of any society, and right now we have the opportunity to better equip tribes with the tools they need to keep their people out of harm's way.

Thank you for your time and attention. I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Steve Daines
United States Senator