

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 17, 2017

RADM Michael D. Weahkee  
Acting Director  
Indian Health Service  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Admiral Weahkee:

We write with alarm regarding the emergent water shortage on the Rocky Boy's reservation. As you know, the water supply on the reservation is running low and everyone living there has been forced to subsist on scarce water resources. We urge your immediate attention to this matter.

By way of brief background, the tribe instituted initial water restrictions on June 27 due to the high temperatures predicted for the following week. On July 6, tank levels dropped to one-third of normal operational levels, at which point the water department stepped up enforcement of the water restrictions and began publicizing them more aggressively. By July 10, water storage tank levels dwindled as low as three feet in the 3 Mile Tank and five feet in the Newtown Tank. Meanwhile, temperatures over that period of time sat consistently around 100 degrees Fahrenheit, exacerbating the situation. While as of today, the 3 Mile and Newtown Tanks' water levels have increased to about 10 and 18 feet, respectively, the tribe is still at risk for losing all water.

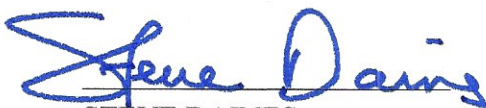
With such limited water supplies, the tribe has barely been able to have their basic needs met. Naturally, irrigating lawns, children having the opportunity to run through the sprinklers, and filling swimming pools are out of the question. The tribe's water resources department has identified the status of the Newtown Public Water System (PWS) as "critical" due to three of four tanks still containing under 50 percent of the usual water levels. This water system serves approximately 2,500 residents in 600 homes, all of whom are impacted by this situation.

The tribe has a comprehensive emergency plan in place should water storage tanks deplete. In the event of such a crisis, we implore you to work closely and immediately with tribal leadership and the tribe's water resources department to ensure tribal members' safety and access to alternative sources of water.

Additionally, in the slightly longer term, we also ask that you work closely with the tribe and assist where possible as they work to drill a new well in the Newtown PWS, which the tribe is doing over the next three to four weeks, as well as in the tribe's work to restore the reverse osmosis well line to functionality.

Thank you for your assistance on this pressing matter.

Sincerely,



STEVE DAINES  
United States Senator



GREG GIANFORTE  
United States Representative