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**COMMITTEE ON
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Congress of the United States **House of Representatives**

October 29, 2009

Chairman Nick J. Rahall, II
House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rahall:

I've read your press release on the fact that Indian Health Care Improvement Act reauthorization legislation has been added behind-closed-doors to the Democrat Majority's massive 1,990-page bill providing for a government takeover of our nation's health care system.

There is bipartisan agreement on the need to reauthorize the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, and that's why it is so deeply troubling that the Democrat Majority's promises of transparency and openness have been violated in this manner. I've no doubt that the advocates of reauthorization are encouraged by action, for there is finally movement on legislation that Speaker Pelosi has refused to allow on to the House floor for a vote for over two and half years.

Yet, the satisfaction that may be felt today, could very well turn into real disappointment in the very near future. Tying reauthorization of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to the controversial government takeover of the nation's health care does a serious disservice to Tribes and individual Indians and Alaska Natives across the country. Reauthorization should be permitted to move independently and not be tied to such a costly and controversial measure.

Why is it that Democrat Chairmen are celebrating this backroom maneuvering and behind-closed-doors dealmaking, when there's been a complete failure on the part of Democrat leadership to successfully advance this legislation in public through the Committee and the full House? The fact that the Natural Resources Committee is being bypassed not only diminishes our Committee's authority and jurisdiction on matters of significance, like Indian Health Care Improvement Act reauthorization, but it jeopardizes the Committee's ability to work in a cooperative manner on all legislation.

Reauthorization of Indian Health Care Improvement Act is important and can be achieved in a bipartisan manner. It need not, and should not, be held hostage to a government health care takeover. I'm hopeful that we can move forward constructively and without conditioning reauthorization to the fate of unrelated, controversial legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Doc Hastings".

Doc Hastings
Ranking Republican
House Natural Resources Committee