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U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

September 7, 2022

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

All of North America is Indigenous homeland, and its colonization depended on dispossession of land from its original Indigenous caretakers through actions that were duplicitous, morally reprehensible and, at times, genocidal in intent or effect. Yet despite this history, tribal nations and communities have persisted and continue to call these lands home today. Currently, there are abundant opportunities to partner with tribal governments in the management of their ancestral homelands, including ways to incorporate their Indigenous traditional ecological knowledge to help conserve lands, improve their ecological health, and address the challenge of climate change. Through co-management agreements, the federal government can support Indian Country and improve the management of federal lands based on the expertise these communities have developed since time immemorial.

Accordingly, I am requesting that GAO undertake an examination of the efforts of federal land management agencies to implement co-management agreements with tribal governments. In particular, I would like GAO to determine, to the extent possible:

1. To what extent do agency policies and processes direct agencies to obtain tribal input when making land and resource management decisions, including but not limited to developing co-management agreements?
2. What are the authorities for federal agencies to enter into co-management agreements for federal lands with federally recognized tribes?
3. What is the number of existing co-management agreements in place and what are the characteristics of these agreements, including, among other things, whether they incorporate Indigenous traditional ecological knowledge?

4. What do agency and tribal officials identify as the key factors that facilitate and impede the use of co-management agreements?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request. Please direct any questions concerning this request to Henry Wykowski at (202) 225-6065.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva
Chair
Committee on Natural Resources