**Topline Asks re Indian Country**

**February 2025**

**The Administration has built several escape valves into each of its mandates implementing its policy priorities, and Tribal programs fall under these escape valves.**

* Each of the Administration’s mandates has acknowledged that activities that implement legal requirements, including statutorily-mandated programs, are not to be affected.
* And these mandates have directed that certain types of programs should not be impacted—such as direct services to citizens, law enforcement and public safety, and programs identified as essential.
* Indian Country programs and funding are provided on the basis of our unique political status and are legally required by trust and treaty obligations and the many associated implementing statutes.
* Further, many of these programs provide essential direct services to the rural communities who rely on them, including services related to law enforcement and public safety.
* For these reasons, some agencies, like DOI and HHS, have already recognized that the Administration’s mandates on their plain terms do not apply to Tribal programs.

**Therefore, we make the following requests of you.**

* *Engage* with us—*prior* to taking action—to better understand where within the federal government direct and essential services are being provided to Indian Country and how to implement the Administration’s policy priorities without affecting ongoing legal requirements to Indian Country.  This type of engagement is in keeping with the United States’ duty to consult government-to-government with Tribal Nations on federal actions that may have Tribal implications*.*
* *Affirmatively state* that programs and funding delivered to Tribal Nations and Tribal citizens and communities are not DEI or discretionary programs, but are delivered in recognition of our unique political status and in furtherance of the United States’ trust and treaty obligations and related statutory mandates.
* *Exempt* from any efforts to pause or reduce federal funding all Tribal programs or funding delivered to Tribal Nations, including through Urban Indian Organizations and Tribal organizations serving Tribal Nations.
* *Exempt* from any workforce reductions or hiring freezes all federal employees serving in Tribal offices or whose roles assist in the delivery of services or funding to Tribal Nations or Tribal citizens or communities.