



Minnesota Advocacy Council for Tribal Transportation (ACTT)

Date: December 1, 2014

Anthony Foxx
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

Kevin Washburn
Assistant Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior, Indian Affairs
MS-3642-MIB
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Re: FHWA Un-Written Policy vs. Bilingual Signs for Indian Country

Dear Secretary Foxx and Assistant Secretary Washburn:

As the Co-Chairs of the Minnesota Advocacy Council on Tribal Transportation (ACTT) and Tribal members, we wish to bring to your attention a serious matter and seek your immediate involvement. ACTT has been working hand-in-hand with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) for some time, developing "Bilingual" Signs for the boundaries of the eleven (11) Tribes in Minnesota. The signs as we developed would have our Native wording on the top and then the English version directly underneath; as one would find in any country where they utilize their native tongue.

However, when this matter was jointly brought to FHWA's Minnesota Division, ACTT was advised that it "appeared" to be against the standard signing protocol and that ACTT would get a response. The written response came in an e-mail, that stated there was no "written" policy, but FHWA's un-written policy would be that English would have to appear on top and the Native wording could be below and in small print. ACTT attempted to pursue this matter, but to this date, have not been able to engage with any authority of FHWA in meaningful dialogue on this important matter.

Imposing an "un-written" policy, developed without meaningful consultation, directly contravenes President Obama's Executive Order 13175, and is in direct conflict with FHWA's own Tribal Consultation Plan (ensure meaningful tribal input into future transportation programs via "Developing policy and programs using input, guidance and recommendations from Tribal Leaders").

ACTT does not speak for Tribal Governments, but each voting representative is appointed by their respective Tribal Government and brings the "daily voice" of Minnesota Indian Country to the table. We

fully expect that on December 3, 2014 during the White House's Conference of Tribal Nations, this matter will be addressed.

The purpose of our letter is to seek an exception for federally recognized tribes to be allowed to display bilingual signs within reservation boundaries with our Native language on top. ACTT additionally seeks an opportunity to work on this important matter on a technical level, diligently looking for a resolution that we can brief our Tribal Governments on.

If you are in agreement, please have your personal representatives contact us as soon as possible to workout necessary logistics to urgently begin meaningful dialogue so that a mutually beneficial resolution may be achieved.

Respectfully,

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cc: Minnesota elected Tribal Chairs
ACTT Committee Members
BIA Midwest Regional Director
FHWA Acting Minnesota Division Administrator
Minnesota Department of Transportation Commissioner
Minnesota Congressional Delegation