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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA)

LISTENING FORUM

USDA PROGRAMS

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Listening Forum (USDA)
13th day of January, 1997
At approximately 3:00 p.m.
Education Center Auditorium
Window Rock, Arizona

Moderator:

MR. MICHAEL SOMERVILLE
NCRS State Conservationist

Court Reporter:

DONALD A. HILLAND, CCR
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A P P E A R A N C E S

Moderator:

MR. MICHAEL SOMERVILLE
NCRS State Conservationist

For the USDA:

MR. PEARLIE S. REED
Civil Rights Action Team Leader

MR. ALLAN STEPHENS
State Director, Rural Development, Arizona

MR. ROBERT PICENO
State Director, Farm Services Agency, Arizona

MS. JOYCE WILLIS
Marketing and Regulatory Programs

MR. MON YEE
At-Large Member

MR. WILBUR PEER
Rural Business & Service

MR. JOHN BOTTOM
Research, Education & Environment

MR. FLOYD WHEELER
Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services

MR. ROBERT COLE
Civil Rights Action Team

MR. ROBERT WHITING
Office of the Chief Information Officer

MR. GARY BARBER
Office of the Chief Information Officer

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For the Navajo Nation:

PRESIDENT ALBERT HALE
Navajo Nation

MR. ART ALLISON
Director, Division of Economic Development

MR. BENNIE COHOE
Director, Division of Navajo EPA

MS. ROSELYN CURTIS
Division Director, Division of Health

MR. JIM ATCITTY
Director, Division of Community Development

MS. ELIZA-BETH WASHBURNE
Director, Navajo Department of Agriculture

MR. MELVIN BAUTISTA
Director, Division of Natural Resources

MR. ARSLAM ROANHORSE
Chief of Staff
Office of President

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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

(At approximately 3:00 p.m.)

MR. SOMERVILLE: Good afternoon. My name is Mike Somerville. I'm the State Conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service. I'm also the Chairman of the Arizona Food and Agricultural Council. And I have been asked to moderate this session for you today.

We would like to welcome you to Window Rock to the USDA Customer Listening Session. We are pleased that you're here in all this snow and cold weather. We know you've gone through a great deal of effort to be here and we appreciate your attendance here today.

We'll begin this session with an invocation. And the invocation will be done by Mr. Hoskie Bryant who is a member of the Fort Defiance Soil And Water Conservation District.

MR. BRYANT: Thank you, Mike. Let's all pray. We know in the Bible it says my people shall turn from their sin and turn to the Lord Almighty God, that he will heal their land. So we want to ask God just to have us heal the land that he has provided to us.

Father, in Jesus's name, I thank you for this day. Lord, we have all kinds of people here. The leaders, different people, people that are in charge of different departments that are here, and people that are land users,

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1 that tried to help each other to improve their land.
2 Finally, we ask for your wisdom. Give us your
3 wisdom to share and to put into places that we can work
4 together. We ask all these obstacles, all things that get
5 in the way that hinders us in improving the land and
6 everything else that hinders to improve our livelihoods to
7 be removed. In the name of Jesus, Lord, we ask for your
8 forgiveness and your mercy and your love. And we repent
9 for our sin.

10 In the name of Jesus, Lord, give us the
11 understanding. If we want to share something, touch our
12 lips that we can communicate effectively with one another
13 and touch our ears that we understand what our people are
14 saying that are to be shared and to be using, put it into
15 use to improve the livelihood of all people.

16 We thank you for all the good things in Jesus's
17 name. Amen.

18 MR. SOMERVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Bryant. We
19 appreciate that.

20 Again we appreciate all of you being in attendance
21 today, recognizing the adverse weather conditions. We know
22 your time is valuable and we know with the challenge of the
23 weather that you've made an extra effort to be here. We
24 appreciate that. We also appreciate the USDA Civil Rights
25 Action Team being willing to come here to Window Rock and



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1 listen to those of us in the Southwest who have concerns
2 regarding USDA services and we appreciate that. We will
3 hear more from the leadership of the Civil Rights Action
4 Team in a moment. There are a few people here I want to
5 introduce. I'd like to start at the end of the head table
6 if I could.

7 Al Stephens, who is the director of the Arizona
8 Rural Development Agency for USDA. Many of you know Al
9 does a super job here in Arizona with his programs.

10 Next to him Bob Piceno, who is the state executive
11 director for Arizona Farm Services Agency. We appreciate
12 Bob being here also.

13 I'd like to introduce a few others that aren't at
14 the head table. Also we've got Larry Burnett. Larry, if
15 you would stand. Larry is the state executive director in
16 New Mexico for the Farm Services Agency.

17 And also Recindo Travino, State Conservationist
18 for MRCS in New Mexico. We appreciate both of you being
19 here.

20 Also Charles Gore who is in the New Mexico
21 Agricultural Statistics Service. We appreciate that.

22 I would like to turn this Listening Session over
23 to Pearlie Reed. Pearlie is the leader of the Civil Rights
24 Action Team for USDA. And he will do further
25 introductions.



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1 MR. REED: Thank you, Mike. Greetings and
2 good afternoon. I'd like to first apologize for our
3 Honorable Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman for not
4 being here with us this afternoon. Mr. Glickman tried to
5 fly in about midday to Gallup and get over here, but the
6 airport was closed so he had to return to Washington. We
7 could not find alternate routes to get him here.

8 This session will be taped, and I can assure you,
9 President Hale, that Secretary Glickman is going to
10 personally watch and listen to this tape. And he will be
11 following up with you as appropriate.

12 Also, as I mentioned to you earlier, on behalf the
13 Secretary, he asked me to let you know that if it is
14 appropriate for him to hold another Listening Session here
15 at a time when he can come, he will be happy to do so.

16 I would like to ask the rest of the members the
17 Secretary's Civil Rights Action Team to make
18 self-introductions.

19 So could we start with you, John. Dr. John
20 Bottom.

21 MR. BOTTOM: I'm John Bottom. I'm with the
22 Research Extension Service and Economics Missionary.

23 MR. PEER: Good afternoon. I'm Wilbur Peer
24 with the Rural Efficient Administrator, Rural Business
25 Services.

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1 MR. YEE: Ya-ta-hey everybody. My name is
2 Mon Yee, and I am with the Natural Conservation Service out
3 of Portland, Oregon.

4 MS. WILLIS: Good afternoon. I'm Joyce
5 Willis with the Marketing and Regulatory Programs.

6 MR. WHEELER: Good afternoon. My name is
7 Floyd Wheeler. I'm Director of Resources for the Food and
8 Consumer Service.

9 MR. COLE: Good afternoon. I'm Robert Cole,
10 former USDA employee in Washington, D.C, and in Arkansas.

11 MR. WHITING: Good afternoon. My name is
12 Robert Whiting. I'm with the Office of the Chief
13 Information Officer.

14 MR. BARBER: Good afternoon, everybody. My
15 name is Gary Barber. I'm with the Office of the Chief
16 Information Officer out of Washington, D.C.

17 MR. REED: I would like to make just two
18 other introductions. Jerry Gonzales, would you please
19 stand?

20 Jerry is on our support team.

21 And Rebecca De La Torre, who is also on our
22 support team.

23 Thank you very much.

24 I will be very brief so that we can get on with
25 the meat of the program. So before I turn it over to

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1 President Hale, I would like to say that the purpose of
2 these listening sessions is for us to get out in the
3 communities and hear firsthand from you what the problems
4 are at USDA, what's going wrong, what we can improve on and
5 specifically pick up recommendations that we can take back
6 and share with the Secretary of Agriculture and develop an
7 action plan to implement those recommendations that would
8 make things much, much better at USDA.

9 The reason the Secretary established this Civil
10 Rights Action Team, over the last three to four months, he
11 has been inundated with an enormous amount of information
12 coming in from our customers and employees, centered around
13 how we treat our customers as well as our employees.

14 And what the Secretary has asked his USDA Civil
15 Rights Action Team to do is to make a thorough audit of the
16 USDA from a civil rights perspective, both in program
17 delivery and employment and come back to him by early
18 February with recommendations and an action plan to resolve
19 all of the problems hopefully that we can work on here at
20 USDA.

21 The Secretary is extremely serious about this
22 effort. In previous meetings, he has indicated that he
23 believes this is the most comprehensive activity ever
24 undertaken relative to civil rights at USDA. So we're
25 looking forward today to your input. And we'll take the

1 information and fold it back into the system and make sure
2 that we follow through.

3 Mike Somerville will give you more information a
4 little bit later on on the details of how you can provide
5 input over and above what you will be able to do in the
6 Listening Session.

7 So, with that, without any further ado, I would
8 like to turn the program over to President Hale.

9 President Hale.

10 Mr. President, you can speak anyplace you want.

11 PRESIDENT HALE: Thank you very much. I
12 like a person who let's me do anything I want.

13 Thank you. Thank you, and good afternoon, Ladies
14 and Gentlemen, Members of Dignitaries at the head table.
15 Certainly an honor to be here with you this afternoon.

16 In spite of the weather there is a good turnout
17 here. And that's an indication that we're all interested
18 in presenting our views and also listening to some of the
19 other views that will be expressed by many of the
20 presenters that are listed today.

21 Before I get any further, if I may, I would like
22 to introduce some of the people who are present from my
23 staff at the head table on my right.

24 Let me first introduce Arslam Roanhorse, who is
25 the Chief of Staff for my office.

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1 Melvin Bautista, who is the Executive Director for
2 Division of Natural Resources.

3 Eliza-Beth Washburne, Department of Agriculture,
4 Director.

5 Jim Atcitty, who is the Executive Director for
6 Economic or Community Development.

7 Roselyn Curtis, who is the Executive Director for
8 Division of Health.

9 And then we have Bennie Cohoe, who is the
10 Executive Director for EPA Navajo Nation.

11 And Art Allison, who is the Director of Division
12 for Economic Development for the Navajo Nation.

13 We also have some people who are visiting with us,
14 taking this opportunity to come visit the Navajo Nation.
15 And they're our neighbors from over in New Mexico and some
16 from Arizona. And we certainly are honored to have them
17 being present here.

18 And let me introduce them first. I don't know how
19 to say your first name, but Mr. Gilbert, Councilman from
20 Pueblo at Acoma, Acomita, New Mexico.

21 There he is. Mr. Gilbert.

22 Cyrus J. Chino, First Lieutenant Governor, Pueblo
23 of Acoma.

24 Rex G. Salvador, Second Lieutenant Governor,
25 Pueblo of Acoma.

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1 Robert Sakiestewa, Governor, Hopi Tribe.

2 Thank you very much. And welcome to the Navajo
3 Nation. And again on behalf of the Navajo Nation, the
4 Navajo people, I welcome each and every one of you to this
5 listening conference.

6 The purpose of the conference has been outlined
7 for us very briefly and we're very fortunate to have this
8 listening conference conducted by the United States
9 Department of Agriculture here on the Navajo Nation. I
10 understand that this is the first listening conference to
11 be held out of the 13 listening conferences that are
12 scheduled that is being held on an Indian reservation. And
13 that is indeed an honor for us. And we certainly do
14 appreciate the Secretary's support. I know he has
15 supported the Navajo Nation in its effort to engage in
16 conservation measures relative to water, land, air, and
17 others.

18 According to the Navajo tradition and teaching, we
19 all come from the earth. And as a result, Mother Earth, we
20 are very special to. And the things that we're doing
21 through the agriculture program, the conservation program,
22 is all geared to making sure that we take care of our
23 Mother Earth. Because Mother Earth has taken care of us
24 thus far. And if it wasn't for Mother Earth, we all
25 wouldn't be here.

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1 And thank you very much for giving me this
2 opportunity. Let's get on with the program and have all
3 the presentations made because we are faced with an
4 increased weather condition, adverse weather conditions.
5 We certainly would like to get people out of here as
6 quickly as possible.

7 Thank you very much. Good afternoon.

8 MR. SOMERVILLE: Thank you Mr. Reed and
9 President Hale. This Listening Session is being held for
10 the Action Team members to listen to your concerns and your
11 comments. It's more important that USDA officials hear
12 from you so that we might, as Mr. Reed said, better direct,
13 better focus our programs in the areas that will most
14 benefit you, the customers of USDA.

15 So we're not up here, up front, and the Civil
16 Rights Action Team is not here to talk to you. We don't
17 want to waste your time. We're more interested in your
18 ideas and your comments coming to USDA. So we intend to
19 listen to you and provide opportunities for you to give us
20 feedback and give the Civil Rights Action Team feedback on
21 behalf of those people that you represent.

22 I need to go through some housekeeping so that we
23 all know a little bit about what the rules are so that we
24 can move through this with some efficiency in order so
25 you're not out on the icy roads late in the evening.

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1 You do need to know that this session is being
2 taped so that USDA can capture all of the ideas. We also
3 have interpreters over here to your left and my right who
4 are translating from English to Navajo. And if you would
5 like a set of -- if you would like a set of earphones so
6 you can listen to that translation, if that would be easier
7 for you to hear the concerns, we have these here at our
8 head table so we can also listen if we choose to. Those
9 are available over at the table there, right there.

10 Thank you.

11 We have timers. We would like to confine the
12 comments to about five minutes each so that everyone will
13 have a chance to speak. And we have people over here to my
14 right who are going to be timing. And if you could hold up
15 the sign, Ralph. As you speak, you'll see that. And if it
16 says "one minute," you'll know you have about one minute.
17 We're not going to hold you real tight to that, but just so
18 that everybody has a chance to be heard, Ralph will remind
19 you. Ralph Goy will remind you of how much time you have
20 left.

21 The microphones are in the audience and you can go
22 to any of those mics. I think that would be more
23 convenient than walking up front here.

24 If you have additional comments that you don't get
25 to present orally, you can write those down. In your

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1 packet is a sheet that has the address and fax numbers for
2 the USDA Action Team. And you can either fax additional
3 comments to them or mail them in or write them here and
4 drop them in the boxes back in the back, wrapped with
5 purple paper.

6 If you see those back there, you can drop your
7 comments in those boxes or you can send them directly to
8 the Action Team.

9 If you didn't get a chance -- if you would like to
10 speak today, and you didn't sign up on the sign-in sheet,
11 you could still go do that outside now. And we would still
12 be able to hear you. We have a couple of sheets of paper
13 with all the names of those who do want to speak.

14 And unless there is any additional comments from
15 the head table, we'll begin this process so that we can
16 move along as quickly as possible.

17 Our first five-minute speaker is from the Navajo
18 Nation Department of Fish and Wildlife, Michael Halona.
19 And he may want to speak right from his table there.

20 I'm sorry. President Hale is going to speak
21 first. And then we'll go to Mike.

22 PRESIDENT HALE: Thank you very much and
23 good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen, and people who are here
24 at the head table. Appreciate the opportunity to
25 participate in this Listening Session today.

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I'm the President of the Navajo Nation and have been the president for the last couple of years. We are very encouraged by the Listening Session that is being sponsored here by the United States Department of Agriculture.

There is a real need for such a session to take place out in Indian Country, especially out here on the Navajo Nation. The Navajo Nation is the largest Indian Nation in the country. In terms of land base we have over 17.5 million acres. And our population is in excess of 250,000 people.

The Navajo Nation spans three states: New Mexico, Utah, and Arizona. Because of that, we are presented with a unique challenge in terms of administration of the USDA county-based programs.

The Navajo people are among the poorest of America's rural poor. We have 65 percent of the Navajo people who live below the poverty line. Per capita income for Navajos is \$4,106, as compared to the per capita income of \$14,420 for other people across America.

The Navajo Nation suffers from enormous deficit in all critical areas that are necessary for prosperous rule, livelihood, and well-being. Half of the Navajo people live in substandard housing with no running water, no electricity, or no sanitary waste disposal facilities.

1 Navajo rangelands, farmlands, and rural
2 communities are today well below their potential for
3 economic and social productivity. Many of our people are
4 largely dependent on small flocks of goats and sheep and
5 produce from their small farm plots for subsistent living.
6 Our needs are commensurably vast and diverse.

7 In areas traditionally served by USDA, the Navajo
8 Nation has yet to receive the benefits afforded many of the
9 other rural communities in America. In the past several
10 years, USDA has improved its relationship with the Navajo
11 Nation.

12 Most notable in this progress is a cooperative
13 relationship that has recently been established between the
14 Navajo Nation and USDA. This relationship has to be guided
15 by some basic principles. One is that there must be
16 acknowledgement and respect for the sovereignty of the
17 Navajo Nation. The sovereignty of the Navajo Nation has
18 long been recognized in judicial pronouncements, in
19 treaties in the United States, constitutional and numerous
20 legislation.

21 There must also be, secondly, a commitment for
22 strengthening the government-to-government relationship
23 that has been pronounced by President Bill Clinton. And
24 there must be lastly a clear recognition of not only this
25 agency but all the federal agencies, that each one of those

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1 federal agencies owes a trust responsibility to the Navajo
2 Nation and the various Indian Nations across the country.
3 That the trust responsibility is not limited to one agency,
4 but to all federal agencies.

5 Historically, the Navajo Nation and other Indian
6 Nations have been underserved by USDA in terms of rural
7 development, education, and natural resource conservation
8 programs. This imbalance, this inequity, can be attributed
9 to continuing cultural, logistical, administrative, and
10 legislative constraints in areas that have been imposed.

11 While there remains much to be accomplished, the
12 Navajo Nation and USDA have made progress in its
13 relationship. A few of those, if I may reiterate, is the
14 formation in 1993 of the first Indian Soil and Water
15 Conservation Districts under Indian law and staffing of
16 those districts.

17 Secondly, consolidation and streamlining of nearly
18 all of the SCS program's delivery to the Navajo Nation.

19 Third, provision of a full-time MRCS Watershed
20 Planning Team to the Navajo Nation.

21 Fourth, establishment to date of two full-time
22 extension service positions on the Navajo Nation.

23 And, lastly, the establishment of the Navajo
24 Nation Resource and Conservation Council, which is slated
25 to kick off in mid to late 1997.

1 Recently, I had an opportunity to visit personally
 2 with Secretary Glickman. In our meeting, we discussed the
 3 establishment of an RCMD district for the Navajo Nation,
 4 infrastructure development at Navajo Community College and
 5 at Crownpoint Institute of Technology, and our application
 6 for emergency grain assistance.

7 With the snow as it is outside, the grain
 8 assistance is extremely important. So we must have that
 9 assistance rendered or a decision rendered on that request
 10 for assistance immediately.

11 In that meeting, the Secretary affirmed to us his
 12 willingness to come and visit the Navajo Nation. I was
 13 surprised to hear that he was already conducting a
 14 Listening Session and that he has also expressed a
 15 willingness to return at some other point and also conduct
 16 another Listening Session. But I am extremely encouraged
 17 by his commitment to visit the Navajo Nation, not only for
 18 a couple hours, but maybe for two or three days. And we're
 19 making preparations for that visit.

20 There were several very specific programs that the
 21 Navajo Nation would like to see either improved or funded
 22 or implemented. One is an integrated Rural Development
 23 Planning Proposal that will be a pilot program in Indian
 24 Country. We strongly urge USDA to initiate that pilot
 25 program on the Navajo Nation. And what that would do is

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1 create a full-time multidisciplinary USDA Rural Development
2 Planning Team. This is similar to the Watershed Planning
3 Team that has proven to be very successful.

4 Secondly, we would like to see the enhancement of
5 the land grant status for tribally controlled colleges.

6 In 1994, Congress enacted the Equity and
7 Educational Land Grant Status Act, granting 29 Indian
8 higher education institutions limited land grant status.
9 By doing that, there has been limitation placed on the
10 benefits that these institutions can receive. So, in that
11 regard, you can say that there has been discrimination
12 initiated in this legislation as it pertains to Indian
13 colleges.

14 Thirdly, expand Indian reservation extension
15 programs. The 1990 Farm Bill established Indian
16 reservation extension programs, but funding has been very
17 limited. We would like to see increasing funding so that
18 more extension agents can serve the Navajo Nation.

19 Fourth, increased access to farm service and
20 agency loan programs. We have inherent problems arising
21 from our status or the status of our land, which is in
22 trusts. And the title is held by the United States
23 Government. That gives us problems in terms of trying to
24 get loans through the normal loan institutions or financial
25 institution programs.

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1 Due to the limitation, due to these and other
2 limitations, we have been limited in trying to get loans
3 for Navajos on Navajo trust land. We have done our part in
4 trying to resolve the problems arising from the trust
5 status of our land. We have adopted the Navajo Deed of
6 Trust Act recently to address foreclosure issues. And we
7 are attempting to also increase the amount of loans that
8 can be approved or will be approved by USDA under its loan
9 programs.

10 One problem that we run into because of our
11 economic state, with our lack of job opportunities, many of
12 our people are not employed. And as a result, when they go
13 to seek loans, they cannot offer the necessary guarantee
14 that they will make payments. As a result, there have been
15 numerous denials of these loans.

16 Fifth, increased access to natural resource
17 management programs, renewable resources of the Navajo
18 Nation, forest, rangeland, water resources. All suffer
19 from severe degradation and from marginal productivity.
20 And this can be attributed to the reason why we have such a
21 poor rural economy. We need to increase our funding in
22 that regard and also to increase access to those programs.

23 Many times, we run into programs that are
24 administered by the state. And the state seems to take the
25 position that the programs only stop or do stop at the

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1 reservation line and that there is a wall there. And that
2 shouldn't be the case. And that's the situation that we
3 run into.

4 Sixth, the Navajo Nation would like increased
5 participation in the Animal Damage Control Program. We see
6 a lot of loss of livestock and crop resources due to
7 predators: coyotes, wild dogs, bears, mountain lions. We
8 don't want to necessarily destroy these animals because
9 they have their place in this world, but we want to control
10 them so we can continue to grow the livestock that we need
11 and to farm the lands that we need.

12 Seven, to authorize a waiver for Indian
13 participation in many of the USDA programs. A lot of the
14 programs are very difficult to access because of certain
15 restrictions.

16 For example, as a result of the 1996 drought many
17 of the ranchers were forced to sell their livestock,
18 cattle, sheep. And the Navajo Nation has applied for
19 emergency feed grain assistance, but we have encountered
20 many obstacles. Many of these individuals, many of these
21 farmers and ranchers, were unable to meet the criteria that
22 has been established for participation in those programs.
23 Livestock has been the mainstay of Navajo economy and
24 Navajo life for many, many years. And we certainly would
25 like to continue to assist the livestock owners.

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1 In the summer of 1996, my staff and I rode across
2 the Navajo Nation on horseback to take a look at the
3 drought condition, the condition of our land, our water
4 resources, our vegetation. And it's sad for me to report
5 that the condition in many areas of the Navajo Nation is
6 extremely poor. And I dare say that in many areas the
7 vegetation has been devastated so much that it's going to
8 take years for that land to recover. But we cannot just
9 continue to say that.

10 We need to join forces and address those
11 conditions. And we certainly request the USDA to provide
12 us the necessary resources to fence in those lands, to
13 reseed them, to do water conservation measures so we can
14 save the great Navajo Nation.

15 And in that regard, save the land for our Navajo
16 livestock owners, beginning with the approval of our
17 application for emergency feed grain assistance.

18 Eight, emergency Indian Reservation Rural Water
19 and Waste Disposal Grant Programs. The Navajo Nation is in
20 need of assistance to provide safe drinking water. And we
21 also need assistance to develop a Solid Waste Facility
22 Program. We are aware that there is funding from the
23 agency or from the Department for vehicles, equipment, and
24 construction funds. And we would like access to those
25 because we have not been provided access to those before.

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1 There is another issue, number nine, which we also
2 would like to address and need assistance on. And that is
3 the Colorado River Salinity Control Assistance Program.
4 This is water that is coming off the San Juan into the
5 Colorado River. There is a lot of salinity that is
6 accumulating in those rivers. We certainly would like to
7 have funding to address that situation.

8 And lastly to provide for bilingual interpreters
9 in offices that are serving the Navajo people. Many of the
10 Navajo people do not speak the English language. And as a
11 result, when they approach or go to offices, USDA offices,
12 for assistance, they have difficulties in communicating.
13 We would like to see a program where there is a bilingual
14 worker or an interpreter available at these offices.

15 In conclusion, I again state my gratitude to
16 Secretary Glickman for this listening conference and for
17 sending his people out to listen to us. I hope they have
18 their hearing aids turned up to full volume so they can
19 really listen to us and hear us. It's one thing to
20 listen. It's another thing to hear. If you listen, you
21 can hear things, but a lot of times you don't retain them.
22 But if you hear things and you retain it, then you can have
23 a basis for addressing a lot of the concerns that will be
24 raised today.

25 And thank you very much for this opportunity. And

1 again I welcome you to the Navajo Nation. Thank you.

2 MR. SOMERVILLE: Thank you, President
3 Hale. Our first speaker from the audience will be Michael
4 Halona. Mike will speak, I think, from the staff table
5 there.

6 MR. HALONA: Good afternoon. My name is
7 Mike Halona. I'm a Service Officer with the Navajo
8 Department of Fish and Wildlife. I would like to say good
9 afternoon to the Navajo Nation delegates and dignitaries
10 and good afternoon to the USDA guests and welcome to our
11 beautiful land.

12 On behalf of the Navajo Fish and Wildlife
13 Department, I'd like to kind of shed some light on the
14 problems that we have been dealing with with USDA involving
15 animal damage control.

16 As President Hale mentioned, a large number of our
17 members depend on animals for their livelihood. The Navajo
18 Fish and Wildlife is requesting assistance from the USDA
19 pursuant to the Animal Control Act of 1931, which states
20 "The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to make such
21 expenditures for equipment, supplies, or materials,
22 including the employment of persons and means in the
23 District of Columbia and elsewhere and to employ such means
24 as may be necessary to execute the functions imposed upon
25 him by this section."

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1 And at this point we have not received any
2 support. And this is not new. The Navajo Fish and
3 Wildlife has been working with the government since 1956
4 when the co-op agreement was set up and that was entirely
5 funded by the Navajo Nation up to 1978. In 1972, the
6 president then issued a direct order banning the use of
7 strict pesticides. However, Indian reservations excluded
8 them.

9 At the same time, shortly after the administrator
10 from EPA forbid any use on Indian reservations. In 1972,
11 the Navajo Nation Council passed legislation which because
12 it was being reported and documented that millions of
13 dollars of livestock were being lost, in one incident a
14 million dollars in one month.

15 So, in 1994, the chairman of the Navajo Nation
16 wrote the Congress of the United States, requesting
17 assistance and implementing the will of the Navajo people
18 due to proper management of predators. In 1974, April, the
19 same year, Secretary of Interior wrote to nine states and
20 they confirmed agreements with these states to carry out
21 Animal Damage Control activities in their states.

22 June of 74, the Navajo Nation Council asked the
23 Secretary of Interior why Indian governments were omitted
24 from this proposal. The Secretary of the Interior stated
25 that what Indian tribal leaders should do is contact their



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1 states and ask for subcontractors.

2 The Navajo Nation submitted several proposals and
3 never did receive a response. In October of 1985, the
4 Navajo Nation wrote letters to the Appropriations Committee
5 supporting the transfer of the Federal Animal Damage
6 Control Program from the US Fish and Wildlife Service,
7 Department of Interior, to the USDA with the condition that
8 appropriate share of funds would be available to Indian
9 tribes to establish Animal Control Programs and explaining
10 that the Navajo Nation has unsuccessfully requested
11 appropriate funding from the Department of the Interior
12 under the Predator Mammal Control Act.

13 In July of 86, the Navajo Nation and BIA met with
14 representatives from the USDA to discuss the possibilities
15 establishing a cooperative program. USDA ADC program
16 stated that it must be financed jointly and that they would
17 have to supervise the program and provide their own
18 personnel. And the Navajo Nation expressed a concern that
19 the Navajo Department of Fish and Wildlife is capable of
20 operating the program.

21 In October of 1988, BIA and Navajo Nation
22 officials met with the regional director of the USDA in
23 Denver. And at that time we were told that we would relook
24 at the fact of Secretary of Interior may cooperate with
25 states that they were not obligated to work with the Navajo

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1 Nation.

2 So December 1988 we went back to our states and
3 were ready to work with the New Mexico Department of
4 Agriculture's ADC program and eventually entered a
5 memorandum of understanding only to provide limited service
6 in McKinley County and Sandoval County because that's the
7 area where our tribal members are submitting payments for
8 grazing farm and ranch improvement funds, which jointly
9 fund the ADC program in New Mexico.

10 And the only other agreement that we have with the
11 USDA is that they have allowed the Navajo Nation to
12 purchase pesticides for animal control on the Navajo
13 Nation.

14 So, as you can judge, the Navajo Nation has made
15 numerous requests to the federal government through the BIA
16 and USDA for funding for resources for the Animal Control
17 Act. On behalf of the Navajo Nation, we request your
18 support in developing a direct cooperative relationship
19 between the USDA and the Navajo Nation, a more equitable
20 approach toward reducing livestock and damage. Ultimately,
21 through our joint efforts, a solution can be agreed upon
22 and addressed.

23 In your decision, we will have a long-term benefit
24 for the Navajo people. Thank you, and have a safe trip
25 home.

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1 MR. SOMERVILLE: Thank you, Mike. Our next
2 speaker will be Denny Clah. He represents the Chinle Soil
3 and Water Conservation District.

4 MR. CLAH: Good afternoon, Distinguished
5 Guests from Washington office, and also the Navajo Tribal
6 Administrations, Departments of the Division, and also the
7 participants of the Listening Session.

8 I am representing the Navajo people today. And I
9 am also being a designated representative to the Chinle
10 Conservation District. And I am the chairman for that
11 Conservation District there and also Navajo Nation Soil
12 Conservation, their department for the Navajo Nation.

13 So I'm on my second term for SWCD. I have three
14 issues to pose to the listening areas. One is field
15 service concerns and staffing. We are requesting for an
16 increased number of staff at the agency level because there
17 is a lot of projects still completed in a year. And also a
18 lot of projects are being filed. And also assessments on
19 these projects need to be completed for each project. And
20 then also we need increased coordination with the land
21 users and livestock owners.

22 And then also the land improvement also needs to
23 be increased, and that's where the SRC field office and I
24 kind of really support that agency provision from the state
25 and also pretty much to the USDA office.

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1 Okay. Number one, 1997 Farm Bill. First of all,
2 as the county requirements, it needs to be just to the
3 Navajo Nation. There needs to be consolidations of these
4 county requirements to meet the one requirement for the
5 Navajo Nation because a lot of these requirements are all
6 in different -- by different counties. And some of them
7 don't really make up what we requested.

8 Okay. Number two in the Farm Bill is that the
9 Navajo land grant program be more accessible to our school
10 system. Not only the community colleges, but also our
11 district schools. Our kids need to learn about the natural
12 resources and about agriculture. And so they can be able
13 to implement our land and make use of the land and the
14 resources.

15 And number two in the existing program is federal
16 and state emergency feed program. The regulation
17 requirements for Navajo people is not the same because of
18 our people. And that's one area that's really
19 complicated. And a lot of families, they buy feeds, and a
20 lot of people lose the reimbursement.

21 And then the other thing is that from my chapter,
22 from my chapter there is two counties. Number one county,
23 it has customary use for grazing by land livestock owners
24 and the other portion of the chapter they don't have a
25 regulation. It's under executive order. So therefore they

1 don't have an equal chance west to the east side of my
2 chapter.

3 So those are the areas that I would like to touch
4 upon. And I would like that the task force take into
5 consideration and look into these matters because it really
6 will benefit the local people and the land users, the land
7 owners and also the our student children.

8 And at this point, I would like to say thank you
9 for giving me the opportunity. And I know I could probably
10 make this in less than five minutes. Even eight seconds is
11 a long time.

12 Thank you.

13 MR. SOMERVILLE: Thank you very much, Denny.
14 Our next speaker will be Ruth or Bob Roessel, and they are
15 representatives of the Round Chapter.

16 MR. ROESSEL: My name is Bob Roessel. I'm
17 the Director of the Planning Research for the Round Rock
18 Chapter.

19 As you may know, the chapters are governmental
20 units that are scattered throughout the reservation. There
21 are 110 such chapters on the Navajo reservation. And these
22 chapters, due to the efforts of our members, are trying to
23 get more power, more authority, and more responsibility.
24 And we look upon this opportunity to testify before you as
25 an example of trying to help a chapter realize its

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1 potential and realize its responsibility.

2 I would like to mention that Round Rock Chapter
3 had the first Peace Corps training in the United States.
4 The Round Rock Chapter had the first Vista training in the
5 United States. The Round Rock Chapter had the first
6 directly funded Americorps program in the United States.

7 So we are a chapter that are very much interested
8 in trying to help ourselves and we look upon this
9 opportunity to express our needs to you as an opportunity
10 long overdue. I would like to mention several of our
11 particular needs.

12 First, Navajo Community College is a land grant
13 institution. And yet it does not receive money in
14 accordance with that designation. We have an opportunity
15 to have our own institution be responsible for extension
16 service and all USDA programs. That does not happen.

17 We wrote a letter to Eddie Barbers, the President
18 of our state Board of Regents, complaining about the
19 University of Arizona getting all the money which they are
20 supposed to spend equally and fairly across the state of
21 Arizona. They do not do this. The entire reservation is
22 counted as one farm and is allocated money on that basis.

23 In other words, a little farmer down in Gila
24 County will be just as important in the distribution of
25 funds from the University of Arizona as is a 200,000

1 population of the Navajo reservation.

2 The Round Rock Chapter is interested in developing
3 a solid waste landfill. This is an area in which you have
4 an opportunity and responsibilities. We've done all that
5 we can do. We've had an archeological clearance and all
6 those other steps have been taken. We've not been able to
7 get this thing launched. This would be a landfill that
8 could serve the entire reservation. It is something that
9 is estimated, that there be five-and-a-half million dollars
10 a year in revenue to this chapter or a group of chapters.
11 And yet we're not able to get it off the ground.

12 The Round Rock Chapter is also interested in
13 operating a demonstration farm. This past year we met with
14 USDA officials. We met with tribal agricultural
15 officials. We met with all kinds of officials. And we
16 asked -- we wanted to have a 20-acre demonstration farm.

17 Three different groups of these officials took
18 soil samples, yet we never got any results back. I think
19 you find agriculture as a fragmented entity on this
20 reservation, at best. You have so many different places to
21 go and you go to one, "Oh, well, I don't have any
22 responsibility in that area."

23 The USDA office at Window Rock is poorly staffed
24 and understaffed. We've attempted to work with those
25 people, at times successfully and at times unsuccessfully.

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1 The Navajo Nation, you heard President Hale say, we needed
2 more extension agencies, perhaps two. I say we need two
3 for every agency. If you want to serve the needs of the
4 Navajos, you have to provide the ability, the right persons
5 to provide these services.

6 The Round Rock Chapter is interested in getting
7 under your rural development program a grant to build a
8 multipurpose building. We have a Chapter House at Round
9 Rock built in the mid-1950s. The roof leaks, the toilets
10 don't work -- Mr. Hale can attest to this. He has been
11 there. A frequent friend of the Round Rock Chapter. And
12 we need to be able to meet the needs of our community in
13 developing a multipurpose community facility. And yet we
14 find that we have difficulty in this area.

15 Finally, Round Rock would like to request
16 technical assistance from USDA from the various programs.
17 To come to the Round Rock Chapter, to meet with the Round
18 Rock community, and to cooperatively develop plans that
19 will allow the Round Rock community to serve the
20 demonstration of what a Navajo community can do if given an
21 opportunity.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. SOMERVILLE: Thank you, Robert. Our next
24 speaker will be Eliza-Beth Washburne, Director of Navajo
25 Department of Agriculture.

1 MS. WASHBURNE: Ya-te-hey. My name is
2 Eliza-Beth Washburne I'm the director for the Navajo
3 Department of Agriculture.

4 Thank you for this opportunity to speak before the
5 Civil Rights Action Team. And the most visible USDA
6 program which has been on the Navajo Nation is the Food
7 Distribution Program, the weight program, Natural Resource
8 Conservation Service, and to a limited extent the Farm
9 Service Agency.

10 The other programs, the other USDA programs seem
11 to be a well-kept secret. The Navajo Nation of our people
12 have participated in other programs but to a very limited
13 extent.

14 There are three issues that I would like to speak
15 on today. First is the Indian reservation extension
16 programs. With the passage of the 1990 Farm Bill, the
17 Indian reservation extension programs was authorized and
18 was reauthorized with the recent 1996 Farm Bill. Up until
19 1992, the Cooperative Extension Service has been like a
20 ship in the night with programs that are sponsored here and
21 there maybe once a month, but not a very comprehensive
22 program, which the Navajo Nation is entitled to.

23 The Navajo entered into a memorandum of
24 understanding with three land grant universities with the
25 University of Arizona as the lead university. The other

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1 two are New Mexico State University and Utah State
2 University.

3 Currently, there are only two things available to
4 serve the Navajo Nation and its population. The goal which
5 our Nation has is to have extension personnel in offices in
6 at least seven locations across the Navajo Nation. In our
7 counties and states, I don't know what the ratio of
8 extension personnel are to the population which they serve,
9 but here on the Navajo Nation there is one person for at
10 least every hundred thousand people. And this is only your
11 basic agricultural natural resource extension agency. By
12 that, we don't have 4-H youth, developmental agency. And
13 yet the population statistics show that the Navajo Nation
14 is a very young nation.

15 There needs to be an equal distribution of
16 full-time and funded extension personnel and offices
17 established on the Navajo Nation. Currently, there is only
18 one position that we have that is full-time and my
19 understanding is that the funding is being held up in
20 Washington.

21 For other issues of consolidation of programs
22 which has been mandated by the Farm Bill, the 1990 Farm
23 Bill. In response to this, the Farm Service Agency had
24 designated a day or two to come out to various locations on
25 the Navajo Nation and they called it off.

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1 Currently, this practice has been to have a
2 program assistant in the St. Michael's office. The main
3 office is in Holbrook. Navajo people still have to travel
4 quite a distance when they wish to apply for this program.
5 There needs to be farm program service centers set up in
6 each of the five agencies so that all agencies can be
7 available to the people.

8 With the 1996 Farm Bill, the Navajo Nation will
9 continue to participate in the programs. This is when we
10 meet the USDA personnel by our side with us to have these
11 programs implemented and maintained in accordance with the
12 agreements which the cooperatives have to enter into.

13 The main concern that we have here is that there
14 is equal and fair distribution of the program funds and
15 technical assistance which are available through these
16 programs. From information in the Farm Bill provisions, it
17 seems like the Navajo Nation does meet all of the
18 requirements to be determined a priority area. Where does
19 the Navajo Nation fit in these priority area designations?
20 That's what we would like to know today.

21 This concludes my report and I'll also be
22 submitting a written statement. Thank you for your time.

23 MR. SOMERVILLE: Thank you, Eliza-Beth. Our
24 next speaker is Keith Ryder, Navajo New Lands. Keith?

25 MR. RYDER: Good evening. Whatever it is.



1 Good afternoon. I thank you, Mr. Somerville, and the
2 chairman of this meeting, and the USDA, President Hale, and
3 other dignitaries that are here.

4 I do consider it an honor to address this group
5 and this assembly. My name is Keith Ryder, and I am from
6 down in Navajo Land. I wear many hats. I've just got one
7 on today, but my source of employment is the Navajo-Hopi
8 Indian relocation in Chambers, Arizona. That's one hat.
9 This is on the area known as the New Lands, which I'm sure
10 everyone in this room is familiar with that.

11 I also serve as an adviser to the county in
12 Springdale, Arizona.

13 The third hat I'm wearing today, that I'm
14 president of the Little Colorado River Resource
15 Conservation Development area.

16 I would first like to say how great it is to be
17 working with all of the people and specifically the Little
18 Colorado River RC&D, who have put in a large part and a
19 major player in establishing the first RC&D tribal lands.
20 There are two items that aren't in place at this time
21 concerning that RCD.

22 Number one is the signing of Secretary Glickman,
23 putting us into effect, and number two is funding. The
24 Navajo RC&D has only come about by good leadership and
25 perseverance by people such as Mike Somerville, Dave

1 Ransome, Bernie Vega the Little Colorado River.

2 So these and many, many others who -- I've only
3 got five minutes. I can't mention everyone who has played
4 a part in this. But I foresee the Navajo RC&D as being a
5 striking force on the Navajo Nation lands in terms of
6 economic development and resource conservation.

7 For the past seven years, I've been working very
8 closely with the soil and water conservation districts,
9 attended many meetings, and I have seen good plans and good
10 projects put in place. But they're not carried out, not
11 because of lack of leadership, not because of lack of
12 Action Teams, because there is some good people out there
13 but because of lack of funding.

14 Some of these have already been addressed here
15 this morning. The Action Teams are out there to use these
16 funds, use them in a manner that will benefit the Navajo
17 Nation and its people, the new Navajo RC&D has good solid
18 leadership in place and one associate who was appointed by
19 President Hale as a coordinator, hard work and dedication
20 of people like Robert Tequila And I am sure all of the
21 rest of the council members who were appointed to the farm
22 council.

23 The Little Colorado River RC&D my son Bill,
24 myself, and many others stand ready to help this new RC&D
25 to put in place the projects that will be good for

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1 America. The loss of Americorps has been a blow to the
2 Navajo Nation. It has been by one chapter, but it is a
3 terrific loss. I'm very disappointed that wasn't
4 refunded. I therefore petition this committee and also
5 Secretary Glickman to expedite funding for this important
6 office.

7 It's been one of my other duties as an adviser to
8 the Apache County NRCD. I would like to say that the 1997
9 Farm Bill is one of the best that I've seen. I've been
10 associated with the programs administered by the ACS, Great
11 Plains, and others, and I see a vast potential in the
12 partnerships that will be put into place under the new Farm
13 Bill.

14 However, the priority areas do not extend far
15 enough north. I believe that the Navajo Nation should be
16 put toward the top of the priority list and some of the
17 programs that will be created can go out and put in place
18 some meaningful developments in studies that sit on a shelf
19 and gather dust, but a grass roots people working and
20 putting them in place. Projects that will reach the scope
21 of this great nation. Projects such as I would like to
22 mention in closing, which is the Southern New Mexico
23 Livestock Marketing Association.

24 The study put in place a livestock marketing
25 association on the New Lands. To use a real estate term,

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1 the three most important things on real estate is location,
2 location, location. The Southern New Mexico Livestock
3 Marketing Association has all three of those in its
4 location on the new lands. Started four years ago by grass
5 roots people and is being put in place by grass roots
6 people with help from HAR, BIA, and others.

7 I met last Friday in Phoenix with the rural
8 development and we just barely got started.

9 I see my time is up. I wish I had another 15
10 minutes, but I don't. But the president of this
11 association will address a little more on this Navajo
12 livestock marketing when he comes to speak. But to use an
13 old cliché, the bottom line is "The people here are not
14 asking for a hand out, they're asking for a hand up."

15 Thank you very much.

16 MR. SOMERVILLE: Thank you, Keith. Our next
17 speaker will be David Neztosie. And he represents the
18 Farm Board from Tuba City.

19 MR. NEZTSOSIE: Hello. Thank you. Good
20 afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen, and also the Listening
21 Panel, and the Chair, Mr. Moderator, and our President.
22 Then also the different representative Division Directors
23 or Executive Directors. And then also all the other MRCS
24 programs or other USDA programs. Then also other tribal
25 departments, farmers, ranchers, land users.

1 I'm David Neztosie. And I represent the Farm
2 Board from my local Farm Board as well as all the Farm
3 Boards put together reservation-wide. And I also serve as
4 a member of the Farm Service Agency.

5 Today for sure is different. This will not allow
6 a farmer or rancher to be here. I'm from Tuba City, which
7 is about 200 miles away. And I had to make sure so I have
8 to make it out of here without flying or walking.

9 Time is also a big factor, although farmers and
10 ranchers go by the sun. I heard this session was starting
11 at 9:00, and then later I heard it was going to be at 1:00
12 p.m.

13 Then next they tell us it was going to be at 3:00
14 p.m. So this is basically, just thinking about the local
15 farmer, the local rancher that's out there, if you go by
16 the sun, you know, and there is a lot of time that we have
17 to provide for this, I know I'm going to be traveling back
18 at night. So this is something I just wanted to bring up.
19 Not to be disrespectful or anything, but I just wanted to
20 also bring out that maybe for once a farmer or rancher can
21 speak first.

22 However, we do have needs. We do need shovels, we
23 do need hoe, improved techniques, engineers, hydrologists,
24 economists, soil surveys. There needs to be survey. And
25 then also other water studies. We Navajo farmers need

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1 tractors, implements, seeds, irrigation development, and
2 agricultural education.

3 Help us to help our government preserve our way of
4 life in this world. I had taken notice what BIA has done
5 irrigation, among other things, and relinquished them to
6 the Navajo tribe without funds.

7 And we have a big project that a lot of people
8 know about, which is the Navajo Agricultural Product
9 Industry. And then also there is other irrigation project
10 that I have in mind, including Tuba City that a lot of
11 people know it, Shiprock Irrigation, and so forth.

12 We have been neglected. Credit is long overdue.
13 Farm bills. As far as the Farm Bills, we need direct
14 funding for individual projects as set by our local NCD,
15 which is the Soil and Water Conservation District. Please
16 support our new NRC or RCD that the Navajo tribe is
17 developing.

18 And then also the president did mention it before,
19 and also it always has been my belief that agriculture is
20 the common denominator to any business or businesses in
21 this country. And maybe like America did once before,
22 maybe we can make agriculture number one again today
23 somewhere in this world with your help.

24 I would like to go ahead and make a recommendation
25 for the Secretary of Agriculture, like Mr. President Hale

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1 stated, have him stay for two or three days. Maybe we can
2 give him a tour of some of the local farms. And this I
3 ask. And I thank you.

4 And I do have a written comment, which I did
5 submit and I do appreciate it. Thank you.

6 MR. SOMERVILLE: Our next speaker is Roberta
7 Jones with rural Coalition in Texas.

8 MS. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Reed, Mr. Hale,
9 and staff. My name is Roberta Jones. I'm from Washington,
10 D.C. I work for the Rural Coalition in Washington. And I
11 will be presenting testimony on behalf of the Coalition and
12 its members. My name is Roberta Jones. I coordinate
13 Outreach for the Rural Coalition based in Washington. The
14 Rural Coalition is an alliance of over 90 community
15 organizations in rural areas across the continent who are
16 engaged in a shared effort to promote participatory and
17 sustained world development that is initiated and guided by
18 the communities itself.

19 The Intertribal Ad Council is a member of the
20 Coalition, which also includes most major minority and
21 indigenous farm organizations, as well as farm worker
22 groups.

23 I'm a Navajo from Tuchi, New Mexico. It is my
24 interest to return home one day to my land in Tuchi to farm
25 and to be able to access needed services from USDA for

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1 myself and for my people. Today I speak on behalf of the
-2 Rural Coalition and its members which also supports my
3 efforts to return to the land.

4 Since I joined the Rural Coalition a year and a
5 half ago to coordinate our 1995 activities here on the
6 Navajo Nation, I'm gaining respect for why the Navajo
7 people have stopped farming. Our concern is that other
8 traditional methods of farming have been lost. Our elders
9 are not being respected for their wisdom. Our young people
10 are not encouraged to see agriculture as part of our
11 future.

12 Despite statements by our tribal leaders and
13 government officials of the Navajo Nation and the United
14 States, which I encourage local empowerment and returning
15 traditional methods, my work has shown me that there is
16 really no place for us to get the assistance and
17 encouragement we need to return to agriculture.

18 In fact, local US Government offices often convey
19 a very different message, that agricultural services are
20 not for the Indian people, that we are not interested in
21 farming our land, and that we do not have a land ownership
22 rights necessary to qualify for agricultural services from
23 USDA. This is the same message the other Indian minority
24 farm and farm worker members of our Rural Coalition are
25 frequently receiving across the nation.

1 I come before you today to share some specific
 2 concerns on civil rights issues with regard to minority
 3 farmers and other rural people, specifically the Navajo
 4 people. We have been told in the past that the Navajo
 5 Nation and USDA have a government-to-government agenda and
 6 an understood agreement.

7 When our colleagues who work with poor communities
 8 and farmers in other regions of the nation came here and
 9 visited our agricultural land, they noted that there were
 10 two primary forms of agriculture. One very large farm on a
 11 very small often subsistence farming and grazing operations
 12 where other medium-sized farms and collaboration among
 13 producers. Where they ask for new ideas for production and
 14 marketing come from and how do new plans get set in place.

15 The observations and concerns of my colleagues are
 16 questions I share. I see more evidence that the agreements
 17 between the two governments has not produced a way to reach
 18 our people. The two governments need to combine efforts to
 19 deliver badly needed services to all the people on the
 20 reservation.

21 The USDA must also learn and reach out and serve
 22 all the Indian people in this region in cooperation with
 23 each Indian Nation. We believe organizing efforts and
 24 community-based nongovernmental efforts are critical.

25 We of the Rural Coalition are ready and anxious to

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1 assist in building new relationships between the
2 governments and the people and sharing ideas that have
3 worked for other farmers and groups. It seems that the
4 best ideas come from people willing to work the land and to
5 learn to work together to make their communities better.

6 In September 1996, under the direction of the
7 Rural Coalition, in partnership and with support from USDA,
8 Rural Coalition member organizations from a dozen states
9 came together for a training in Washington, D.C., on county
10 committee election procedures.

11 We followed up with fieldwork to increase minority
12 nominations and participations in the elections. I had the
13 opportunity to work in two counties in New Mexico. Our
14 more comprehensive findings on this county community work
15 will be shared with the Listening Team in Washington,
16 D.C., later this month.

17 At the training in Washington, Farm Service Agency
18 experts provided us with a complete work book with all the
19 regulations governing the election. The regulations
20 clearly stated that all enrolled members of Indian tribes
21 who hold agricultural land or who have agricultural land
22 held in trust for them are eligible voters. I came to
23 share this information with my people and to encourage them
24 to vote.

25 To my surprise, the county office in McKinley

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1 County had a vastly different interpretation of this
2 regulation. Not surprisingly, the regulation is not
3 understood by the Navajo people, and this particular county
4 office refused to review the regulation with me, even after
5 they noted the training I received. It is my sense that
6 regulation was intentionally misinterpreted by the
7 nonminorities who operate the programs.

8 The Indian population needs to know that USDA
9 exists in their regions and the services that it should be
10 providing. After interviewing several people, most of you
11 know that USDA is here in and around the reservation.

12 I think my time is up. Let me just conclude
13 here.

14 We deeply appreciate your willingness to come and
15 listen to us. It is in the best interests of all of us
16 that we continue to build relationships and trust and
17 harmony where none existed before. There is little we
18 cannot accomplish once we direct our energies and
19 attentions toward their goals.

20 In conjunction with your Civil Rights Action Team,
21 we have collaborated in a very few days to organize these
22 sessions and to turn out participants in greater numbers
23 than most events in past years. People have taken the time
24 to come out because we have joined you in telling them that
25 this time the department really means what it's saying and

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1 will honor its word to listen with knowledge to all that is
2 wrong with the system and that that can be improved and
3 changed.

4 We have placed our credibility on the line to our
5 members by affirming our faith in this process. We also
6 know making change is very difficult and our challenges are
7 great. We will continue to cooperate in any way we can to
8 support the efforts of the Action Team. We hope that the
9 department will listen carefully and fully to the findings
10 of this team and place serious weight on the gravity of the
11 problems.

12 We further urge you to provide adequate time for
13 this team to complete its work and then find adequate
14 resources to implement the level of real changes necessary
15 to assure all rural people have real access to services and
16 are treated always with dignity and respect.

17 Thank you.

18 MR. SOMERVILLE: Thank you. In order to
19 help you, I'm going to use my prerogative here and give you
20 a little information regarding how many more people we have
21 to speak to us. We have 26 more speakers. And I've been a
22 little reluctant to get real hard and fast on the
23 five-minute rule. We're going to have to get strict with
24 the five-minute rule if you don't mind. And again we don't
25 want to offend anyone, but we don't want all of you here

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1 until -- well, 26 speakers at five minutes, now that's more
2 than a couple hours left.

3 So we want to make sure that you-all have a chance
4 to speak, but if you would honor the five-minute sign as
5 you see it come up, close your comments at that point, and
6 then file your written comments in with the Action Team, we
7 would sure appreciate that. And again we don't want to
8 offend anyone; we just want to make sure everybody has a
9 chance to be heard. I'm not sure where the tape recorders
10 are, but they're in the back.

11 To make sure you're comments are heard, if you
12 haven't completed your comments in five minutes you can
13 walk back, there is two gentlemen standing in the back and
14 you read your comments into the tape recorder if you don't
15 have them fully written out. So there are ways we can move
16 through this. Thank you.

17 Our next speaker is Dr. Tommy Lewis, President of
18 Navajo Community College.

19 DR. LEWIS: Good afternoon, Ladies and
20 Gentlemen. I would like to thank the Secretary for taking
21 time out to respond or some Listening Session. I also
22 would like to underscore the comments that were made by our
23 President, Mr. Hale, regarding land grants talked about
24 Navajo Community College and the institute of technology.
25 In 1994 these two institutions along with 27 our tribal

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1 colleges were included in with all of these land grant
2 institutions throughout the United States.

3 And Mr. Hale made it very clear from the very
4 beginning there was an injustice done to tribal colleges.
5 The funding to support our mission has been very limited.
6 The money that we get right now is just so small that we
7 cannot do anything with it. We barely got \$50,000 this
8 year under the equity land grant. And that's so little
9 that we can't even do much with it.

10 Navajo Community College is the oldest of all the
11 tribal colleges throughout the United States. It's mission
12 is very clearly to deliver education, using the language,
13 culture, history, and philosophy of our people. And the
14 land grant mission at NCC is to strengthen the family
15 communities strength and nation through the Navajo Indian
16 for community power and self-reliance. This is our heart
17 of integrated rural development, including community
18 economic development and natural resource conservation and
19 management.

20 This ballistic approach must be explicitly
21 reflected in the forthcoming agreement between USDA and the
22 1994 institutions. The USDA's rural development mission,
23 we understand that USDA is mandating Congress to lead and
24 format all rural activities.

25 Historically, USDA has built infrastructures

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1 including water and power, housing and community
2 facilities, production, credit, and natural resources
3 management into the required knowledge and skills which are
4 the foundation for rural America's prosperity. Everywhere
5 except on Indian lands.

6 Extending all of these infrastructures to the
7 community in lands in the United States and unfinished
8 business on into the 21st Century. This challenge requires
9 that USDA redirect and target its resources to address
10 overlooked and long unmet needs in Indian Country.

11 A new approach is needed with Secretary Glickman's
12 vision. USDA must reinvent, streamline, and accelerate its
13 delivery of programs and services to match. The uniqueness
14 of Indian cultures and jurisdictions commensurate with
15 Indian lands. We are self-contained sovereign
16 organizations.

17 USDA services can no longer be fragmented along
18 county and state lines. For example, the Navajo Nation
19 spans 12 counties and three states. There must be one
20 streamlined delivery system and administrative area for the
21 Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Rural Economic
22 Community Development Service, the Farm Service Agency and
23 other USDA programs.

24 USDA must champion an integrated streamlined
25 approach among other federal agencies who are often even

1 more fragmented.

2 The point that I want to stress is that in October
3 of 1996 President Bill Clinton signed an executive order
4 for the tribal colleges. The historically black colleges
5 and universities, Hispanic serving institutes have
6 benefited from such an executive order throughout the
7 years.

8 For the first time, us Indian people are given
9 this opportunity. That executive order requires all the
10 federal agencies, including USDA to really support tribal
11 colleges in trying to deliver quality education in the
12 areas of cooperative extension and research programs. I
13 really firmly believe we Indian people can do all of the
14 things that the University of Arizona, New Mexico State
15 University, and other land grant universities can offer.

16 We, the Navajo people, have a strong desire to
17 really come forward and fulfill the land grant mission. I
18 trust that you will deliver this message to the Secretary
19 and hope that you can do something to support our
20 institutions.

21 Thank you very much.

22 MR. SOMERVILLE: Thank you very much. To
23 facilitate some of you who are concerned about the road
24 conditions, if you would prefer not to speak orally as
25 we're doing now, and would like to go to the back of the

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1 convention center here and record your message on tape, and
2 then go ahead and go on home, we could facilitate that
3 also. Some of you are expressing that concern.

4 Jerry Thompson, if you would hold your hand up.
5 Anyone who would like to do that and get their comments
6 recorded, that would be very adequate and your comments
7 would still be incorporated into the Action Team if you
8 would prefer to do that.

9 Our next speaker is Charles Martinez, Board
10 President, Rural Coalition. Mr. Martinez -- is he here?

11 We'll move on to Robert Church, the Gap Chapter.

12 Robert isn't here. Amos Johnson with Navajo and
13 Natural Resource Department.

14 MR. JOHNSON: Ya-te-hey. This is to
15 everyone. I want to welcome everyone. My name is Amos
16 Johnson. I'm a water resource agent. Also president of
17 Gap Chapter.

18 It is an honor to speak to this administration
19 staff, the value of people, ranch land, water family
20 livestock, and all other natural and cultural resources
21 that Indian people hold these things close to their hearts
22 and are in need to access financial technical assistance.
23 We are to be treated as citizens of this country.

24 As a Navajo natural resource professional there is
25 a need, such as development of water, crop, and livestock



1 farms and to designate the San Juan Basin as a conservation
2 priority area to be able to receive the needed USDA dollars
3 and also the following issues that I bring to you. One is
4 the Farm Bureau Program. To have the number of agriculture
5 program sharing program is that due to conditions unique to
6 Indian reservations, access to these funds will not be on a
7 par with nonIndian communities.

8 For instance, trust lands cannot be used as
9 collateral. It is also more difficult for reservation
10 farms to be incorporated into multigearred contract
11 requirements.

12 Number two, the Department of Water Resource
13 Salinity Control made proposals to the USDA, but due to
14 funding those proposals were never funded. Now, the
15 program will be with a program and something for the Navajo
16 proposals is less likely.

17 PL-566, Water Share Restoration. The USDA has
18 established water in St. Michael's, Arizona. With this
19 department's assistance, this team has completed its water
20 program on Indian lands prioritize water shed for future
21 planning and begun implementation of several projects.
22 Support for this program is finished.

23 The soils priority. The Navajo Nation has elected
24 not to contract BIA soils into the program at this time
25 because several major soil inventories have begun or are

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1 near completion. The BIA, Navajo Nation need to coordinate
2 and increase our efforts to complete these inventories.
3 These inventories provide information that is critical to a
4 wide variety of activities. These are to USDA and to
5 President Hale.

6 The Watershed Act, the Watershed Restoration
7 Planning during 1997. If funds are available, the staff
8 will be implementing the plans by July 1998. This projects
9 includes funding and funding must be supported.

10 The Navajo Nation Watershed Restoration Act. We
11 have discussed the mechanism which will be most effective
12 in getting financial resources to the critically needed
13 Watershed Restoration Program. The Watershed Conservation
14 Planning Team has suggested a Congressional act similar to
15 the Watershed Act, which would create it.

16 The Watershed Act was passed by Congress several
17 years ago. This has tended to reduce discharge into
18 Elephant Butte and other reservoirs. However, no funding
19 was available. This program would provide resources which
20 would improve watershed restoration on Navajo communities.

21 The Navajo Nation SIDC and through a cooperative
22 agreement as agreed to provided the needed assistance to
23 restore and conserve and manage the available resources in
24 our watershed. It is in this agreement the Navajo Nation
25 has contributed dollars to match our dollars.



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1 So, as I stated, we are in need. Thank you very
2 much.

3 MR. SOMERVILLE: Thomas Begay, Little
4 Colorado River Soil and Water Conservation District.
5 Benny Cohoe, Division Director for Navajo EPA.

6 MR. COHOE: Thank you. Good afternoon.
7 Ya-ta-hey. My name is Benny Cohoe. I'm the Executive
8 Director for Navajo Nation Environmental Protection agency.

9 On the behalf of the Navajo Nation, I appreciate
10 the opportunity to participate in voicing of environmental
11 concern of the Navajo Nation.

12 As President Hale earlier stated, the Navajo
13 Nation supports and encourages the efforts of Secretary
14 Glickman in making the USDA more responsive to the needs of
15 all Americans, including the Native Americans. And at this
16 time, rather than taking up extra time, I just want to
17 concur with all the presentations that have been presented
18 from the Navajo Nation and also I would just like to
19 present a recommendation to USDA.

20 The recommendation is that our president of Navajo
21 Nation is focusing his efforts on strengthening the
22 involvement of Native American governments at all levels of
23 the federal government. Functions and issues and concerns
24 of the tribal governments are too numerous to list, but
25 the efforts that we're working on and considering is for

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1 USDA to consider establishing a task force to study and
2 feasibly in conjunction with Indian tribes to develop a
3 process and a mechanism by which as much of a whole dollar
4 that is allocated and appropriated by Congress reach the
5 Indian nation where it is intended to be spent.

6 Our program services and funding are
7 overregulated. There is too much duplication when we have
8 to abide by state statutes, we have to abide by county
9 ordinance, extension agencies have their own policies and
10 procedures. And when these processes are in place, the
11 dollars that are intended for projects on various rural
12 communities are so fragmented maybe only a percentage of
13 that dollar reaches a project that is needed to be
14 completed in Indian Country.

15 So maybe a serious consideration should be given
16 to a block grant process. And we also know under the US
17 Department of Interior there is legislation that was
18 enacted by Congress which many Indian tribes across the
19 nation are taking advantage of, which is the Public Law
20 93-6-38, Education Assistance Act.

21 This is, we think, a boilerplate that is available
22 that USDA should take into consideration and use that
23 format for Indians to receive the dollars directly in their
24 homeland And all these loan programs, I think that if it
25 has to be repaid, I think it should be kept in Indian

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1 Country and used as a revolving loan to further some of the
2 projected initiatives that they want to take.

3 And the list goes on and on, but I would like to
4 thank you for the short time that we're offered to present
5 our thoughts and our thinking and we appreciate all the
6 officials that came down from Washington and other tribal
7 members that are here, as well as representatives from our
8 nation.

9 Thank you.

10 MR. SOMERVILLE: Thank you. In your
11 packet there was a form that you could use to record your
12 comments. I just want to alert you to the bottom of that
13 form. There is an address where you can mail your
14 comments: US Department of Agriculture Civil Rights Action
15 Team, PO Box 2890, Washington, D.C. 20013.

16 That is in your packet. If you don't have that in
17 your packet or you can't find it, you can talk to someone
18 in the back at the registration desk.

19 The fax number there is 202-720-9030. Your
20 comments should be faxed directly into the Action Team.

21 Our next speaker is Pete Gilbert from the Pueblo
22 of Acoma, New Mexico.

23 MR. GILBERT: Good afternoon, Ladies and
24 Gentlemen. Just a minor observation, in future Listening
25 Conferences, when I signed in we were seven on the list.

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1 When it was typed up we were much further down. And we
2 would like to present our testimony and then be able to
3 leave.

4 My name is Petuuche Gilbert. I'm presenting the
5 Pueblo of Acoma's formal statement. And of course there
6 will be other extended written comments that will be
7 submitted to USDA.

8 The Pueblo of Acoma and reservation in New Mexico
9 has generated concerns over concept of agriculture at
10 Indian Country. We expressed these today.

11 Request for improvements in the delivery system.

12 One, we still do not know of available services and
13 responsibilities of the US Department of Agriculture
14 towards Indian reservation in Native American communities.

15 Periodically, we get correspondence and printed
16 literature from USDA field offices. And occasionally field
17 representatives come into our tribal offices. These are
18 all or never on a regular basis. We are never continuously
19 updated on available services and programs. The common
20 USDA response to this neglect is there is insufficient
21 money and staff to keep tribes informed and that there are
22 no offices to keep tribes on or near Indian reservations.
23 There is always no money to represent Indians on
24 reservations.

25 As an example, during the severe drought during

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1 1996, we were told that USDA was sympathetic, but there
2 were no funds for emergency assistance. Second, there is
3 lack of good coordination through state channels. The
4 state does not easily make USDA services available to the
5 tribes. We do not know exactly how to prepare services,
6 nor what they are. USDA offices are miles away from tribal
7 land.

8 Our recommendation has been neglected in trying to
9 get USDA to open field offices in Indian Country and to
10 make services available to tribes without having to go
11 through state channels. Indian tribes must be treated
12 equally to states in formation of USDA.

13 Thirdly, we were extremely upset that Congress did
14 not fund the three-percent set aside for USDA programs,
15 despite repeated concerns from tribes and Indians
16 representing tribal interests. The All Indian Pueblo
17 Council passed the rural development in the federal
18 Agricultural Reform Act of 1996.

19 Additionally, we pronounced to Congress by set
20 aside and we ourselves provide Representatived Joe Skeen in
21 1996, a \$50-million needs summary to address infrastructure
22 and needs requirements.

23 Fourth, President Clinton, on rebuilding the
24 coalition, pledged support for Indian needs on the
25 reservation. This has yet to be seen at Acoma. We held an

1 economic summit on Acoma Pueblo in 1995, which was attended
2 by tribes and the state delegation was present, over needs
3 for infrastructure.

4 Senator Pete Domenici acknowledged the process.
5 He sponsored legislation to obtain tribal funding. Still
6 the format remains in federal unfunded mandate for tribes.

7 Fifth, the Pueblo of Acoma has been aggressively
8 seeking funds through rural development. In 1996, the
9 Tribal Council passed funds requests for 14.4 million for
10 Acoma water and infrastructure. The tribe paid for funds
11 to support its proposal. This was not funded.

12 Six, after not being funded, the tribe submitted
13 to develop and improve sewer and water infrastructure. The
14 government of Acoma was informed with about \$1.5 million.
15 The tribe now has to determine how fast to use the other
16 money for its quality system.

17 Seven, the Pueblo of Acoma has severe sewer and
18 water quality problems. In 1996, we updated our list and
19 determined that Acoma needed money to determine these are
20 very conservative estimates. This list shows the need for
21 antisewage development for a waste water treatment plan,
22 for a Sky City sewer system, or water improvements or land
23 improvements. The list goes on.

24 Eight, lack of funding to address sewer and water
25 infrastructure. Tanks are now contaminating the small

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1 narrow San Ysidro Valley that affects homes, farms, and
2 businesses located in the area. These are only a few that
3 affect the USDA regarding agriculture and rural
4 development.

5 We think and insist that a lot more can be done
6 and that federal funds will be directed toward the extreme
7 needs to improve the quality of life in Indian
8 communities. And USDA can and should be an important part
9 of this development.

10 Finally, we think that one of these Listening
11 Session should really be held in Albuquerque. There are 21
12 tribes and most of these are located along the Rio Grande.
13 And I think it would really behoove USDA to listen to the
14 pueblos and other tribes that are located in that
15 particular area that couldn't make it to this session.

16 Thank you very much.

17 MR. SOMERVILLE: Thank you our next speaker
18 will be Robert Sakiestewa from the Hopi Tribe.

19 MR. SAKIESTEWA: Thank you very much.

20 President Hale. Met you a long time ago. Good to
21 see you again. Members of the Action Team. My name is
22 Robert Sakiestewa. I am a member of the Hopi Tribe of
23 Arizona. I am presently sitting in as the governor and
24 also as come chair of the US-Israeli Hopi Agricultural
25 Initiative.

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1 First, our village is very fortunate to have been
2 approved by the board and the Hopi Tribal Council to form a
3 Natural Resource District on a Hopi reservation. This is
4 the first one that has ever been initiated on Hopi. We are
5 in the process of signing the land away. We are located on
6 the western-most portion of the Hopi reservation. Our
7 district works with the various districts in Arizona and
8 the Department of Agriculture.

9 Our duly elected board of supervisors are here to
10 start our minority project, by our farmers or ranchers. We
11 are ready to start submitting grants for our projects.

12 Secondly, our village is fortunate to be a part of
13 a three-village member of Hopi villages to pursue the
14 US-Israeli Hopi Agricultural Mission through the use of
15 brackish appearing water. They want to control salinity.
16 We want to use that for agriculture. Our project will
17 consist of five scientists, of which two will come from
18 Israel, one from the University of Arizona, one from
19 California, and one from Montana. We are cooperating with
20 the Arid Lands Development Foundation of Hawaii.

21 At this date, we are formulating a feasibility
22 study, which will be completed in February 1997. The farm
23 will be initiated soon thereafter. And then progress to
24 larger farms. Our efforts have already visited the various
25 departments of the USDA in Washington. And we are happy to

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1 report that everyone that we met with was interested and
2 excited for this project.

3 We have been assigned Ms. Mary McNeil of your
4 office to work with in submitting our proposals to the
5 various departments. We have hired Mr. Daniel also. The
6 foundation helps to write and submit proposals. This
7 initiative was proposed back in 1992 by the then-tribal
8 chairman Mr. Vern Sisemen.

9 We have recently been approved by \$400,000 from
10 the United States Department of Agriculture. This funding,
11 however, was taken back due to the recessions by the US
12 Congress. A tentative amount just may be a form of
13 discrimination. And I would like to indicate that it is
14 such.

15 We were at the point of drawing down funding when
16 we already had our organization in place. If this had not
17 been the case, we would be in our third year of the
18 project. I will assure you on behalf of the three Hopi
19 villages that the villages and on behalf of the organized
20 development foundation that this type of development with
21 the use of brackish water has never been pursued within the
22 United States of America as some members of Congress were
23 led to believe.

24 We would then request that you, Mr. Dan Glickman,
25 Secretary of Agriculture, focus your efforts on this

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1 project for the results. We at the Hopi village are
2 confident that this project will not only provide us with
3 needed revenues, but will also give employment for our Hopi
4 people.

5 The third division, that since we are farmers from
6 the past, that this project will entice our Hopi youth to
7 use this technology to sustain them for the future as it
8 was told by our hope prophets.

9 Thank you, Mr. Dan Glickman, for providing me this
10 time, which is a very important session. Thank you.

11 MR. SOMERVILLE: Our next speaker will be
12 Melvin Bautista, Director of Navajo Division of Natural
13 Resource.

14 MR. BAUTISTA: Thank you. As stated, my
15 name is Melvin Bautista, and I am the Executive Director
16 for the Division of Natural Resources. But also I am the
17 appointee by President Hale to the Intertribal Agricultural
18 Council, representing the Navajo Nation as well. So we do
19 have a meeting coming up at the end of this month according
20 to the schedule. And one of the issues they'll be bringing
21 up will be the Civil Rights Action Team Listening Session.
22 So I will take this information with me.

23 To bring to your attention, first of all I would
24 like to thank the President and also the USDA team for
25 inviting us to speak here, as well as inviting the people

1 from the Navajo Nation to also attend and speak to the
2 issues.

3 Three issues I would like to just briefly bring up
4 is the 1996 Farm Bill entered environmental quality
5 program. Access and eligibility for these programs are a
6 major concern which we, the Navajo Nation, have. To date,
7 Navajo Nation has participated in the agricultural
8 conservation program utilizing cost-share funds to put in
9 various agriculture conservation projects. And it's the
10 mechanism by which the people have to be required to
11 qualify for these programs is the major concern.

12 The programs are five to ten-year agreements which
13 have to be monitored closely so that Navajos stay in
14 compliance and therefore completing and receiving full
15 benefits of the program. USDA personnel involved in
16 assisting Navajos in these programs have to be fully
17 competent in conveying the information in Navajo to the
18 people so that there are no misunderstandings of the
19 programs and their requirements.

20 Secondly, under the PL-544, Small Watershed
21 Restoration Programs, the program has been established in
22 Navajo. However, staffing seems to be inadequate for the
23 amount of lands that the Navajo Nation has. President Hale
24 expressed that there are over 17.5 million acres. That
25 essentially equates to about 27,000 square miles. Funds

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1 needed for this program need to be funded at its maximum so
2 that more than one watershed will be working on the nation.

3 Currently, we have one working at the site and
4 another one, too. This program would be instrumental in
5 assisting the Navajo Nation in accelerating the restoration
6 of its Navajo rangelands. So this would be one area that
-7 we would look to assist the Navajo Nation in that effort.

8 Lastly, the Farm Service Administration loans.
9 People that have participated in this program have been
10 very limited. One of the reasons is that the Navajos --
11 the Navajo that are not participating in this program is
12 because the office is located in Holbrook. There is an
13 office here in St. Michael's, but people are still being
14 referred to Holbrook to access the loans. Personnel in
15 this office have readily admitted that they have not been
16 trained in terms of providing this assistance.

17 The other problem that we have is also the
18 application process itself. The applications from my
19 understanding is at least two inches thick and requires
20 extensive documentation. A person applying for this
21 program needs to be a USDA-trained personnel to assist them
22 in completing the application. And not all Navajos -- most
23 Navajos -- that do apply, once they realize what they are
24 facing, they simply just do not want to apply.

25 So this is some of the issues that we have.

1 Additionally, what I would like to say is that we
 2 will be submitting written comments a little more
 3 extensive, as to what Navajo Nation has. Thank you.

4 MR. REED: Thank you.

5 MR. SOMERVILLE: Next speaker is Art Allison,
 6 Division Director for Navajo Economic Development.

7 MR. ALLISON: Thank you. My name is Art
 8 Allison. I'm the Executive Director with Economic
 9 Development with the Navajo Nation. And the current issues
 10 in the background, A, The commission on Economic
 11 Development is to create problems -- Division of Economic
 12 Development's mission is to create jobs and employment
 13 opportunities for a growing population through an
 14 integrated economy in cooperation with the private sector.

15 Does this mean business science and business
 16 science, lack of adequate infrastructure, such as water,
 17 power, and roads, et cetera. It is sometimes made when RCD
 18 state office allocations while numerous applications are on
 19 hand. Navajo Nation's projects compete with those from
 20 cities and towns within a state. These RCD state directors
 21 are requesting state aligned Navajo Nation strategic plans
 22 for inclusion within their respective state strategic
 23 plans.

24 And on recent MOU consolidated USDA as much as
 25 delivery and program administration through one state

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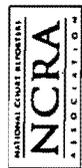


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1 office in Arizona, but current efforts are done through
2 various state offices.

3 And lastly, public and private business -- pardon
4 me -- projects that will bring the office of rural areas
5 are ineligible for funding since the projects are not,
6 quote, public in nature but serves only the business
7 ventures.

8 The recommendation to Secretary Dan Glickman, A,
9 consolidate USDA programs and services delivery through
10 Arizona State Office pursuant to an MOU.

11 B, establish Indian tribes set aside with adequate
12 project funding to RECD.

13 C, use Secretary's discretionary funds to fund
14 Navajo Nation priority projects.

15 D, establish annual propositions set aside to fund
16 infrastructure development plan, quote, to be formalized by
17 the Navajo Nation.

18 And, E, extend eligibility to assist public,
19 private, and rural areas to stimulate rural economic
20 development and job creation.

21 F, assist in making Navajo Nation eligible and
22 funding. We have and for your information definitely the
23 Navajo Nation fits into your rural economics development
24 sector.

25 Our present projects we have is that there is a

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1 definite need for infrastructure for at least \$14.3 million
2 that we need immediately to spur development for projects
3 in this coming year.

4 And thanks for coming. And thank you very much.

5 MR. REED: Mike, I have a question for
6 clarification. President Hale, are you asking for all of
7 the USDA support for the Navajo Nation to be out of the
8 state of Arizona? Is that what we're hearing? From the
9 USDA operation in Arizona?

10 PRESIDENT HALE: This is a similar problem
11 that the Navajo Nation faces because of the location of the
12 Navajo Nation. We are located, as I said, in my opening A,
13 statement in three different states. So if the allocation,
14 the funding are made to the state from the federal
15 government, we have to deal with three different states.

16 On top of that, we have to deal with two different
17 federal regions. I believe region eight and region nine.
18 So that complicates the matter in terms of administrative
19 requirements, meeting reporting requirements. That really
20 gives us a problem. And this is probably the only Indian
21 nation in the country that faces that type of situation.

22 So one way we've resolved this in the JTPA funded
23 program is to designate a primary entity, the primary state
24 that receives the money that will be going to the Navajo
25 Nation. And we only make one report to that state and that

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1 state then shares the information on the report with the
2 other two states. And we've done that and designated the
3 Arizona state as the primary state to do that. And we're
4 facing the same situation here with the USDA. And we
5 thought that might be a way to resolve the administrative
6 problems that we've run into.

7 Thank you.

8 MR. SOMERVILLE: Hoskie Bryant, Fort
9 Defiance Soil and Water Conservation District, Arizona.

10 Is he still here?

11 Here he comes.

12 MR. BRYANT: Thank you. Navajo Nation.

13 Certain areas are just now awakened to the truth of land
14 usage. There is a change where you can now get fully
15 funded in your area to improve your land, ranch, and
16 livestock management. But we ought to go further. We
17 ought to see some funds coming in for the waters. We have
18 windmills, but it's costly. And most of these don't
19 understand how to be ordering or submit it to other
20 countries, other nations, to get parts.

21 And we need a change here. We need some funding
22 for our livestock waters to improve them so people can
23 manage their livestock with their lands in the area.

24 The other part is also the housing. A lot of
25 people are moving to certain areas, the clustered area,

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1 because that's where the running water and all these
2 necessities are. But we've got to see some changes where
3 these people can have some good homes out in their farm
4 area. And I know there is some loans, low interest loans,
5 for these houses, but also we need some waters and we ought
6 to see some funding to our home coming with these projects
7 for family units and not farming and for the housing.

8 The other thing is for the Navajo Nation to really
9 support the land users and the grazing officials in coming
10 up with regulations.

11 Also now to see some changes in our attitude,
12 changes or adjustment from the culture by elected officials
13 and education officials. And the Soil and Water
14 Conservation District members of these people are working
15 with people in our local area. And we understand them, and
16 we communicate with them. And we would like to help our
17 government to see the needs of these people and to help the
18 land user.

19 Thank you.

20 MR. SOMERVILLE: You're doing well. I
21 forgot to let you know we're going to feed you if you make
22 it clear to the end. There will be a hot meal provided at
23 the end of this session right here in the building. So
24 hang with us. You're doing well.

25 Our next speaker is Jim Atcitty, Division Director

1 of Community Development for Navajo Nation.

2 MR. ATCITY: Thank you, Mr. Somerville, and
3 Mr. President, and other distinguished members of the head
4 table. And also I would like to recognize the
5 distinguished members of the listening panel, the Civil
6 Rights Action Team. We thank you and we appreciate you
7 being here today.

8 The working relationship and communication between
9 the Navajo Nations, government, and the Department of
10 Agriculture is very limited. And for this reason the
11 services and benefits through USDA programs are not fully
12 provided on the Navajo Nation due to trust land status.
13 The guidelines and procedures for these programs are not
14 effective and funds to the Navajo citizens are stalemated
15 in red tape and stringent requirements. This prevents many
16 citizens from applying for loans and grants.

17 The remoteness of many communities on the Navajo
18 Nation and lack of basic needs infrastructure such as
19 electricity, decent roads, communication system, water, and
20 sewer system, and health facilities only contribute to the
21 needs for those services. Hence, modern conveniences are
22 not readily available and are very difficult to obtain due
23 to lack of funds and nonexistence of USDA offices within
24 the proximity to provide adequate services.

25 Can Department of Agriculture establish a primary

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1 office on the Navajo Nation and fund directly to the Navajo
2 Nation in block grant forms to service the needs of Navajo
3 citizens?

4 The primary communication grant is absent of
5 Navajo speaking personnel in New Mexico in all Farm Service
6 Agency offices and other USDA offices. The language
7 barrier should not prohibit potential applicants to get
8 loans to advance socially and economically.

9 Can the USDA offices hire some Navajos to
10 alleviate this problem? Even some interpreters?

11 1996, April 4th, President Clinton signed HR-2854,
12 Farm Bill, into law. This bill funded various USDA
13 programs for the next seven years. It concentrated in four
14 areas: trade, research, credit, and rural development.

15 Under Rural Development, Title 7, Section 761, it
16 states that "The Secretary of Agriculture shall establish
17 rural community advancement programs and provide grants,
18 loans, loan guarantees, and other assistance to meet the
19 rural development needs of the in states and federal Indian
20 tribes."

21 This legislation also calls to the Secretary, for
22 the directors of the RECD, state offices, to prepare a
23 strategic plan for Indian tribes and for delivery of
24 assistance to the subtitle Indian tribes.

25 Question. Has this -- what type of plan has been

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1 made with the Navajo Nation? If not, when, where, and how
2 will this be implemented?

3 Under the same section, it states that "the
4 Treasury of the United States will also establish a trust
5 fund, the rural development trust funds, which would
6 include some accounts, including an account for federally
7 recognized Indian tribes. A three-percent reserve shall be
8 established for the federally recognized Indian tribes to
9 carry out rural development programs."

10 Also when will this also be corrected and
11 established?

12 And the USDA has funds for infrastructure
13 development. In the past, the USDA has provided much
14 needed funds to match the funds under the IHS Public Law
15 86-121 Program. However, the regulation governing the
16 funds are not consistent. IHS is a primary agency
17 providing water, waste water, to the Navajo Nation. And
18 regulations are consistent with the Navajo Nation laws. It
19 would be appropriate for the USDA to allow IHS to use the
20 regulations when doing joint funding on water and waste
21 water projects.

22 Thank you very much.

23 MR. REED: Thank you.

24 MR. SOMERVILLE: Ben Chapo, Southern Navajo
25 Livestock Marketing. Is Ben still here?



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1 MR. CHAPO: Good evening. My name is Ben
2 Chapo, Southern Navajo Livestock Marketing.

3 We have formed under the local grass roots
4 organization and call through the Navajo Nation. And
5 mostly we're working for opportunity in livestock
6 marketing. So nationally whoever supplies the cattle,
7 coupled with higher price of grain, livestock prices,
8 continued downward again several years ago, especially on
9 the Navajo Nation where annual rainfall is low. The price
10 of feed is high, increasing the costs of raising livestock.

11 The local problem copes with a national future,
12 makes it unprofitable for producers to market their
13 livestock.

14 If these problems are not addressed, the livestock
15 producers will not improve. Their economic condition will
16 still be a problem. The health care of the livestock will
17 decline and the producers will not get the necessary
18 information to improve their livestock.

19 The Southern Navajo Marketing Association that I
20 said is a grass roots, local organization formed to address
21 these problems. The situation has a perfect opportunity to
22 create solutions to the problem with its support with funds
23 available, technicians available, and other assistance to
24 other programs.

25 These are one of the big problems that mention

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1 through our presence here. So a lot of these need to be
2 addressed through the USDA from this Navajo Nation. We
3 like to hear it addressed and concern these problems of our
4 nation.

5 Thank you.

6 MR. REED: Thank you.

7 MR. SOMERVILLE: John Blueeyes, Navajo
8 Nation Department of Agriculture.

9 MR. BLUEEYES: My name is John Blueeyes.
10 I'm an employee of the Navajo Nation Department of
11 Agriculture. Appreciate the opportunity to present my
12 comments. I have had many opportunities as a member of the
13 Navajo Nation to interact with the USDA personnel and being
14 involved in conservation projects with farmers and
15 ranchers. My comments will mostly pertain to the
16 assistance program delivery with respect to conservation.

17 Before I proceed with my comments, I would like
18 for the benefit of USDA to provide a brief overview of the
19 tribal governmental structure and how that contrasts with
20 Navajo communities, Navajo communities that USDA serves.
21 Hopefully, this will provide insight that will enhance our
22 working relations.

23 The Navajo tribal community will govern
24 relationship. The government has sovereign powers. As
25 such, it is structured to have essentially and locally

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1 located offices throughout the reservation. The United
2 Nations has its Department of Agriculture. In turn, it is
3 a part of the Division of Natural Resources and is capable
4 of delivering services similar to that provided by the
5 USDA.

6 The Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture has
7 offices that attend to inner field offices manned by
8 district conservationists.

9 The Navajo Nation has long established entities
10 who are hopefully elected officials called district
11 committees and farm boards. They are heavily involved in
12 local government affairs on the reservator. The
13 reservation has a 110 local units of government called
14 chapters. Each has a committee member or member of a farm
15 board.

16 Revised and/or new USDA programs have changed the
17 matter on how we access programs from the past. Some
18 changes have made it difficult to access these programs,
19 yet some are flexible enough that there were opportunities
20 for contracting administration and/or programs.

21 The organization's role and responsibilities in
22 relation to those of the published regulatory provisions of
23 the federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996
24 served as a creative approach to future recognizes. The
25 USDA conservation program asked us for input from local

1 work groups, maximizing the environmental products for
 2 money intended shared-cost among many contributors. The
 3 efficiency of moderations, contracting, and so forth.

4 The Navajo Nation has its lead in setting policy,
 5 direction management administration of its natural
 6 resources.

7 The Navajo Nation believes it is capable of
 8 leading subsequent to the 1996 Farm Bill. Some programs
 9 focused on individual farmers and ranchers. Our
 10 relationship is a unique government-to-government
 11 relationship. It consists of local partners with other
 12 agencies.

13 American government should be allowed to enter
 14 into cooperative agreements with one credit corporation and
 15 USDA programs on Indian lands.

16 This committee and board members should be
 17 designated as local representatives. They and Navajo
 18 Department of Agriculture will cooperatively gather input
 19 to satisfy these regulations.

20 Our President of the Navajo Nation, Albert Hale,
 21 is a proponent of local empowerment, and the program
 22 enhances this.

23 Traditionally, Indian tribes have not been strong
 24 politically. Consequently, they may not rank very high
 25 when priority areas are established to do conservation

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1 work. This means steep or no conservation projects. We
2 have to rely on the commodities for corporation and state
3 conservationists to gain access to these programs. We've
4 always contributed to conservation projects. Conservation
5 is a line item on our budget.

6 We ask the NRC to limit because the Farm Bill asks
7 us for evaluation assessment of soils, air, land, water,
8 natural, and environmental resources. We need the
9 expertise, the technical resources to fulfill tribal and
10 nationally recognized natural resource laws. We ask that
11 the following discussion take place with the commodities
12 credit corporation and others to reach the matter on how to
13 carry out these decisions. As we move forward, we can
14 refine this relationship from time to time.

15 Thank you.

16 MR. SOMERVILLE: Roselyn Curtis, the
17 Division Director for Navajo Division of Health.

18 MS. CURTIS: Good evening. And thank you
19 for this opportunity. I think the Navajo Division of
20 Health is assuring almost daily to assure that there is a
21 constant improvement to the health of the people.

22 And we have two USDA programs. And they are
23 Women, Infant, and Children and the Food Distribution
24 Program. We find that there is a great need actually to
25 conduct a study for the relationship between the

1 consumption of commodities and the prevalence of various
2 chronic disease on the Navajo reservation as well as other
3 Indian nations.

4 It seems that diabetes, heart disease, and obesity
5 are prevalent and are dire conditions and the health of our
6 people and also other Indian reservations. And these are a
7 big concern to us. And of all the these disease, chronic
8 diseases that affect Indian people -- heart disease,
9 cancer, and diabetes are among the five leading causes of
10 death for the Navajo people.

11 And based on these 1994 statistics, the rate of
12 mortality from coronary heart diseases is like 39.8 per
13 100,000. And this is continuing to increase daily and is a
14 very big concern to the health services on the reservation.

15 We also find that obesity is a serious problem
16 among the Navajo adults. And according to a Navajo Health
17 And nutrition survey, 64 percent of males and 68 percent of
18 female adults over age 40 to 49 are overweight.

19 The Navajo Food Distribution Program actually
20 serves around 18,710 clients per month. In 1996, the
21 program served 7,029 families. And this represented an
22 increase of 591 families from 1995.

23 Due to the higher prevalence of chronic and dire
24 related disease, the Navajo Nation is concerned of the
25 types and nutritional content of the commodity food program

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1 that is distributed to the Indian people. Some of these
2 conditions are related to high sodium, saturated fat, and
3 high glucose content of the commodity foods.

4 Currently, there has been no research conducted on
5 the relationship between the consumption of commodity food
6 and the prevalence of chronic disease. And our
7 recommendation is that the USDA set aside research dollars
8 to conduct exploratory studies on the relationship between
9 the consumption of commodity foods and prevalence of
10 various chronic disease such as diabetes, hypertension,
11 heart disease, obesity among the American Indians.

12 The WIC program and other concerns by the WIC
13 program and also other concerns by the Commodity Food
14 Program, we will submit as our written testimony.

15 Thank you.

16 MR. REED: Thank you.

17 MR. SOMERVILLE: Lawrence Martinez, Indian
18 Agricultural Council.

19 MR. MARTINEZ: Thank you very much. My name
20 is Lawrence Martinez. I'm from Haystack, New Mexico. And
21 I'm with the IACE, representative of Albuquerque area.
22 Also an alternate for the McKinley County Service Agency.
23 And also president of the local livestock group, the
24 Co-op. And also a member of Arts and Crafts Co-op located
25 in Crownpoint, New Mexico, and a livestock producer.

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1 What I would like to bring up is I would like to
2 see more loans to Indian operators. It seems that we have
3 applications that are real complicated, especially when you
4 live on the reservation, and it refers more to
5 off-reservations operations. We would like to, if
6 possible, have new applications designed for Indian
7 Country, and especially with the priority areas that are
8 coming out of the new bill.

9 I feel that it's an opportunity to provide our
10 Indian producers and operators to go into the field that
11 they've gone to school for. And they want to practice.
12 Understanding the application and our limited areas on the
13 reservation, I would like to see our lines move forward.
14 They are limited to overgrazing. And people telling us
15 that we're always overgrazing. I feel that because we're
16 limited to land use we like to, like I said, extend our
17 reservation lines.

18 Also, I would like to see more Indian
19 participation in our local working groups, decision-making
20 for the reservation for Indian operators. I feel that out
21 of the organizations and the groups that are deciding where
22 the funds should go, we need more Indian participation.

23 In the partnership with the new Farm Bill, I feel
24 that in order to get the understanding across, we do need
25 to extend our reservation lines and also have our local



1 representation into the local group and on to the other
2 groups.

3 And then the USDA also needs more representation
4 on the reservation. We do need representatives like in our
5 area. And we need some agency over in the Crownpoint
6 area. Our representatives -- and we're supposed to go to
7 Window Rock, which is like 120 miles. And then it's
8 located in Arizona. And so we're told, "You're from
9 Gallup?" And then in Gallup, we're told to go back to
10 Window Rock. "You're in Albuquerque."

11 So, for that reason, I would like to see more
12 employment on the reservation with the USDA trying to get
13 your programs across.

14 That's all I have to say. Thank you very much.

15 MR. SOMERVILLE: Thank you. Douglas Dishwood
16 Shiprock SWCD.

17 MR. DISHWOOD: Hello. My name is Douglas
18 Dishwood. I'm the Shiprock representative from 12 grazing
19 committees. Our district covers -- is in the northwest
20 corner of the reservation and covers three states: New
21 Mexico, Arizona, and Utah. And this is where the
22 streamlining of the USDA programs would come in handy
23 because we had to deal with three different counties and
24 three different state requirements.

25 And also we have irrigated lands along the San

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1 Juan River and also dry land farming out along the base of
2 the mountains. Plus the range, we are under Arizona. It
3 covers us under their program. So, if we want anything,
4 they either go to St. Michael's or down to local so that
5 the distances are concerned there.

6 Our District would like staffing to include an
7 office up in the Shiprock district. And also under the
8 FSA, the requirements for the reservation would help
9 because we do have that three-state area. And also the
10 training through these for the FSA ward to be secondly for
11 Indian lands not training, but mostly concerns off
12 reservation.

13 And on the geographic priority areas, we would
14 like the state to include an affirmation on the priority
15 list. That's all.

16 And I would like to thank the members for bringing
17 the snow from Washington to our area from Back East. Maybe
18 if you have a hearing during the summer, maybe you can
19 bring some rain. We would appreciate it.

20 MR. SOMERVILLE: RD Joe.

21 MR. JOE: Thank you, distinguished guests and
22 visitors and Mr. President. I'm going to be brief. I just
23 want to bring out some comments and some questions.

24 Number one comment is a working relationship and
25 communication between the Navajo Nation government and

1 Department of Agriculture is very weak. And because of
2 this reason, the services delivered to the Navajo Nation
3 citizen is very poor.

4 The benefits and programs are not fully applied on
5 the Navajo Nation due to trust statutes. These programs
6 involve a lot of red tape, multiple, stringent
7 requirements. This prevents us citizens from applying for
8 loans and grants.

9 And second is a question. Since the tristate
10 situation, why can't the USDA funnel all their money to
11 Navajo Nation directly in a block grant instead of going
12 through state government? That way we can set up our own
13 organization and handle our own loans at whatever
14 requirements you impose on the Navajo Nation citizens. We
15 can be trained and handle our own affairs.

16 That's one way we can resolve the tristate
17 situation. If that's a possibility, we ask the Department
18 to set up a headquarters on the Navajo Nation.

19 And a third thing that is a handicap, a lot of our
20 people are illiterate and do not understand the application
21 process. So that prevents a lot of our Navajo citizens
22 from applying for these loans.

23 And the fourth comment is last year I went to the
24 office in Phoenix, Arizona, and handled several
25 applicants. And several are of a substantial amount. And

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1 there were 25 that applied again and unusual circumstances
2 developed, based on the loan activity was none.

3 One of the important conferences was reassigned.
4 A coordination of these loans took eight months and a lot
5 of these clients had confrontational stress over these
6 loans. Some were denied. And I would like for the Civil
7 Rights Team to look into this matter. And I would like to
8 make some recommendation.

9 Number one is to establish the headquarters for
10 USDA specific to Farm Service Agency to service Navajo
11 clients in the Navajo Nation.

12 Two, to streamline USDA requirements to adapt to
13 the needs and demands of the Navajo people.

14 Three, to establish federal programs or develop a
15 block grant to the Navajo Nation and have the Navajo Nation
16 administer its own program to assist its own people.

17 And, lastly, I would like to give you a belief and
18 a tradition and a practice that's been here in the Navajo
19 Nation. Why is farming important at this time? Okay. The
20 Navajo Nation took place across the nation has released the
21 teaching of their children the importance of farming and
22 self-sufficiency and the future continuation of passing the
23 tradition to a younger generation.

24 Presently, we have many farms that are not being
25 improved at all. One of the basic reasons is the purchase

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1 practices. This is the day. We have begun the custom at
2 stores that make products available. This is one of the
3 reasons that the family has not used historically on the
4 Navajo reservation. The family used the farm to land for a
5 holiday basis. And at this family the farm and the human
6 relationship was going and it will continue.

7 And we ran across an elder this past summer. And
8 what he said was the children -- that we have gotten away
9 from the agricultural economy. They don't listen to us no
10 more. Why? Are we shunning away from our responsibility?
11 Have we gotten away from teaching the young children how to
12 farm and take care of themselves and be responsible? Where
13 did that self-sufficiency go? That was one of the concerns
14 that was voiced by an elder in one of these meetings.

15 So the point is if we can get USDA to rechannel
16 and reorganize with our needs and demands, maybe we can get
17 to a self-determination mode and handle the whole affairs
18 and that would alleviate a lot of other problems.

19 Thank you.

20 MR. SOMERVILLE: Rob Honanif the Hopi Tribe?
21 Wallace Tsosie, fort Defiance Soil Water
22 Conservation District.

23 MR. TSOSIE: Thank you-all. I would just
24 like to say that it's an honor to be here. Distinguished
25 guests, the Civil Rights Team, and Navajo tribal officials,

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1 it's good to see you again.

2 December 9, we had the opportunity to meet with
3 the Secretary of Agriculture in Washington, D.C. And
4 accompanying myself was our President, Mr. Albert Hale, Mr.
5 Reed, and Mr. Mike Somerville. The purpose of that trip
6 was to submit an application called the Navajo RCD. And we
7 still support that application and mainly because the
-8 Navajo RC&D or any RCD program is a very local oriented
9 organization.

10 And Mr. Hale is the champion of the local and farm
11 concept. And he believes very deeply in the local people.
12 The decision to plan, and everything that goes along with
13 it should be decided at the local level.

14 For that reason, we wanted to try out the Navajo
15 RCD concept. And we would like to encourage and even
16 recommend that the Secretary take action on that
17 application as soon as possible because we already have
18 established a council and we already established an
19 office.

20 So we can start this program. And that is one
21 area I would like to mention, and that is since we are
22 still under the Little Colorado River RCD, we have made --
23 the Navajos have really benefited from the Little Colorado
24 RC&D.

25 Some of the projects that was mentioned here in

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1 this forum of course is the land, the livestock,
2 particularly the Navajo sheep. We are very interested in
3 the livestock with the Navajos and there was a project that
4 was given toward that and we were very happy to be part of
5 it. And we would like to continue those type of projects
6 with the Navajos.

7 There are many other projects that we want to
8 mention, but because of time I would just want to submit
9 that as part of the -- as information for this forum.

10 The other thing I would like to mention is that
11 the Navajo Soil and Water Conservation District, as the
12 forerunners among Indian tribes is the first to organize
13 under the tribal laws, and it is existing and it has been
14 very effective in lot of ways, particularly to the Navajo
15 Nation. So they're very instrumental in the bringing the
16 watershed to the Navajo Nation.

17 Now, our RC&D application, they are to sponsor
18 that. Navajo Soil and Water Conservation District
19 sponsored the Navajo RC&D applicant application. So we
20 have made a great stride, I believe. And we would like to
21 continue because the only thing we need is we need to have
22 some technical assistance.

23 And the last one I want to say that regarding the
24 Farm Bill, particularly the Equip program, you know, I was
25 assigned as one of the state technical committee and I want

1 to say that all it is it is held down in Phoenix, which
2 is something like a six or seven-hour drive from here.

3 The second thing I noticed was that this program
4 is geared toward the farmers in the southern parts of the
5 state. And I guess what I'm saying is that we need -- if
6 we want Equip to be very effective and benefit the Indian
7 tribes, it should be very flexible and geared towards the
8 needs of the Indian tribes. And basically that's what I
9 wanted to see.

10 I know Ralph is holding up the sign. So thank you
11 very much.

12 MR. SOMERVILLE: We have two speakers left to
13 hear from, Elvira Strong, from Navajo Food Distribution
14 Center. And following her.

15 MS. STRONG: An incident happened just a
16 moment ago. This man comes in and says, "Are you nervous
17 lady?"

18 And I said, "No, I'm not."

19 He said, "Well, you're in the men's rest room."

20 So I got out of there.

21 We're requesting for your support, Randy, Floyd,
22 Joyce, and Karen. Navajo Nation Food Distribution program.
23 My name is Elvira Strong. I'm the program director.

24 During our lifetime, most of us -- I mean all of
25 us in this auditorium are familiar with commodities. Our

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1 client participation has increased.

2 This year from January to December of 1995, we
3 provide a customer service to two and 2,589 clients. Our
4 clients participation at that time averaged 16,882 clients
5 per month. From January to December 1996, we provided
6 customer service to 224,514 clients. Our client
7 participation averaged 18,710 clients per month. In 1996,
8 our clients increased 1,828 clients more than in 1995. An
9 average increase of 152 clients per month. Or let's say 13
10 clients a day two hours a day. We received 7,389,902
11 pounds of USDA commodity food in 1996.

12 Our clients want to change the old way of
13 providing USDA commodities. Food is changing. We need to
14 join the bandwagon of technology. We need to purchase
15 equipment, more walk-in coolers, computers, heating system
16 and freezers. We need to compensate staff fair and
17 equitable pay because of their job change. The old way
18 doesn't work well for us any more.

19 Many of us know about the Navajo Nation Food
20 Distribution Program. We want to get a house bill passed
21 to add native food items to the USDA commodity food
22 availability listing. For example, our blue corn meal is
23 an essential food item to the Navajo people. We use this
24 to make muffins, to make bread, to make mush. This is a
25 very popular food item and essential to us.

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1 Another food item we would like USDA to support
2 us in is the Indian bread mix. Of the 18,000 clients, 27
3 percent, 5,062 are over the age of 60. The Indian bread is
4 very similar to sopapillas. Our grandmother can actually
5 make bread. All she needs to do is add water, kneed the
6 dough, and cook. What a convenience.

7 We also want some improvement. Sometimes we
8 receive USDA food commodity food late, behind schedule.
9 Last year we encountered a problem. For example, the bread
10 flour was ordered in January. The expected date was in
11 June. We did not receive the cookbook bread flour until
12 August. Our clients went without bread flour for several
13 months.

14 Sometimes we get food substitutes that we don't
15 want. We also have a limited choice of ordering food on
16 the USDA commodity food availability listing.

17 Next, we haven't had butter, we haven't had corn
18 syrup or honey for the past year. But if you shop at
19 Safeway or at Basha's you see these food items and you have
20 choices, the generic brand and store brand. But yet our
21 clients do not get these products.

22 The current food items also come in big bulk
23 size. And they need to be modified to smaller sizes. A
24 decade ago, families were larger. Now they're smaller. We
25 also would like the Navajo Nation to participate in that

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1 frozen meat project.

2 Most of us are ignorant of the economic
3 opportunities with USDA. For example, another item, this
4 is a bag that had pinto beans. From NAPI, the Navajo
5 product industry, an entity of the Navajo Nation can be one
6 of USDA's food vendors for potatoes and corn.

7 We would like to make a change to occupied
8 buildings 12, 13, and 5 at Fort Wingate, New Mexico.
9 Navajo Nation Food Distribution occupies 12 and 13 to store
10 USDA commodities. We have a problem occupying building 5.

11 The Fort Wingate arm depot requests that gas and
12 electric meters be placed before we occupy the building.

13 USDA calls it an interservice agreement, which has
14 been drafted. This interservice agreement will give Navajo
15 Nation a strong hold of the premises. This is very
16 important for Navajo Food Distribution to get the heater
17 and to get the interservice agreement finalized.

18 We also have another -- we want Navajo Nation to
19 transport USDA commodity food from the Exeter, California,
20 warehouse and the Kansas City, warehouse. This would be an
21 opportunity for the Navajo nation.

22 The main thing is we need to change. We must help
23 our people to learn how to eat a well balanced nutritional
24 meal. Using the food pyramid guide, educate clients about
25 the fat content in the canned meat and sugar content in the

1 canned sugar.

2 For example, some clients who are diabetic --
3 Okay. Well, I just want to let you know that the fat
4 content, if you drink fat from the pork meet, you get three
5 courses of fat meat. All of you sitting here listening to
6 me, you can help is make this change.

7 MR. SOMERVILLE: Justin? Justin Vigil.

8 MR. VIGIL: Good afternoon -- or good
9 evening -- Members of Navajo Nation, President Hale,
10 Directors from the various departments, and interpreters,
11 and others that are participating here this evening.

12 It's an honor to be here. And it's well worth the
13 wait to make my mad dash from Lupe, which is on the
14 southwest part of the Navajo reservation about 150 miles
15 away.

16 My comments and concerns for this evening's
17 presentation is in two parts. One part basically, as a
18 representative of the Little Colorado River Soil and Water
19 Conservation District in my area is the need for more
20 technical services within the programs that we're trying to
21 provide for our land users within our district.

22 We serve three areas as far as providing
23 cost-share practices along with the state programs and
24 agents that we're involved with under the USDA and also the
25 National Resource Conservation Service. That is to allow

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1 more passage and allow more allowance as far as federal
2 funding to support technical services that is badly needed
3 in our areas as far as what we call the reserve.

4 We want to be able to instill thoughts and also
5 positiveness in terms of addressing environmental
6 degradations that we're faced with as far as what we have
7 in terms of vegetation, but also to instill ideas of how we
8 need to preserve some of the native plants and a native
9 species as far as wildlife that would that is one thing
10 that we would like to have understood, but also to have
11 more understanding in terms of contract space to have
12 dietary programs that would address the health problems
13 that we're seeing here within our reservation. That is to
14 create entities as where I work at the little Colorado
15 Community school to allow native foods to be brought back
16 into our dietary programs that are set by the state and
17 also the nutritional programs under the Department of
18 Agriculture.

19 Over the weekend, I went through some of the
20 formats that is required by the state nutrition programs as
21 to recent piece but a lot of the contract food that we get
22 into our school system is shipped out from various
23 destinations on the outskirts of the reservation. That
24 instills a lot of nutritional problems in terms of
25 ingredients that preserve the produce that are in the

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1 products that we give back to the students.

2 Also I want to be able to address a need for
3 educational awareness on our reservation to be able to
4 bring back some of the issues as to what she was talking
5 about earlier is bringing back some of the native
6 elements. That makes us who we are by practicing land has
7 its economic assistant is using native foods to be able to
8 sustain our communities. And also address some of the
9 degradation again into land values causing people again to
10 under the need for land restoration and land rejuvenation,
11 but also to achieve the balance that we have offsets in the
12 last few years, what we call transition.

13 But again a brief time, I thank you to be here and
14 be able to address the issues that we have talked about
15 thus far. And I concur with all the people that had talked
16 about issues that we need to address but also be able to
17 release initiatives we'll be able to achieve some of the
18 goals that we have and striving for. That is to have
19 self-determination, to be able to have local empowerment
20 with our communities as to the programs that sustain us,
21 which is through livestock, which is through farming and
22 also the traditional values of who we are no our culture
23 and our survival into the next century as we take this
24 giant leap.

25 And again thank you very much for being part of



1 your listening section and all the members that have
2 sponsored this. Thank you.

3 MR. SOMERVILLE: Thank you. Thank you. I
4 was brought five additional names. You're doing so
5 wonderfully, we're going to give these five people an
6 opportunity to speak. I'm just going to read those names.
7 And if they would come up one after the other, if you can
8 remember the order.

9 Robert Akia. Charles Boy, who is the head of Head
10 Start. Fernando Nawtaw, Division of Economic Development.
11 Stan Milford. And Samuel Valdez. In that order. And that
12 will do it. And then we'll have closing comments.

13 MR AKIA: Thank you very much for giving me
14 the opportunity. And then welcoming all the panel.

15 And I have a position statement. It is our intent
16 to establish an understanding on the representation of the
17 Indians that we have received on the local working group.
18 These local working groups are necessary for an independent
19 organization for the 1996 Farm Bill and making sure there
20 is equal representation.

21 Presently, the Farm Service Agency serves the
22 Navajo Nation from three states and 12 counties. Each of
23 other soil conservation districts has more than one county
24 office to deal with. Some of our agencies also have to
25 deal with two states on top of one more office. We



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1 understand that the working groups will be established at
2 each office.

3 We also understand that there must be a
4 representation of the local conservation district, the
5 local district conservationist from natural resources
6 conservation service, and the local Farm Service Agency.

7 However, because of this Navajo Nation, we will
8 have a local representative from the Navajo Nation. We
9 also know that representatives from the community at large
10 will be on the local working groups. Our concern is FSA
11 will occupy more than one seat on the perspective local
12 working groups.

13 For example, it is very conceivable that the
14 Shiprock RCD may have FSA representation from three states
15 and three counties. Will FSA occupy the receipts on the
16 local working group? Which FSA county office policy will
17 be adhered to?

18 We would like to see one representative from FSA
19 at each of the local working groups. We suggest that it is
20 time for FSA to establish the Navajo Nation as the
21 administrative area. The president has made -- the Crow
22 Nation in Montana has conceded FSA to sustain the Crow
23 Nation in respect to the Crow Nation. The same should be
24 afforded to the Navajo Nation.

25 We would like to use the agreement made between

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1 FSA and the crow nation as a model. And we have a
2 resolution that was passed at the recent meeting of the
3 Navajo Nation Conservation District. Please contact us if
4 there is any questions that need to be asked.

5 And then I was designated as a research
6 conservation development president for the Navajo Nation.

7 And we have some projects that we work on and are
8 completed one is four corners rural technology development
9 partnership a \$300,000 rural development to study for the
10 Navajo sheep industry. And the four corners partnership
11 organized another \$350,000 grant. Wool and wool hair
12 marketing, an \$18,000 grant awarded Shiprock from the US
13 Forest Service to investigate ways to market wool and wool
14 hair products.

15 The Little Colorado. And we have two others.
16 RCD wrote the chapter a \$30,000 request to the US Forest
17 Service to build a demonstration timber bridge at Steamboat
18 Chapter. The problem we had there was the matching funds
19 could not be obtained.

20 Another and alternative housing, a project to
21 assist members to build an adobe house. RCD provided
22 technical assistance to explore alternative low cost
23 housing solutions. And then the Southern Navajo Livestock
24 Marketing Association provided organizations and businesses
25 assistance for over \$26,000 grant from the Navajo Nation to

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1 improve a sales talk. This assisted business to further
2 the guide.

3 A community plan that addresses the community's
4 need to social economic and environmental development.
5 Plan involves participation of all community members.

6 Other chapters have made requests. And we all
7 know that we have a Americorps program that was initiated
-8 for our Navajo young people, which was very beneficial for
9 our Navajo college bound students. And we would like to
10 have that program continued.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. SOMERVILLE: I mispronounced Charles.
13 It's Charles Pihe will speak to us next. He may have had
14 to leave.

15 Fernando Nawtaw?

16 MR. NAWTAW: Good evening. Thank you for the
17 opportunity, Mr. President, and your staff and with special
18 guests Listening Session.

19 First of all, my name is Fernando Nawtaw, and I am
20 employed with the Economic Division of the Nation. I'm
21 getting sort of confused with you guys because at one point
22 I was employed by USDA Mr. Stevens's agency. And also
23 associated with Southwest Indian Association and your
24 tribal council and organization. I've also been employed
25 with NAPI the tribal enterprises.

1 My comments are sort of related to NAPI. We're
 2 trying to promote and develop a French fry project, food
 3 table processing operation. Our request to the Secretary
 4 is to see if Mr. Secretary can kick lose some money for
 5 infrastructure development for our project.

6 We ran into an obstacle with USDA where basically
 7 we're doing a public-private partnership business venture.
 8 We want our money, and other money from USDA can't be used
 9 on this project because it's not full public in nature.
 10 But this is a project that will bring three, four, possibly
 11 even 500 jobs to the Nation, to rural America. And we're
 12 running into USDA regulatory barriers that did not help us
 13 access.

14 And with this project, we'll be able to farm up to
 15 15,000 acres of potatoes, process them into hashbrowns,
 16 French fries, et cetera. But we can't because of this
 17 regulatory barrier with the USDA. So if there is a way we
 18 can work that out, and value that type of project that
 19 where he need for the nation and use that as a pilot
 20 project to create jobs and provide economy building
 21 irrigation.

22 The other point, you know, is that the banking
 23 industry, the community investment act, the bankers are now
 24 for measure. See how much they'll give back to the
 25 community. I would recommend that USDA set up a similar

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1 type of method to measure their own problems. And we would
2 challenge USDA to be more in the next three years of the
3 century than they've done in the past 20 years.

4 The other points I want to bring out are more or
5 less as a land user. This is the local area here.

6 Mr. Secretary, I would like to see some of the
7 farmer/rancher requirements reduced so we can afford to put
8 these projects in. Right now, matching money, as
9 appropriated, gets used by only a few projects. Farmers
10 and ranchers have to use their own money. So as a result
11 our reservation needs vast improvements in natural
12 resources.

13 So, Mr. Secretary, will you help us reduce that
14 requirement? You can get a lot more done. They'll help us
15 establish projects similar to the conservation program.
16 They really for work. They'll fix up their own natural
17 resources. And Navajo is a beautiful land. It draws
18 millions of tourists. But what you didn't see today
19 because it's covered by snow is we're faced with mass
20 erosion and overgrazing. So we need USDA help to work on
21 that project.

22 The other is our sheep and wool producers at one
23 time took advantage of the incentives and subsidiaries and
24 that's gone. So can the Secretary go back to coaching and
25 get authorization? The other is the vast force and

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1 resources. And can USDA be creative enough to join hands
2 with the nation to help us begin to utilize the forest
3 timber resource and improve our rangeland again. The other
4 is can the Secretary be the catalyst measure projects on
5 the reservation.

6 The other is improve our irrigation projects.
7 With this valley here, we're trained to some agricultural
8 farm units in this valley. The problem is we lack water.

9 So if the Secretary could help us bring jobs to
10 the Navajo Nation which is rural America. Right now we
11 have unemployment rates over 35, 50 percent.

12 So with that, I'll end my comments. Have a good
13 time, enjoy your trip and bring some more horse shit to us.

14 MR. YEE: I've got a question. Is this the
15 Navajo table processing project.

16 MR. NAWTAW: This is the navajo processing
17 project. It's a farmer RCD. We were hoping to use some
18 water and other infrastructure money to bring
19 infrastructure into the plant. But because of the problems
20 with not serving the public.

21 MR. YEE: Thank you.

22 MR. SOMERVILLE: Stan Milford.

23 MR. MILFORD: My name is Stan Milford.

24 Where is the camera?

25 Good evening, folks. My name is Stan Milford. I

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1 am presently wearing the hat of staff assistant to the
2 Navajo Nation. Our President has a wonderful idea about
3 empowering the people. But perhaps you folks up there in
4 Washington could somehow instill the people in that are
5 holding the reins to help us to start up this idea of
6 empowering these people of the local empowerment. And
7 that's where you're given you're giving people authority
8 back up to their lands and let them to do it for
9 themselves.

10 The people are outgrowing the idea of how the BIA
11 wants us to live and a program just like a computer
12 programs a certain idea. They have done that to us. We
13 won't tolerate BIA people now. All of our people that work
14 for the government we do. We fashion our government just
15 like the BIA. Now BIA is leaving, see. But we know that
16 BIA practice will continue. So we've got to change. Today
17 we've got to change. It is so slow it's terrible.

18 And we have a century of controlled government,
19 which is very much like China, Cuba, Russia. We need to do
20 something right here. We have a lot of potential, but the
21 BIA has got a stranglehold on us the way it's fashioned.
22 We need to get going. We have down here 30 miles from here
23 that town is growing so fast, you know, it's unbelievable.

24 We would like to do that out here, but we have to
25 check with the red tape before we get going. It's so

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slow.

So some of the areas that we're being discriminated is like the prices of things obvious here silver mine markets they're high in price. Down in Phoenix, it's about half the price.

So there is discrimination there. And then you have offer here this lady is giving out food over here for free. When somebody over here is trying to tell agents, "Farm over here," it's easier to go over here, and pick you up a can of corner than it is to go over here without no water or without having to do with things.

So those kinds of things you have to weigh. So our lives have to change. We're no longer our kids no longer want to herd sheep or do things like that. It's really hard. Most of us in here, Indian folks, our children won't speak the language. Some do, very few. They'll say Ya-ta-hey just like you say it. But there are some discriminated areas, you know. And we find that here if you hang around Window Rock you'll find a lot of it.

In, for example, our schools, our school boards, school periods are established and chrome their destiny. Today we're still advisers. So I want advisers to the school, you know. I want more authority to control our schools. But yet be patient. We need some help. Those kind of areas, you know.

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1 We need to control our own destiny. Things have
2 to change. That I think you need to say those people out
3 there you need to change out there. You can't continue the
4 way they're going. They're busting and sinking the way
5 we're going.

6 And we had real time unemployment. 35 percent,
7 Gentlemen. It's higher than that in many places out here
8 in certain pockets. Run as high as 60 percent some places.
9 So it's devastating. We're landlocked. You can't go
10 nowhere. You can't do anything. You just have to be at
11 the mercy of your neighbors to help you out.

12 So I would like to say thanks for coming out and I
13 am kind of late, but I think you got a lot of information
14 to carry back to Washington. So have a good time while
15 you're here.

16 Thank you.

17 MR. SOMERVILLE: Thank you. Samuel
18 Valdez. Is Samuel still here?

19 Great. Thank you.

20 MR. VALDEZ: Thank you. I want this
21 opportunity. And I first suspect that I'll be coming to
22 all the top important people. I thank you.

23 What I want to cover has to do with two or three
24 people. One is the direct funding from the USDA tribe.

25 And another one is the application and red tape

1 request for a loan, that type of thing. I don't know much
 2 about our kind of area, about direct funding. Because
 3 sometimes direct funding to the tribe, you hire
 4 administration and other people like myself, get all those
 5 funds to the grass roots people I'm just a retired person
 6 here and one thing I would like to see is we're on the
 7 Checkerboard area.

8 And on a yearly basis, some of us had to pay for a
 9 lot. I have to pay \$264 a month to graze my sheep. But I
 10 get ineffective assistance from the bureau.

11 I think the Bureau and the USDA needs to
 12 compromise, come together, and provide effective services
 13 to the local people paying for that grazing fee, which is
 14 another thing is that they talk about I remember back in my
 15 younger years some of you older people still remember the
 16 old project they used to have they called it CCC project.

17 Most of us -- I think it was community
 18 conservation construction, where they were building,
 19 remodeling, regenerating the local wells, and so on. And
 20 they were building bridges for the community.

21 Talking about rural areas and disadvantaged
 22 people. So we're sheep herders. We're disadvantaged. And
 23 I think if it's at all possible, I would like to see that
 24 project to be REVIVED and implemented again at the local
 25 level. That way it gives the people some employment also.

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1 And that's what I had to say. Thank you.

2 MR. SOMERVILLE: Thank you. Thank you very
3 much. Before I turn this back to Mr. Reed for closing
4 comments and President Hale if he prefers, I would like to
5 recognize three people.

6 First, Eliza-Beth Washburne, and the Soil
7 Conservation Districts who have done an awful lot of work
8 to help organize this session for you.

9 Jerry Gilmore, who I think is not in the room
10 right now. He chaired the local management group. There
11 is Jerry.

12 Jerry, thank you so much. We appreciate it.

13 And lastly, Jeanne Ann Rachetti, who is the
14 regional reservist for the local region for the
15 conservation service. You have been very helpful in our
16 region, Jeanne. Thanks so much.

17 We'll hear closing comments from Pearlle Reed, Mr.
18 Hale, possibly.

19 Following their comments, we'll have a benediction
20 and a Blessing on the food by Wallace Tsotsie, and that
21 will conclude this Listening Session. Thank you.

22 MR. REED: Thank you, Mike. President Hale,
23 we'll defer to you for the last word. We have one person
24 that I would like to recognize.

25 Mary McNeil, would you please stand?



1 She's the Native American coordinator in Secretary
2 Glickman's office. I'll just simply say thanks.

3 And we really appreciate your sharing these
4 comments with us. This information is going to be very
5 helpful to Secretary Glickman. In spite of the weather, I
6 think on behalf of the Team, I can say that this trip is a
7 very, very beneficial trip for us.

8 The only thing, President Hale, I would suggest
9 you need to follow up aggressively on, and that is to get
10 the Secretary to come out and spend two or three days with
11 you.

12 So with that, President Hale, would you please
13 close it out?

14 PRESIDENT HALE: Thank you very much,
15 Pearlle, and Mike, and all the other dignitaries that are
16 here from Washington and all the other areas. I certainly
17 do appreciate you coming out, and also like to extend
18 appreciation to all the people who have given testimony.
19 And I am sure that there are a lot more who would have
20 liked to have made the presentation. However, the process
21 is that we have availability of that opportunity.

22 I would also like to express appreciation to Ms.
23 McNeil for coming in. The last time I saw her we were
24 meeting with Secretary Glickman. And thank you very much
25 for coming by and joining us.

1 And especially the Navajo people. Thank you very
2 much for joining us in all the local officials.

3 One person I would like to recognize is my brother
4 who is on the council before I go any further. His name is
5 Tom Shota, and he is a member of the Resources Committee at
6 the Navajo Nation Council from the local area. Thank you,
7 Brother, for joining us.

8 In closing, I first just want to say that you have
9 listened and hopefully you have heard all of the comments
10 that have been made. We have numerous issues and
11 concerns. And these concerns and issues have been with us
12 for many, many years.

13 We talk to the federal officials for statements
14 that were made at the BIA has just programmed us rather
15 than listening to us. And I hate to see the same thing
16 happen to this listening conference. I've been to -- I've
17 heard of at least two listening conferences before I became
18 the president of the Navajo Nation.

19 And in subsequent meetings about two or three that
20 I attended at the white house we talked about some of the
21 progress that has been made as a result of the listening
22 conference. Many of the department heads, secretaries,
23 came in and said, "This is what I've done after the
24 listening conference." I had set up an Indian desk to
25 coordinate the Indian programs. So we have progressed that

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1 much. And they were applauding themselves.

2 When it came my turn to speak on that subject, one
3 thing I said was, "You can give yourself all the accolades
4 you want and label that progress. But in my country with
5 my people the way I measure progress is whether the lives
6 and the homes of my people, of grandmother, grandfather,
7 behind the hill have improved. And all the things that
8 you're talking about creating, Indian desks, they have not
9 improved the homes and livelihoods of my people of grandma
10 of grandfather behind the hill. And if their lives have
11 changed for the better, then I would agree with you. But
12 that there has been progress."

13 And I certainly hope that the presentations that
14 have been made here the recommendations that have been made
15 here, will not all be in vain, but will serve as a
16 foundation to build and to forge new purposes for certainly
17 we're faced with hard times the declining federal revenues,
18 decline in our own Navajo Nation revenues. But our
19 population grows and as a result demands for service grows.

20 And we, as leaders, as government officials, as
21 administrators, our task is to deliver services with less
22 money. The difficulty that arises from that I'm sure with
23 our collective efforts our collective thinking and our
24 collective dedication and commitment, we can bring about
25 that progress.

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1 Thank you again for coming in and joining us.
2 Before I close, I'd like to present some tokens of
3 appreciation to the people who have come out to join us and
4 listen to us most of the afternoon.

5 We have the cap here. It says, "Navajo Land,"
6 which means "trash no." Or let me translate it into
7 English so you can understand it. "No trash."

8 We talked about land here. We talked about
-9 farming. We talked about conservation, soil, water. Those
10 are things that require joint efforts, funding, when we
11 rode across the Navajo Nation.

12 During the review of the drought condition there
13 was one thing that I noticed that as we rode across the
14 Navajo Nation on horseback: accumulation of trash along
15 the highways and other places. So we took another ride to
16 try to focus attention on that particular condition, that
17 problem.

18 We had a challenge from Governor Gary Johnson of
19 the State of New Mexico. He rode his bicycle from up
20 north, northern part of New Mexico, down to Las Cruces, the
21 southern part of New Mexico. He issued me a challenge to
22 see who could pick up the most trash along the highway.

23 When I accepted that challenge, I told him that I
24 would do him one better. That riding a bicycle that
25 distance is easy. And that I would do it the hard way, the

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1 old way, ride a horse all the way across and down to
2 Socorro.

3 And we did that. We met in Socorro. Brought
4 attention to the accumulation of trash along the highway.
5 We were on national television, NBC or CBS morning show if
6 you had an opportunity to see that.

7 But that condition is very prevalent on not only
8 the Navajo Nation but other areas. But it's one thing that
9 doesn't require collective effort. It's one thing that
10 doesn't require equipment. It's one thing that doesn't
11 require funding. It just requires us to step over there
12 where that trash is, pick it up, and put it in the trash
13 receptacles.

14 So I challenge you to do that as you go about your
15 business, as you go home, as you drive home, and to instill
16 that respect for our Mother Earth in your children and our
17 children.

18 So, as you accept this, Pearlie, only one
19 condition for those of you who are accepting this cap, you
20 have to go out there and collect trash.

21 Michael and Robert and all the folks who have come
22 to join us, to listen, the Team members, thank you very
23 much. We have caps for you, too, so don't feel left out.
24 But you also have to pick up trash.

25 We thank you very much and I thank the people for

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1 coming in. All the local officials, thank you. We
2 appreciate your attendance. May you have a safe journey
3 home and may the hole people be with you always.

4 Thank you very much.

5 MR. SOMERVILLE: Before we go we're going to
6 close this with a benediction.

7 (Benediction in Navajo)

8 (Hearing concluded at 8:20 p.m.)

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