

**Statement of Ben Nighthorse Campbell
Chairman, Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
Hearing on the Implementation of the "HUBZone Program"**

May 12, 1999

Good morning. The Committee on Indian Affairs will come to order.

Today we will receive testimony on Title VI of the *Small Business Reauthorization Act of 1997*, better known as the "HUBZones Program".

As those who live in the metropolitan Washington area know well, the federal government employs hundreds of thousands of employees, and contracts for literally billions of dollars in goods and services.

For generations, these contracts were let to firms in and around the "Beltway", and the nation's most depressed areas did not benefit.

In 1997, the Small Business Committee under the leadership of Senator Bond, charted a new course for federal procurement policy by targeting federal contracts to the most distressed communities in the nation --- the "historically underutilized business zones" ("HUBZones")

I need to remind my colleagues that Native lands are among the most depressed and economically stagnant in the U.S. Though some well-situated tribes are benefitting from gambling, most tribes and Indian people live in Third World poverty.

The HUBZones Program includes Indian reservations as a targeted area, but because of definitional problems in the act and in the enabling regulations, ambiguities remain.

The two questions we must answer are these:

1. Should the benefits of the HUBZones Program be made to apply to Native lands in Alaska and Oklahoma?
2. Should tribally-owned firms be eligible for HUBZones contracts?

I believe, and I hope my colleagues believe, the answer to both of these questions is a resounding "YES".

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today, particularly Mr. Hayes from the Small Business Administration.