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ITMA PROVIDES RECOMMENDATIONS ON TRUST REFORM LEGISLATION AT SENATE COMMITTEE HEARING

Washington, DC--Intertribal Monitoring Association (ITMA) Chairman Jim Gray provided testimony today before Senate Committee on Indian Affairs on S. 1493, the Indian Trust Reform Act of 2005, legislation to address Indian trust asset management and resolve historical accounting claims.

" S. 1439 is an important product that reflects many years of our work to achieve meaningful trust reform," said ITMA Chairman Jim Gray. Gray also thanked the Committee for working with Indian country to make sure the legislation meets tribal trust priorities and objectives.

In 2005, ITMA spearheaded an effort to hold hearings and solicit input from tribal leaders and individual Indian beneficiaries nationwide on what is needed to reform the Federal Government's current administration and management of Indian trust assets and funds. ITMA collaborated its efforts with the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and the *Cobell* plaintiff attorneys to reach consensus on specific components needed in broad trust reform legislation.

ITMA further held a membership meeting in late January 2006 to discuss the proposed legislation and allow member tribes an opportunity to provide input on the specifics of the legislation. As a result of its work, ITMA has provided detailed comments and recommendations to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs at today's hearing..

Gray concluded, "We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with the Senate and House Committees to improve the federal government's trust responsibilities owed to Indian tribes and individual Indians."

ITMA provided recommendations address on five of the six titles of the legislation, and expressed brief comments encouraging legislative settlement of the longstanding *Cobell v. Norton* lawsuit. ITMA's position calls for Congress to move forward with structural improvements at the Department of Interior, expand and enhance tribal governance over trust assets, reduce fractionation of trust assets and implement meaningful trust asset review and recommendations on future trust reform in the Department of the Interior. A copy of the full text of ITMA's written testimony to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs is available upon request.

ITMA is a national tribal consortium of 64 tribes. ITMA was organized in 1990 to actively monitor and facilitate trust fund and asset management initiatives. To learn more please visit: <http://www.itmatrustfunds.org>.

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