

February 2, 2021

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Alex Padilla
United States Senate
B03 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Feinstein and Padilla,

As advocates for tribal sovereignty rights and the protection of land and water on Native American lands, our group Sonoma Solidarity with Standing Rock urges you to support President Biden's nomination of Deb Haaland for the position of Secretary of The Interior.

Deb Haaland is uniquely qualified to fill the position of Secretary of the Interior. As one of the first Indigenous women to serve in our Congress, Rep. Haaland understands the roles of federal, state and tribal governments in conservation and development. She has demonstrated her deep concerns about the environment, and knowledge about the importance of science based evidence in making policy decisions. This historic appointment would elevate a Native American to a cabinet position for the first time, and could mark a turning point for the government's relationship with native peoples.

It is especially significant that Rep. Haaland would be leading the department that oversees the federal government's relationship with tribal governments. Indigenous communities have long been excluded from decisions about federal policy that affect their way of life and their cultural, ecological and economic futures. Her values will provide needed change of perspective to this new administration and help lift Native American voices to greater prominence in the national conversation about conservation, environmental justice and the climate crisis. We require leaders in the federal government who understand the climate emergency, the impact it has on disenfranchised communities everywhere, and the urgent need to advance climate response swiftly.

Deb Haaland's nomination represents a possible new direction for the agency which oversees energy development and fossil fuel extractions. These policies affect communities across the nation, particularly the indigenous, who have borne much of the brunt of reckless development meant to benefit a powerful few. The science shows that a healthy economy must be based upon a stable ecology, and democratic decision-making demands input from all citizen groups.

The members of Sonoma Solidarity join hundreds of tribes, The Lakota Law Project, Chairman of the Natural Resources Committee Raul Grijalva, and the Union of Concerned Scientists in advocating for Deb Haaland in this leadership role. Many Americans desire that this department take a leading role in developing cleaner energies, protecting our environment and our nation's ecosystems, reducing and removing emissions from the atmosphere to restore the climate, and moving us forward toward a sustainable future. Deb Haaland possesses the experience, the knowledge, the vision and the will to help lead us forward. We hope that you will stand behind her Senate confirmation.

Respectfully,

Sonoma Solidarity with Standing Rock members
(cont'd page 2)

Linda Swartz, Cazadero, CA
Hoai-An Truong, Silicon Valley, CA
Debora Hammond, Cotati, CA
Jenny Blaker, Cotati, CA
Attila Nagy, Santa Rosa, CA
Linda Sartor, Santa Rosa, CA