September \_\_, 2025

Russell Vought

Director, U.S. Office of Management and Budget

1650 Pennsylvania Ave. NW

Washington, DC 20503

*Sent electronically to: OMBLegislativeAffairs@omb.eop.gov*

**RE: Request for OMB Exemption for Federal Employees Serving Tribal Nations in the Event of a Government Shutdown**

Dear Director Vought:

I am writing you on behalf of [Tribal Nation] to express our concern about the negative impacts a federal government shutdown would have on our nation and people. The [Tribal Nation] urges OMB to promptly issue a directive to all federal agencies exempting federal employees serving Indian Country from any Reduction in Force (RIF) actions and to exempt employees serving Indian Country from being furloughed to the maximum extent possible.

**Issuing a directive to exempt federal employees of Indian Country programs from RIFs and furloughs is consistent with the United States’ delivery on trust and treaty legal obligations.** The United States assumed ongoing trust and treaty obligations for which we prepaid with our lands and resources. The United State fulfills its trust and treaty obligations, in part, through direct delivery of Tribal programs and services and through the provision of federal funding to Tribal Nations and Tribal-serving organizations. Allowing a government shutdown with no exemption for federal employees serving Indian Country decimates the ability of the United States to carry out its sacred obligations to Tribal Nations, Tribal citizens, and Tribal communities, disrupts our economies, threatens our public safety, and undermines public confidence in our institutions.

**Issuing a directive to exempt federal employees serving Indian Country is consistent with the President’s priorities.** OMB’s September 24, 2025 Memorandum encourages RIF notices for all employees in programs, projects, or activities that are “not consistent with the President’s priorities.” President Trump has indicated Indian Country is a priority and has stated that his Administration is “fighting for Native American communities.” Following the President’s lead, numerous federal agencies have provided exemptions from actions that otherwise would have caused unintended collateral damage to Indian Country. A government shutdown with no exemption for federal employees serving Indian Country frustrates the President’s priorities.

**Issuing a directive to exempt federal employees serving Indian Country is authorized by the Anti-Deficiency Act.** OMB is authorized by the Anti-deficiency Act to ensure that federal employees providing services related to the “safety of human life or protection of property” are exempt from government shutdown furloughs.[[1]](#footnote-1) Tribal Nations rely heavily on funding, programs, and services provided by the federal government with respect to policing, public safety and justice, education, and healthcare, among other important areas. A government shutdown with no exemption for federal employees serving Indian Country would jeopardize the health, safety, and wellbeing of millions of people who rely on these Tribal programs for essential services.

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We reiterate the need for OMB to take prompt action to issue a directive protecting Indian Country in the event of a government shutdown.

Sincerely,

1. 31 U.S.C. § 1342. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)