Badger-Two Medicine: Statement of the Blackfeet Nation
July 22, 2020

The Blackfeet Nation welcomes today’s announcement of federal legislation that will permanently protect our sacred cultural lands in the Badger-Two Medicine. Sen. Jon Tester’s bill safeguards this tremendous Montana landscape and defends Blackfeet rights in the area for perpetuity.

We are grateful for Sen. Tester’s long-held friendship and leadership, and we will work closely with him and all of Montana’s congressional delegation and elected officials to pass this important legislation as swiftly as possible. We encourage the entire delegation to join us in this effort.

The Badger-Two Medicine, since time immemorial, has been Blackfeet Territory, a place of refuge and strength for our Pikuni People. We acknowledge our many Blackfeet elders who were at the forefront of this struggle, but who are no longer with us. Mentors such as Buster Yellow Kidney, Mike Swims Under, George Kicking Woman and Francis “Big Man” Bull Shoe did not live to see this legislation that they helped achieve, but we are grateful for their wisdom, leadership and spiritual guidance.

Today, people from throughout our Blackfeet community continue the work to protect our indigenous rights, honor and way of life, including the lands, waters and wildlife that are integral to our cultural survival and traditional practices.

Tim Davis, Chairman of Blackfeet Tribal Business Council:
“This is a great day for our Blackfeet People, and we will continue to stand as one with our voices united in defense of the Badger-Two Medicine. Protecting our traditional territory is the healing we need to make all of us whole and sacred, as intended by Creator.”

Earl Old Person, Chief of Blackfeet Nation:
“For thousands of years Badger-Two Medicine has shaped the identity of our people. I have always been told by our elders that our responsibility was to save those lands for our children and all future generations of Pikuni People. Sen. Tester has given us an opportunity to safeguard our sacred places, and to protect them always for the Blackfeet Nation and for all Montanans who use these mountains.”

John Murray, Blackfeet Tribal Historic Preservation Officer:
“It is impossible to separate the Badger-Two Medicine from our language, belief systems and origin stories. Our traditional Blackfeet knowledge system is intact, but it is in a fragile condition. It cannot
withstand many more assaults. If we don’t protect it now, we may lose those parts of Blackfeet knowledge and culture forever.”

**Harry Barnes, former Chairman Blackfeet Tribal Business Council:**
“We’re extremely grateful that Sen. Tester is committed to protecting our people and places, and we’re looking forward to working with Montana’s congressional delegation to pass this bill. The Badger-Two Medicine is like a church to our people. It is a powerful place of healing. In this time of Covid-19, with our elders and our communities at such risk, it is inspiring to know we will protect the healing wellsprings of Blackfeet culture.”

**Tyson Running Wolf, MT House District 16:**
“The Badger-Two Medicine represents some of the best wild habitat on the planet, and it is critical to our traditions and ceremonies. The future success of the Blackfeet Nation requires that we keep these strong cultural foundations intact. I have worked for years on this with Sen. Tester and our neighbors from across Montana, and together we are building a powerful future for everyone who uses the Badger-Two Medicine.”

**Terry Tatsey, former Blackfeet Tribal Business Council:**
“This bill is special because it is the first proposal to be written with Blackfeet involvement. Our voices are finally being heard. Those mountains are where we still practice our culture and our ways, and where we find healing and guidance. It’s not just our history that’s tied to the Badger-Two Medicine – it’s our future, too.”

**Kendall Edmo, Blackfeet Deputy Tribal Historic Preservation Officer**
“This bill provides Blackfeet with a real opportunity, and a voice in managing the landscape in ways that honor our ancestors and maintain the cultural and ecological integrity of the Badger-Two Medicine for future generations. It gives a path forward for Blackfeet to enhance our treaty rights and to engage in a genuine dialogue around tribal sovereignty.”

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