

15988



COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

B-201885
CED1-7

January 26, 1981

Do not make available to public reading

The Honorable James A. McClure
Chairman, Subcommittee on Department
of the Interior and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The purpose of this letter is to confirm agreements reached with Senate Appropriations Committee staff, concerning the Committee's request on page 42 of Committee Report No. 96-985, Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriation Bill, 1981. As you know, the Committee requested that we conduct an investigation of the [Council of Energy Resource Tribes (~~CERT~~) federally supported activities], including an examination of how these funds are spent, other sources of income, and how effectively the organization benefits all tribal energy resource interests.

DLG 05941

On December 8, 1980, we advised Appropriations Committee staff that our preliminary efforts indicated that the real concern involving energy development on Indian reservations did not appear to be whether Federal funding of CERT was proper. Instead, the more important question appeared to be whether the Congress should consider new alternatives for the development of energy resources on Indian reservations. Presently, neither the Bureau of Indian Affairs nor any other Federal agency has provided or appears capable of providing the assistance tribes need to develop their resources. As a result, 25 tribes banded together to form CERT in an attempt to fill this void.

The Appropriations Committee staff agreed that the most important issues were the identification of (1) deficiencies in Federal efforts to assist the tribes in developing their energy related resources, and (2) alternatives to these Federal efforts. We were therefore requested to do a thorough review of this area and the role CERT plays or should play. In this


514817

B-
CED1-7

respect, we agreed to provide incoming Committee staff with a briefing in late February on Federal funding of CERT and the anticipated scope of our review of Federal efforts to assist tribes in developing their energy resources. The Committee staff stated that we should take the time necessary to properly evaluate any alternatives for development of energy resources on Indian reservations.

Mr. Roy J. Kirk, Senior Group Director in our Community and Economic Development Division, is responsible for the review. He can be reached on 376-8212.

Sincerely yours,



Comptroller General
of the United States