

**United States Senate Committee on Indian Affairs**  
**Testimony on behalf of S. 2436**  
**Reauthorization of the Native American Programs Act (1974)**  
**June 8, 2004**

Testimony submitted by:

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Mister Chairman and members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify on behalf of the reauthorization of the Native American Programs Act of 1974. Referred to in my testimony as NAPA.

My name is Leonard J. Smith and I am an enrolled member of the Assiniboine-Sioux Tribes on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation in northeastern Montana. I am also **Chief Executive Officer** of A&S Tribal Industries, a tribal owned, four-acre **industrial** complex of 180,000 square feet that provides metal fabrication and machining manufacturing services to the federal government and to private industry. A&S Tribal Industries, once the largest private sector employer in northeastern Montana, with **550** employees and approximately \$ 40 million in revenue is currently diversifying into new market opportunities with the assistance of NAPA.

NAPA is the only program in the federal government that:

- Provides seed funding for a large and diverse constituency—over 550-Federally Recognized Tribes, Alaska Natives and Natives of the Pacific Islands
- Helps leverage local funds and non-federal funds to finance business projects at the community level.

The results are increased self-sufficiency, job creation and job retention on American Indian reservations. Programs such as NAPA have a strong impact on the ability of tribal and Native owned companies to develop laws and regulations that comply with federal agency standards as well as with business practices required by **private** industry.

My testimony focuses on project funding and technical assistance provided by the Administration for Native Americans (ANA). The investments we have received from ANA have helped A&S Tribal Industries increase private sector contracts **for** commercial product lines. As Chief Executive Officer of a Tribal owned **enterprise**, I understand and incorporate

the distinct competitive advantages that tribes have for creating jobs on reservations and in Native American communities. But we need the federal partners, like NAPA, to help with the successful transition of tribal-owned companies into the global economy.

In our case, technology plays an important role in self-sufficiency, profitability and job retention in our American Indian communities. A&S Tribal Industries uses NAPA programs as tools to meet the technical requirements of prime defense contractors and increase joint ventures on commercial and federal contracts. This directly creates and retains manufacturing jobs on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation.

ANA funding helped us develop a manufacturing training curriculum at Fort Peck Community College that met the **supplier** standards of a prime defense contractor. The result is that locally-based American Indians are being trained in manufacturing **technical** skills that are **higher paying jobs**. This helps A&S Tribal Industries recruit new customers, increase revenues and create **higher paying jobs** for Native Americans that live in very small **isolated communities**.

The reauthorization of NAPA will help **other** tribally-owned manufacturing businesses climb the management and technical capacity “ladders” that are minimum standards required by private industry. NAPA programs provide resources that help locally-based Native American leaders build new partnerships which increase jobs. And in turn, provides paychecks that support local small businesses like grocery stores, clothing stores, **service** companies, transportation companies, telephone and utility companies and all of the services required on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation in northeastern Montana. I urge passage of S.2436, the Reauthorization of the Native American Programs Act of 1974.

Thank you.

Leonard J. Smith Jr.  
Chief Executive Officer