

Friday, September 21, 2012

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Ben Ray Luján of New Mexico’s Third District and Ranking Member on the Indian and Alaska Native Affairs Subcommittee highlighted legislation that passed the House earlier this week to allow Indian tribes to request a declaration of emergency or major disaster from the President.

“It’s clear that some states have been slow to act when tribal communities are facing emergency situations. Enabling tribal governments to request a disaster declaration directly from the President will speed up the process and streamline the effort to get tribes that assistance they need during a difficult time,” Congressman Luján said. “I am pleased that by working with my colleagues across the aisle, this important legislation earned wide bipartisan support and now moves on to the Senate.”

H.R. 2903 amends the Stafford Act to allow tribes to make requests directly to the President. Under current law, tribes must rely on state governments to make a request when there is a disaster on tribal land.

The bill was introduced by Representative Jeff Denham of California and passed with unanimous support on Wednesday, September 19. It has been referred to the Senate for further action.

#