

KENNETH L. SALAZAR

May 20, 2013

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Chairman, Judiciary Committee
United States Senate
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Minority Member, Judiciary Committee
United States Senate
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Grassley:

As the former Secretary of the Interior, I had the privilege of working with Mr. West on several policy issues of national significance. In my experience, Mr. West is an extremely capable, diligent, and effective leader. I wholeheartedly endorse Mr. West's confirmation as Associate Attorney General for the United States.

As Assistant Attorney General of the Civil Division, Mr. West was committed to strengthening the Justice Department's relationship with tribal communities and worked closely with the Department of the Interior to improve the relationship between the Native American community and the federal government. In December 2009, a \$3.4 billion settlement was negotiated in *Cobell v. Salazar*, a long-standing class-action lawsuit in which members of the Native American community argued for an accounting on individual Indian money accounts and restitution for breaches of trust responsibilities. Furthermore, the Civil Division made it a priority to resolve *Keepseagle v. Vilsack*, where Native American farmers alleged discrimination in the USDA's farm loan program. Under Assistant Attorney General West's leadership, the Civil Division concluded the litigation in *Keepseagle*, as well as four other cases involving minority farmers who believed they suffered discrimination, by crafting historic resolutions that were responsible, fair, and consistent with the rule of law.

Under Acting Associate Attorney General West's leadership, the Department coordinated with six federal agencies, including the Department of the Interior, and five states in ongoing civil litigation arising out of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The Department of Justice conducted the government's civil investigation into the explosion, fire, and oil spill and then filed and litigated a civil enforcement action against BP and other defendants in multi-district litigation. Mr. West's efforts ensured that those responsible for the disaster, and not the American people, would pay for the recovery and restoration of the Gulf Region.

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Mr. West is a tremendous public servant with the profound ability to lead, coordinate, and resolve complex matters of national significance with compassion and cultural sensitivity. He demonstrates the qualities that are essential to the position and I hope that the Senate will promptly confirm Mr. West to serve as the Associate Attorney General for the United States.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kenneth L. Salazar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kenneth" being more prominent and the last name "Salazar" following in a similar style.

Kenneth L. Salazar

KLS/crh