



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

September 9, 2004

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The Honorable Mike Leavitt  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Ariel Rios Building  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Administrator Leavitt:

On behalf of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the oldest and largest national advocacy organization in the country, I write to request a meeting in the near future to develop a solution regarding the public display of offensive and historically inaccurate paintings and murals in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) offices at the Ariel Rios Building. The paintings by Frank Mechau, William Palmer and Ward Lockwood depict Native Americans in a stereotypical fashion which many tribal peoples deem offensive.

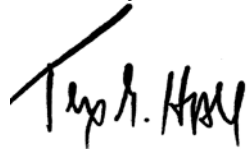
The NCAI is aware that EPA has a strong commitment to developing federal agency policies and programs on a government to government basis. You personally continued the agency's pledge of consultation and cooperation when you met with tribal officials during the National Congress of American Indians Executive Council Winter Session. Your open door policy made an impact with our constituents who are willing to seeking mutual beneficial solutions to conflicts that arise. We are concerned if this issue is not soon addressed regarding the display of the paintings and murals, the reputation that the EPA has built up over the years in tribal outreach and consultation matters may be compromised.

We would like to offer some options which may be workable through the cooperation of General Services Administration (GSA) officials who would oversee the matter. We suggest that the GSA consider loaning the paintings out to a local gallery and/or design cards containing text explaining Native American viewpoints regarding the artist's interpretation of the events characterized to be placed adjacent to the murals.

The NCAI staff became aware of the sensitive nature of this problem in 2000 and had thought the matter was resolved with the removal of the

paintings and covering of the murals. In order to foster the longstanding relationship between the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Congress of American Indians, we hope to meet with you as soon as possible to set in motion a process for a final resolution of the matter. Thank you for your timely response on this matter. If you have any questions, please contact Jacqueline Johnson, Executive Director at the NCAI, 202.466.7767.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tex G. Hall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent, sweeping initial "T".

Tex G. Hall  
President