



National Congress of American Indians



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## Media Release

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### **NCAI Policy Research Center Releases Land Management Report**

NIAGARA FALLS, NY—June 17, 2009—The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Policy Research Center (PRC) – NCAI’s tribally-driven think tank – has released a first-of-its-kind analysis of a critical barrier to homeownership on Indian lands, a report entitled *Exercising Sovereignty and Expanding Economic Opportunity Through Tribal Land Management*. The report is the result of a joint project with First Nations Development Institute, funded by NeighborWorks America and Stewart Title Guaranty Company (Stewart Title).

“While the United States faces one of the most significant housing crises in the nation’s history, many forget that Indian housing has been in crisis for generations,” said NCAI Executive Director Jacqueline Johnson Pata. “This report takes some important steps toward a future where safe, affordable and decent housing is available to Native people in numbers sufficient to meet Indian Country’s housing needs.”

The report analyzes the success and challenges of tribes that have taken responsibility (in whole or in part) for administering the land title process on tribal lands.

“There are currently many unnecessary obstacles to homeownership on trust land, resulting in significant economic costs for Native communities. We hope this report will draw attention to the need for improved title processing,” said Mike Roberts, President of the First Nations Development Institute. “First Nations Development Institute helps Native people build assets through education, empowerment, and homeownership. Expedited title processing would allow homebuyers on Indian land to experience the same rights that any other homebuyer in America currently enjoys and remove barriers to the American dream of homeownership.”

“Like many others, Stewart Title and its’ issuing agents have experienced the slow and uncertain process for obtaining title status information on Indian lands,” said Edward D. Hellewell, Senior Vice President and Senior Underwriting Counsel for Stewart Title. “Stewart is hopeful that the success of the tribes detailed in the report as well as the discussions of the challenges will be a pathway to efficient title processing that will result in equitable homeownership opportunities and enhanced economic development.”

[Click here](#) to download the report. For more information, contact PRC Director of Strategy and Partnerships, Peter Morris (202) 422-9485.

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Founded in 1944, the National Congress of American Indians is the oldest, largest and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization in the country. NCAI advocates on behalf of tribal governments, promoting strong tribal-federal government-to-government policies, and promoting a better understanding among the general public regarding American Indian and Alaska Native governments, people and rights.