

## **TRIBAL SUPPORT STATEMENT TO THE CHARLES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

The Honorable Charles County Commissioners:

I am writing this letter in support of the Piscataway Conoy land transfer. I support the permanent transfer of the old Nike Missile Battery Site on Country Lane in Waldorf to the Piscataway people.

My name is Elk Richardson, and I am an enrolled member in the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe, a recognized tribe in the state of North Carolina. I have previously served in elected tribal leadership –three elected terms to the Haliwa-Saponi Tribal Council (serving one term as Tribal Council Chairman) and one (1) elected term as Vice-Chief. I grew up in nearby Washington, DC, Wheaton, MD, and Hollister, NC; and have also lived in New Carrollton, Rockville, and Gaithersburg. All my life I have visited and traded as brothers and sisters with the Piscataway Indian people, including many visits and activities at the old Nike Missile Battery Site. I know the importance of local property to the Piscataway Indian people.

For years, even prior to my lifetime, our ancestors –both my Haliwa-Saponi people and ancestors to the Piscataway—travelled the Atlantic coastal regions, trading, worshipping during ceremonials, and allying in warring and trade with various other nations during our histories. Our historic existence and alliances as Algonquian peoples goes back centuries – living, thriving, and protecting our territorial areas. This land in the heart of traditional Piscataway territory is significant to the promotion of the continued tribal existence and cultural preservation of the Piscataway Indian people –who, by the way, are the aboriginal land-holders and residents of the entire DC-DelMarVa area. Once this property becomes Tribal land once again, our native peoples will once again have a place to host public events that will enhance Maryland's history, culture and tourism. The Piscataway people have been too long without necessary home-based/territorial facilities to protect and promote their tribal histories, culture, and ceremonial activities.

This facility will also be the premiere location in the state of Maryland for indigenous youth to learn about their culture, expand their knowledge of traditional arts, and advocate for our environment based upon our Indigenous Knowledge.

Thank you in advance for supporting the permanent transfer of the old Nike Missile Battery Site on Country Lane in Waldorf to the Piscataway people.

Sincerely,

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