



NEWS

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

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See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

For Immediate Release:
March 5, 2003

News Media Contact:
Rosemary Kimball at (202) 418-0511
e-mail: rkimball@fcc.gov

FCC and Tribes Continue Important Dialogue on Improving Access to Telecom Services in Indian Country *Commission and Tribal Leaders Hold Day-Long Meeting*

Washington, DC -- On February 28, 2003, Chairman Michael K. Powell welcomed a high-level delegation of tribal leaders from the National Congress of American Indians and the National Tribal Telecommunications Association. The tribal leaders met with Chairman Powell to discuss ways to improve access to telecommunications products and services throughout Indian Country. Commissioners Kathleen Q. Abernathy, Michael J. Copps and Jonathan S. Adelstein, and several bureau chiefs also participated in the meeting.

The day-long meeting was hosted by the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB), the Commission's point of contact for Indian Country. The meeting renewed the ongoing dialogue between the tribal representatives and the FCC, designed to foster a strong working relationship and to ensure open lines of communication. Tribal leaders and representatives from the Fort Mojave Tribal Council, the Gila River Indian Community, the Salt River-Pima Maricopa Indian Community, and the Cheyenne River Sioux tribe attended the meetings. Representatives of the National Congress of American Indians' Telecommunications Subcommittee and other tribal organizations also participated.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Chairman Powell said, "The FCC welcomed this opportunity to strengthen the government-to-government trust relationship that exists between the federal government and Indian tribal governments. It was an extraordinary honor and opportunity to continue our dialogue and share ideas about advancing our common goals. We at the FCC are firmly committed to ensuring access to telecommunications services in Indian Country and we look forward to exploring opportunities for greater access and continuing these productive discussions in the future."

Jacqueline Johnson, Executive Director of the National Congress of American Indians, said: "NCAI is extremely pleased by the FCC's commitment to improve its government relationship with tribes. We look forward to working together with the FCC to better address the telecommunications needs of Indian country."

The meeting was part of the FCC's broader Indian Telecommunications Initiatives (ITI), a comprehensive program that seeks to promote understanding, cooperation and trust among American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and tribal organizations; the FCC and other governmental agencies; and the telecommunications industry. Through ITI, the FCC seeks to foster partnerships to target specific concerns, identify potential solutions and bring affordable, quality telecommunications services to Native American and Alaska Native communities.

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