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Good Afternoon Honorable Tribal Leaders,

I know that at this moment you are focused on emergency preparations, but I wanted to reach out to offer my well-wishes and my continued support. In each of your respective communities, you are being asked to make difficult decisions that impact the lives of many people. And while it may feel like you are working in isolation, I want to remind you that as indigenous people, leadership has never rested solely on any one individual. It has always been the work of the entire community to come together, to solve problems and to find our way through trying times.

We're all in this together. And we will get through this together, as one people.

In the Pueblos there is a saying: "Respect is never severed." Like respect, the values of commitment, love and compassion must also never be severed. By holding true to these values and not allowing the crisis to divide us, our communities will endure and thrive. Our mission as a department is to support tribes in building healthy and prosperous communities. And we are more committed than ever to realizing this vision of strong, indigenous communities across our state and our nation.

With that in mind, our department would like to offer the attached document to provide you with some additional options in your planning and response to COVID. This plan provides strategies on quarantine, containment and surge preparation. I'd like to acknowledge the following individuals who also helped with preparing this plan: Phoebe Suina, Alvin Warren, Conroy Chino, Cheryl Fairbanks, Jasmine Yepa, Derrick Lente, Christy Chapman, Gayle Dinechacon, Melissa Candelaria, Carnell Chosa, Anja Rudiger, Regis Pecos, Bernalyn Via, April Hale, Aja Sanzone and Joyce Nacioma. We hope that this document will provide you and your staff with more options and be a basis for your ongoing COVID response efforts.

You are leaders in this moment for a reason; how we collectively respond to this crisis has the potential to create security for generations to come. Now is a time to unite, to rely on one another, and to draw from the unique strengths of each of our communities. This is how our people have endured and sustained ourselves since time immemorial.

In closing, I'd just like to express my gratitude for all your support and well wishes over the past few weeks. Your blessings have helped to sustain our entire department and we are grateful for your guidance and leadership. Please know that we are also keeping you, your families, and your communities in our hearts and in our prayers, every day.

Herkem,

Lynn Trujillo  
Secretary