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Letter from John Hart to Senator Langer Regarding Land Purchases Outside the Fort Berthold Reservation, May 23, 1950

John Hart

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John B. Hart, Executive Director
ROLLA, NORTH DAKOTA

May 23, 1950

Honorable William Langar
Senator from North Dakota
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Langar:

I want to thank you very much for the assistance you gave us with the Indian Bureau on the proposed purchase of land outside the exterior boundaries of the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation.

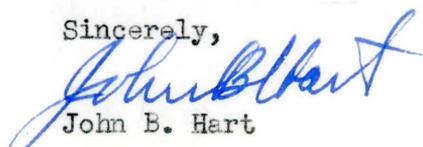
This has been a pretty hot subject in all counties where land is to be purchased outside reservation boundaries. I anticipate it will be a very hot subject around the Fort Berthold area when and if any such land is purchased because it will reduce the tax base of the county throwing an additional burden on the other real estate tax payers of the county. This feeling will be augmented in the Fort Berthold area because of the purchase of land by the government to be flooded by the Dam itself.

My information on the subject, gained mainly from the county commissioners of the counties involved, is that they very definitely do not like the idea of land being purchased outside the county in a tax exempt trust status until at least the Indians ^{personally} are making full use of the land they now own on the reservation. There is also some feeling that if any land is purchased it should be purchased within the exterior boundaries of the Reservation.

My general thought on the matter is that if we make the position of the counties known to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs now, there is a good chance of avoiding a hot controversy later. My guess is that the Commissioner of Indian Affairs will now recognize that feeling does exist along this line and probably grant us a hearing. I personally feel that if a hearing is granted we will be able to present a case to the Commissioner directly that will convince him of the inadvisability of purchasing tax exempt trust land outside the reservation.

I want to thank you very much for the assistance you have given us and I wish to assure you I will keep you completely informed as to developments.

Sincerely,


John B. Hart