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Contact: Brian Wagner

Phone: 202-596-6102

Email: brianw@brownlloydjames.com

TCA, Turkish Officials Participate in Native American Business Conference

March 5, 2012, Las Vegas – A Turkish government delegation, led by Deputy Undersecretary Cemalettin Damlaci of the Ministry of Economy and the Turkish Ambassador to the United States, Namik Tan, joined the Turkish Coalition of America Feb. 27 - March 1 at the 26th Annual Reservation Economic Summit (RES).

RES is the premier Native American economic and business development conference. TCA staff and Turkish government representatives met with tribal leaders and Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska), Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Indian and Alaska Native Affairs, to discuss the burgeoning Turkish-Native American economic and cultural relationship.

This is the second summit where TCA has helped facilitate an international dialogue, part of TCA's ongoing efforts since 2009 to build bridges between Native American tribes and Turkey, including organizing and leading the 2010 Native American Business Cooperation Trip, which brought representatives of 17 Native American tribes to Turkey in a visit which drew international attention. Ambassador Tan's participation in RES 2012 marked the first time the summit received a foreign ambassador.



From left: TCA President Lincoln McCurdy, Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska), Deputy Undersecretary Cemalettin Damlaci, and Turkish Embassy official Onur Bulbul.

On Feb. 27, Damlaci met with TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy, Rep. Young and Mr. Onur Bulbul, Assistant Commerce Counselor at the Turkish Embassy, to discuss the progress of the Indian Tribal Trade and Investment Demonstration Project Act (H.R. 2362). During the meeting, Damlaci expressed the Turkish government's desire to host an international business networking conference in Istanbul.

Later that evening, TCA hosted a dinner meeting to introduce Nevada's Turkish American community leaders to the Turkish government delegation.

At the official opening of the summit on Feb. 28, the Turkish delegation was recognized by the event organizers, as well as by Rep. Young, for Turkey's continued interest in expanding business and cultural ties with Indian Country. TCA organized a reception that afternoon with

support from Turkish American Business Association (TABA), the Caspian Group, LLC and the Turkish American Chambers of Commerce and Industry (TACCI) to honor the Turkish delegation. Later that evening, the delegation attended a dinner meeting with the Governor of the Pueblo of Laguna tribal nation in New Mexico to discuss potential business opportunities with members of the Laguna Economic Development Corporation.

On Feb. 29, after participating in a panel on the international economic opportunities available to tribes, Damlaci visited the premium Turkish clothing store SARAR, which recently opened a new location at the Venetian Hotel.

The delegation then met with Chairwoman Cheryl Causley and Mellor Willie of the National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC) to discuss potential proposals pertaining to Indian Country's housing needs.

The delegation then met with representatives from Montana- and Rocky Mountain-based tribes to discuss their interest in doing business with Turkey. The representatives briefed the



representatives together with the Turkish Ambassador Nânik Tan and the delegation led by Deputy Undersecretary Cemalettin Damlaci.

delegation on their plentiful natural resources and strong workforce, and pledged to help support the passage of H.R. 2362. The tribal leaders highlighted the legislation's progress as an important milestone in promoting tribal economic sovereignty. H.R. 2362 is legislation authorizing a short-term demonstration project to facilitate Turkish trade and investment in Indian Country.

TCA's participation at RES wrapped up with McCurdy joining a summit panel to share information about Turkey's booming tourism industry and brainstorm ways that tribal leaders could increase their own tourism revenue.