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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wind River Inter-Tribal Council maintains COVID-19 Orders, encourages remote learning

The Wind River Inter-Tribal Council (“WRITC”), representing the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone tribes, has opted to continue its previous COVID-19 public health order as amended, regarding safeguards for tribal members on the Wind River Indian Reservation (“Reservation”). The amended health order also instructed schools on the Reservation to impose remote learning for the time being. The decision comes as school districts in Wyoming and throughout the U.S. prepare to track COVID-19 outbreaks and implement safety precautions this fall in K-12 schools.

The WRITC encourages all parents to choose the best option available for their children if they’re attending schools off the Reservation. Most off-reservation schools offer both in-person and/or remote learning, with the exception of Wind River Elementary, Middle School and High School. Fremont County School District 6 in Pavillion faces unique challenges due to the lack of internet access. Those students who do not have access to the internet are required to attend in-person. In addition, tribal COVID-19 orders will not be violated by running school busses in those locations or when parents choose to participate in remote learning in other areas of the Reservation.

“Education is critical, and we all want Tribal students back in the classroom as quickly as possible – but we cannot place our sacred students and teachers at an unnecessary risk of contracting COVID-19,” said Northern Arapaho Business Council Chairman Lee Spoonhunter. “It’s important that we be cautious, and we’re able to do that now that we have virtual alternatives that allow school instruction to continue for the time being. We’re hopeful and optimistic with continued mask-wearing, and with cooperation from tribal members with other public health directives, students and teachers will soon be able to return –safely – to school.”

The WRITC supports education for native children and extends our cooperation to all schools, on and off the reservation in serving their educational needs.

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