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06/30/00 03:58 PM

To:
cc:
Subject: All OS Employees: Reminder Regarding Retention Requirements for E-Mail Messages

(NOTE TO SUPERVISORS: Please ensure all employees without access to e-mail receive a paper copy of this message.)

Subject: Reminder Regarding Retention Requirements for E-Mail Messages

To: All DOI Employees in the Office of the Secretary, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Land Management, the Minerals Management Service, the Office of the Special Trustee, and the Solicitor's Office

From: Anne Sheilds, Chief of Staff

This is a reminder that, under the Federal Records Act, certain e-mail messages must be preserved as federal records. A federal record is made or received by an agency in the transaction of agency business, and is appropriate for preservation as evidence of the agency's activities or because of the value of the information it contains.

In addition, because of court orders in the Cobell trust funds litigation, all documents - including e-mails - relating to Indian trust funds management and administration of Individual Indian Money (IIM) accounts must be preserved. The documents that must be preserved under the Cobell court orders are a broader category of documents than those that must be preserved under the Federal Records Act. They include all documents that relate to any of the following four topics:

1. the ongoing Cobell class action litigation
2. the High Level Implementation Plan and its subprojects,
3. trust reform; or
4. the administration of IIM accounts.

All documents relating to the above four topics must be preserved. This includes even those that you think are non-substantive. If you are in doubt, it is safer to preserve the document.

Under Departmental policy, the preservation of e-mails requires that the message be printed out and organized in a recordkeeping system in which documents are retrievable and accessible for business purposes. You may not rely on computer archival filing systems, backup tapes or electronic folders to meet your document preservation obligations. If you have been doing so, please immediately print and file your e-mails.

For more information on the Department's policy for retaining e-mails, see IRM Bulletin 96-06 (July 25, 1996); IRM Bulletin No. 1997-002 (May 12, 1997); IRM

Bulletin No. 1999-001 (Feb. 18, 1999); or call Alan Burke at 202-208-6479.