



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

NOV 23 2009

Dear Tribal Leader:

Greetings! On behalf of the Department of the Interior, please accept our thanks and appreciation for your participation in President Obama's historic Tribal Leaders Conference held on November 5, 2009. As a result of this significant event, we, collectively, have much work ahead of us. We look forward to collaborating with all tribal nations to achieve Indian Country objectives.

One important outcome of the Conference was President Obama's signed memorandum on Tribal Consultation directing that all Federal department and agency heads develop a plan of action to implement the policies and directives of Executive Order (EO) 13175, *Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments*. The President's memorandum directs all Federal agencies to complete this plan of action, after consulting with Indian tribes and tribal officials, and then submit the plan to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget within 90 days.

The Department of the Interior, as the primary agency responsible for interacting with Indian tribes, takes this directive very seriously. As such, the Office of the Secretary, along with the Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, will lead all Department bureaus in implementing the President's directive. While many bureaus have consultation policies in place, our overarching goal is to implement a consistent and comprehensive Department-wide tribal consultation policy and process upon which tribes can rely. Representatives from each of the Department of the Interior's bureaus will be represented in this collective effort.

It is imperative to begin this effort immediately and request that your tribe assist through participation in consultation meetings we are scheduling and through other communication with us. For the Department to develop a consultation action plan that respects tribal sovereignty, self-governance, and self-determination and maximizes tribal input and coordination, especially across such a diverse Department, your comments on how we can improve our actions is critical. Please consider that your comments might include, but certainly are not limited to:

- What Federal actions of the Department should initiate consultation?
- At what point in the process should tribes be involved and participate?
- How far in advance should the Department and its bureaus give notice of consultation?
- Who should participate in consultation?
- How should consultation occur?
- Should timelines be considered in consultation processes?

- How should consultation follow-up occur?
- How should the Department coordinate among its agencies and bureaus as well as with other Federal departments?
- What, if any, alternatives might be employed such as conferences, workshop sessions, or task forces to improve communication and coordination with tribes?


As President Obama stated in his Tribal Consultation Memorandum, "consultation is a critical ingredient of a sound and productive Federal-tribal relationship." We strongly agree and support the President's effort to improve relations. Therefore, your participation is invaluable to strengthen that government-to-government relationship.

We hope your nation will join together with us to develop this plan. We welcome you and your thoughtful responses. Enclosed are details for the consultation sessions, written comments, and contact information.

For your convenience, we have enclosed President Obama's Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Executive Order 13175.

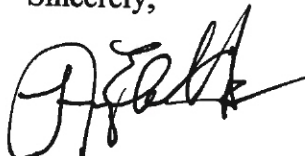
If you have any questions, please contact the Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs at (202) 208-7163. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



David Hayes
Deputy Secretary

Sincerely,



Larry Echo Hawk
Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs

Enclosure

Department of Interior Consultation Participant Information

Formal Written Comments

Please submit written comments *no later than January 15, 2009* by e-mail or postal service.

E-mail Address: tribalconsultation@bia.gov

Mailing Address: Office of Assistant Secretary
(Fed Ex suggested) Indian Affairs
Department of the Interior
MS 4141
1849 "C" St NW
Washington, DC 20240

Consultation Sessions:

Wednesday, December 2, 2009 Time: 9:00-12:00
BIA Provider's Conference 1:00-4:00
Egan Convention Center
Anchorage, Alaska

Wednesday, December 9, 2009 Time: 9:00-12:00
Location TBD 1:00-4:00
Portland, Oregon

Monday, December 14, 2009 Time: 9:00-12:00
Location TBD 1:00-4:00
Washington, DC

Tuesday, January 5, 2010 Time: 9:00-12:00
Location TBD 1:00-4:00
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Thursday, January 7, 2010 Time: 9:00-12:00
Location TBD 1:00-4:00
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Tuesday January 12, 2010 Time: 9:00-12:00
Location TBD 1:00-4:00
Phoenix, Arizona

Thursday, January 14, 2010 Time: 9:00-12:00
Location TBD 1:00-4:00
Sacramento, California

For questions, please contact the Department of the Interior's Office of Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs at (202) 208-7163. Forthcoming information will be posted as it becomes available at www.bia.gov.