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U.S. Department of Labor
Office of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C.
Release Number: 12-2358-NAT

For Immediate Release

Nov. 30, 2012

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US Department of Labor to publish final tribal consultation policy

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Labor will publish in the Federal Register next week its finalized tribal consultation policy, which establishes a formal process through which the department will engage in consultation with federally recognized tribes on actions or policies that will have a significant impact on tribal nations. This policy requires that the department's government-to-government consultation with the federally recognized tribes involve appropriate tribal and department officials.

“The finalization of the Department of Labor’s tribal consultation policy constitutes an important step in our ongoing efforts to more meaningfully engage with Indian Country,” said Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis. “Implementation of this policy will ensure that the department honors the government-to-government relationship shared between the United States and the federally recognized tribes.”

President Obama previously has cited Executive Order 13175, which was issued by President Clinton, tasking executive branch departments and agencies with engaging in regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with tribal officials in the development of federal policies that have tribal implications. Following the president’s charge, the Department of Labor began devising a plan. The Department of Labor held a series of consultative listening sessions, including meetings with representatives of the Native American community, the department’s Native American Employment and Training Council and the National Congress of American Indians, preceding the finalization of the tribal consultation policy. A draft version of the policy was published in the Federal Register on April 18, 2012, followed by a comment period that ended June 18.

The final policy will be published during the week of Dec. 3. A copy can be viewed at <http://www.dol.gov/ope/tribal-consultation-policy.htm>.

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