Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov
For Immediate Release: September 13, 2017
Print PDF

WASHINGTON – U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke today announced that he has named John Tahsuda III, a member of the Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma, as DOI's Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs (PDAS). The appointment was effective September 3, 2017. The PDAS serves as the first assistant and principal advisor to the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs in the development and interpretation of policies affecting Indian Affairs bureaus, offices and programs.

"I want to welcome John Tahsuda to my Indian Affairs leadership team," said Secretary Zinke. "John possesses extensive experience in federal Indian law and tribal government, and deeply understands and respects our government-to-government relationship with tribes. He'll be a strong leader for the Indian Affairs organization."

"I appreciate Secretary Zinke for giving me this tremendous opportunity to bring greater prosperity to tribes and their communities," Tahsuda said. "I'm looking forward to working with tribal leaders on finding ways to make Indian Affairs programs more responsive to their needs."

Tahsuda joined the Department from Washington, D.C.-based Navigators Global, LLC, where he was a principal. Navigators Global is a company that specializes in and offers a wide range of political services to multiple industry sectors, including financial services, insurance, energy, health care, defense, emergency management, American Indian tribal affairs, and high tech/telecommunications.

He led the company's tribal affairs practice providing clients with advocacy and counsel services on a range of tribal affairs policy issues at state and federal levels, including gaming, tax incentives, tobacco sales, land-into-trust issues, health care, economic development, energy policy, federal recognition, and self-governance.

Before joining Navigators Global, Tahsuda had served on the staff of the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs since 2002, first as senior counsel and later as staff director, where he directed policy and legislative efforts relating to Indian tribes. He also was directly responsible for federal policy and legislation affecting gaming, federal recognition, self-governance, and Indian health care.

Prior to joining the Committee's staff, Tahsuda was engaged in private practice providing legal advice and legislative counseling to Indian tribes and tribal organizations. From 1999 to 2001, he served as general counsel and legislative director of the National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA), the Indian gaming industry's trade association, where he monitored legislation and policy issues affecting the organization's 180 member tribes and assisted them in their lobbying efforts.

In the years preceding his tenure at NIGA, Tahsuda served the Oneida Indian Nation of New York as acting general counsel with responsibilities that included overseeing its legal needs and business enterprises. From 1997 through 2001, he also served as an adjunct professor of law at Cornell Law School where he taught courses on federal Indian law, policy and history.

Tahsuda received a juris doctorate from Cornell Law School in 1993 and a Bachelor of Science degree

from Oklahoma State University in 1990.

###

For Immediate Release: September 13, 2017

