Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Comment period deadline is extended to November 28.

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WASHINGTON, DC – Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Kevin K. Washburn today announced that the Department of the Interior has extended the public comment period to Nov. 28, 2014, on proposed regulations to reform the process by which rights-of-way on Indian land are approved and managed. This third extension is in response to a request by Senators John Barrasso and John Hoeven to allow further comments following the most recent tribal consultation held during this week's National Congress of American Indians Annual Convention. Tribal comments received during the consultation were largely supportive of BIA's efforts to update right-of-way regulations that have not been revised in more than 30 years.

The proposed rule was published on June 17, 2014. The Department has hosted four tribal consultation sessions and one public hearing on the proposed rule. The initial comment period deadline of August 18 was extended to October 2, 2014. The Department again extended the comment deadline to November 3, 2014. As a result of this latest extension, comments are now due November 28, 2014.

The draft rule proposes to update Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) regulations at 25 CFR 169 that govern rights-of-way across Indian land which were promulgated more than 40 years ago and last updated more than 30 years ago. The regulations have been deemed ill-suited for the modern requirements for rights-of-way, including the need for faster timelines for BIA approval.

The Department is proposing to streamline the process for obtaining BIA approval and ensure seamless consistency with recently promulgated BIA leasing regulations. It also seeks to make the process more efficient and transparent, increase flexibility in compensation and valuations, and support landowner decisions on land use.

For additional information on the proposed rule, visit

http://www.bia.gov/WhoWeAre/AS-IA/ORM/RightsofWay/index.htm.

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