Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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For Immediate Release: March 16, 2012
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WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Department of the Interior today announced that there is a 15-day extension to the public comment period on the Cobell Land Consolidation Draft Plan. The public comment period will now end on April 3, 2012.

The Cobell Land Consolidation Program will not be implemented until all court approvals are final; however, Interior has prepared the draft plan to continue the tribal consultation on the development of the program.

In accordance with the $3.4 billion Cobell Settlement a $1.9 billion land consolidation fund is to be used to purchase fractionated interests in trust or restricted fee lands from willing sellers to benefit tribal communities and aid in land consolidation.

The initial publication in the Federal Register, on February 23, 2012, opened a 45-day comment period on the draft Cobell Land Consolidation Plan. The plan seeks to remedy the proliferation of thousands of new trust accounts caused by the increasing subdivision or “fractionation” of trust and restricted fee land interests through succeeding generations. The draft consolidation plan proposes a voluntary buy-back and consolidation of fractionated trust and restricted fee land interests that would occur over a 10-year period after the Cobell Settlement becomes final. This extension of 15-days will allow for more time due to numerous requests from Indian Country.

More information on the Cobell Trust Land Consolidation Program can be found at: http://www.doi.gov/cobell

The Cobell Land Consolidation Draft Plan can be found here.

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