Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON, D.C.— In a letter to the Tejon Indian Tribe of California, Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Larry Echo Hawk reaffirmed the federal relationship between the United States and the Tejon Indian Tribe. The Assistant Secretary's letter confirms that the Tribe has a relationship with the federal government.

The Tejon Indian Tribe first requested confirmation of its status in 2006. Due to an administrative error, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) failed for several years to place the Tejon Indian Tribe on the list of federally recognized tribes that the BIA is required to publish annually. That list, entitled "Indian Entities Recognized and Eligible to Receive Services from the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs," was last published in the Federal Register on October 1, 2010 at 75 FR 60810, and the list was supplemented on October 27, 2010 at 75 FR 66124.

In his letter to the Tejon Indian Tribe, the Assistant Secretary stated that "[u]pon review of the facts and history of this matter, including prior Assistant Secretaries' decisions, I herby reaffirm the federal relationship between the United States and the Tejon Indian Tribe, thus concluding the long and unfortunate omission of the Tejon Indian Tribe from the list of federally recognized tribes."

The Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs discharges the duties of the Secretary of the Interior with the authority and direct responsibility to strengthen the government-to-government relationship with the nation's 566 federally recognized tribes, advocate policies that support Indian self-determination, protect and preserve Indian trust assets, and administer a wide array of laws, regulations and functions relating to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes, tribal members and individual trust beneficiaries. The Assistant Secretary oversees the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Bureau of Indian Education. For more information, visit www.indianaffairs.gov.

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The Honorable Kathryn Montes Morgan
Chairwoman. Tejon Indian Tribe
2234 4th Street
Wasco, California 93280

Dear Chairwoman Morgan:

Please accept this response to your June 14, 2009 letter requesting "confirmation" that the Tejon Indian Tribe is a federally recognized Indian tribe, or, in the alternative, permitting the Tribe to organize as a half-blood community under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (IRA). My letter is limited to your request for "confirmation" and does not address the alternative request.

Under limited circumstances, Indian tribes omitted from a list of Indian Tribal Entities because of an administrative error can be placed on the current list without going through the Federal acknowledgment process at 25 CFR Part 83. As a threshold matter, I find that an Assistant Secretary's

authority to make this determination is not limited by the regulations at 25 CFR Part 83. In addition, pursuant to 25 CFR Part 1.2, a waiver of the regulations at 25 CFR Part 83 is permissible for my review of your request.

Upon review of the facts and history of this matter, including prior Assistant Secretaries' decisions, I hereby affirm the Federal relationship between the United States and the Tejon Indian Tribe. This concludes the long and unfortunate omission of the Tejon Indian Tribe from the list of federally recognized tribes.

Henceforth, the Tejon Indian Tribe will be included on the list of "Indian Entities Recognized and Eligible to Receive Services from the United States Bureau of lndian Affairs." The BIA last published this list in the Federal Register on October 1, 2010, at 75 FR 60810 and supplemented the list on October 27, 2010, at 75 FR 66124.

By copy of this letter, I am directing the BIA and specifically the Pacific Regional Office in Sacramento, California, to take appropriate action to deal with the Tejon Indian Tribe in accordance with this action.

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