Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Ralph Gonzales (0) 202/219~4150
For Immediate Release: January 18, 1996
Print PDF

Ada E. Deer, Assistant Secretary Indian Affairs, issued a notice today declining to acknowledge the Ramapough Mountain Indians Inc., as a federally recognized tribe.

A Proposed Finding to decline to acknowledge the Ramapough Mountain Indians Inc., was first published in the FEDERAL REGISTER on December 8, 1993 and the original 180-day comment period was extended until May 8, 1995. The 60-day comment period for the Ramapoughs to respond to third-party comments ended on July 10, 1995.

As a result of this publication, the Bureau of Indian Affairs conducted an extensive review of (1) the Ramapough's response to the Proposed Finding, (2) the comments submitted by interested and third parties, (3) the Ramapough' s response to the public comments, and (4) researched additional historic records in order to arrive at a final determination regarding their status.

Based on this review, the Bureau of Indian Affairs has determined that the Ramapough Mountain Indians, Inc., do not meet three of the seven mandatory criteria for acknowledgement as an Indian tribe under Federal law. Specifically, the Ramapoughs failed to meet criteria b, c, and e, of the federal regulations (25 CFR 83.7) because they did not exist as a distinct community from historic times to the present, did not maintain political influence or authority over their members from historic contact to present, and their membership does not descend from a tribe of American Indians or from tribes that combined and functioned as a single autonomous entity.

This decision will become effective in 90 days unless the tribe requests a reconsideration before the Interior Board of Indian Appeals.