Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – On Thursday, May 15, Deputy Secretary of the Interior Michael Connor will hold a news media teleconference to discuss the schedule for the continued implementation of the Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations (Buy-Back Program) through the end of calendar year 2015. Connor will be joined by Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Kevin K. Washburn.

The Buy-Back Program implements the land consolidation component of the Cobell Settlement, which provided $1.9 billion to purchase fractional interests in trust or restricted land from willing sellers at fair market value within a 10-year period.

Land fractionation is a serious problem across Indian Country. As lands are passed down through generations, they gain more owners. Many tracts now have hundreds and even thousands of individual owners. Because it is difficult to gain landowner consensus, the lands often lie idle and cannot be used for any beneficial purpose. There are now more than 245,000 owners of more than 3 million fractionated interests, spanning 150 Indian reservations, who are eligible to participate in the Buy-Back Program.

WHO: **Michael Connor**, Deputy Secretary of Interior

Kevin K. Washburn, Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

WHAT: News media teleconference concerning the Cobell Settlement Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations

WHEN: Thursday, May 15, 2014 at 2:00pm EDT

MEDIA: Credentialed members of the media can participate in the teleconference by calling 1-877-917-1556 and entering the passcode INTERIOR.