Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Action brings to 18 the number of federally recognized tribes with leasing regulations approved under the Act

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – In keeping with President Obama's commitment to empowering tribal nations and strengthening their economies, Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Kevin K. Washburn today announced his approval of three separate land leasing codes for the Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin. Today's action brings to 18 the number of federally recognized tribes whose land leasing regulations have been approved by the Department of the Interior in accordance with the Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Homeownership (or HEARTH) Act.

"I congratulate the Ho-Chunk Nation on joining the growing number of tribal governments with approved land leasing authority under the HEARTH Act," Washburn said. "The Act provides tribal nations with the means to achieve greater control over their economic futures. With each step forward, Indian Country demonstrates its ability to guide the economic progress of its people now and into the future."

The 7,400-plus member Ho-Chunk Nation, which is headquartered in the city of Black River Falls, submitted its proposed codes for agricultural, business site and residential leasing to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) last year.

"There's no single greater accomplishment of any tribal government than standing on its own without having to ask the federal government for permission," said Ho-Chunk President Jon Greendeer. "That's sovereignty, that's what we work for. We have drastically increased our ability to exercise our sovereignty over our own lands."

The HEARTH Act restores the authority of federally recognized tribes to develop and implement their own laws governing the long-term leasing of Indian lands for residential, business, renewable energy, and other purposes. Upon one-time approval of their regulations by the Department, tribes then have the authority to process land leases without BIA approval, thereby greatly expediting leasing approval for homes and small businesses in Indian Country.

Tribes whose leasing regulations have been approved under the HEARTH Act to-date are:

- Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, Calif. (Business)
- Pueblo of Sandia, N.M. (Business)
- Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, Mich. (Residential)
- Ak-Chin Indian Community, Ariz. (Business)
- Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians, Calif. (Business)
- Citizen Potawatomi Nation, Okla. (Business)
- Ewiiaapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians, Calif. (Business)

- Kaw Nation, Okla. (Business)
- Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, Washington State (Business)
- Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians, Calif. (Business)
- Wichita and Affiliated Tribes, Okla. (Business)
- Mohegan Tribe of Indians of Connecticut (Business)
- Navajo Nation General Leasing Regulations, Ariz., N.M. and Utah
- Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Calif. (Business)
- Seminole Tribe of Florida (Individual Business and Residential Ordinances)
- Cowlitz Indian Tribe, Washington State (Business)
- Oneida Indian Nation, N.Y. (Business)
- Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin (Business, Residential and Agricultural Codes)

The Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Homeownership, or HEARTH, Act, which Congress passed with overwhelming bipartisan support, was signed by President Obama on July 30, 2012. For more information on the HEARTH Act, visit the Indian Affairs website at http://www.indianaffairs.gov/WhoWeAre/BIA/OTS/HEARTH/index.htm.

The Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs oversees the BIA, which is headed by a director who is responsible for managing day-to-day operations through four offices – Indian Services, Justice Services, Trust Services, and Field Operations. These offices directly administer or fund tribally based infrastructure, law enforcement, social services, tribal governance, natural and energy resources, and trust land and resources management programs for the nation's federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes through 12 regional offices and 81 agencies