Action Follows President Obama's November 5 Executive Memorandum

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Washington, D.C. – The Department of the Interior today launched a new effort to develop a Department-wide policy on tribal consultation, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Larry Echo Hawk announced today. The new consultation policy will be developed with input from the nation's 564 federally recognized tribes.

"President Obama respects the inherent sovereignty of Indian nations and believes that the federal government must honor its commitments to American Indian and Alaska Native communities," said Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. "The President's Executive Order on consultation recognizes that the federal government has a responsibility to uphold not just a government-to-government relationship with tribes, but a nation-to-nation relationship. That is why we are working to implement a consistent and comprehensive Department-wide tribal consultation policy and process upon which tribes can rely."

The effort announced today is consistent with the requirements of an executive memorandum issued by President Obama on November 5 that directs all Federal departments and agencies to develop a "plan of actions" to implement the policies and directives of Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, issued by President Clinton on November 6, 2000. President Obama signed the memorandum at the White House Tribal Nations Conference held at the Interior Department's headquarters in D.C.

"On November 5, President Obama issued his executive memorandum supporting tribal consultation as 'a critical ingredient of a sound and productive Federal-tribal relationship'," Echo Hawk said. "The effort we are undertaking today to develop Interior's plan as called for by the President will begin a new and positive chapter in the history of Federal-tribal relations."

President Obama has directed each agency head to submit to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) within 90 days of the date of his memorandum a detailed plan of actions the agency will take to implement the policies and directive of Executive Order 13175. The Department is seeking tribal comments via email, regular mail and in real-time meetings by January 15, 2010, on questions asking what the parameters of a comprehensive Interior Department-wide consultation policy should entail.

Also announced today is the preliminary schedule of Departmental tribal consultation meetings:

2009 (All times are local time)

Date: Wednesday, December 2
Times: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon/1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Location: Bureau of Indian Affairs Providers Conference Egan Convention Center, Anchorage, Alaska
Date: Wednesday, December 9
Times: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon/1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Location: Portland, Ore. Site to be announced.
Date: Monday, December 14
Times: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon/1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Location: Washington, D.C. Site to be announced.

2010 (All times are local time)

Date: Tuesday, January 5
Times: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon/1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Location: Minneapolis, Minn. Site to be announced.
Date: Thursday, January 7
Times: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon/1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Location: Oklahoma City, Okla. Site to be announced.
Date: Tuesday, January 12
Times: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon/1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Location: Phoenix, Ariz. Site to be announced.
Date: Thursday, January 14
Times: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon/1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Location: Sacramento, Calif. Site to be announced.

To view “Tribal Consultation, Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies” and “Executive Order 13175 – Consultation and Coordination With Indian Tribal Governments”, visit http://www.indianaffairs.gov/WhoWeAre/AS-IA/Consultation/index.htm and scroll down to the section “Presidential and BIA Tribal Consultation Documents”
