Media Contact: Frank Quimby, (202) 208-6416 | Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
For Immediate Release: May 20, 2009
Print PDF

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today lauded the Senate's approval of Larry Echo Hawk, a law professor and former Idaho Attorney General and state legislator, as Interior's Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. The President had nominated Echo Hawk on April 20, 2009.

"Larry Echo Hawk has spent his life working on behalf of American Indian communities," Secretary Salazar said. "He is a dedicated public servant with excellent leadership abilities and the legal expertise and legislative experience to help us carry out President Obama's commitment to build stronger Indian economies and safer Indian communities. Together we will work cooperatively with the federally-recognized tribes to empower American Indian and Alaska Native people, restore the integrity of the government-to-government relationship and fulfill the United States' trust responsibilities."

Echo Hawk, currently a professor of law at Brigham Young University's J. Reuben Clark Law School, began his career as a legal services attorney, working for impoverished Indian people in California, then opened a private law office in Salt Lake City. In 1977, he was hired as tribal attorney for the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes at the Fort Hall Indian Reservation in Idaho, a position he held for more than eight years. He became special counsel to the tribe in 1998. He is admitted to the bar in Idaho, Utah, and California.

A member of the Pawnee Nation, Echo Hawk has served on the American Indian Services National Advisory Board and Board of Trustees, the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Indian Alcoholism Counseling and Recovery House Program and the American Indian Community Resource Center Board. A former U. S. Marine, Echo Hawk was elected Attorney General of Idaho in 1990, the first American Indian in U.S. history elected as a state attorney general. He had served as the Bannock County Prosecuting Attorney since 1986. Before that, he served two consecutive terms in the Idaho House of Representatives, from 1982 to 1986.

Echo Hawk received his Juris Doctor degree from the University of Utah in 1973 and attended Stanford Graduate School of Business's MBA Program, 1974-1975. He has received numerous awards and honors, including Distinguished Alumnus Awards from both Brigham Young University (1992) and the University of Utah (2003). In 1991, he was awarded George Washington University's Martin Luther King medal for his contributions to human rights, and was honored as a speaker at the Democratic National Convention. As Idaho's delegation Chair, he was the first American Indian to lead a state delegation to a national political convention. Echo Hawk received his Bachelor of Science degree from Brigham Young University in 1970, where he studied on an NCAA football scholarship and was named to the Western Athletic Conference All-Academic Football Team in 1969. He also earned Academic All-Conference First Team honors as a senior. Echo Hawk was honored in 1995 as the first BYU graduate to ever receive the National Collegiate Athletic Association's prestigious Silver Anniversary Award, given to a select few prominent athletes who have completed their collegiate athletic eligibility 25 years ago, and have distinguished themselves in their careers and personal lives.

Echo Hawk, 60, and his wife Terry have six children: Jennifer, Paul, Mark, Matthew, Emily and Michael; and 22 grandchildren.