Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON – Associate Deputy Secretary James E. Cason today announced that the Department of the Interior declined to acknowledge that the groups known as the Eastern Pequot Indians of Connecticut (EP) and the Paucatuck Eastern Pequot Indians of Connecticut (PEP) are Indian tribes within the meaning of Federal law. The Reconsidered Final Determination concluded that the Eastern Pequot Indians of Connecticut and the Paucatuck Eastern Indians Pequot of Connecticut did not meet two of seven mandatory requirements for Federal acknowledgment under 25 CFR Part 83, and therefore, did not meet the requirements for acknowledging a government-to-government relationship with the United States.

This decision reversed the June 24, 2002, Final Determinations to acknowledge the two petitioners, EP and PEP, as one group, known as the Historical Eastern Pequot Tribe. The State of Connecticut, the towns of Ledyard, North Stonington, and Preston, Connecticut, and a group known as the Wiquapaug Eastern Pequot Tribe challenged the Final Determinations before the Interior Board of Indian Appeals.

On May 12, 2005, the Interior Board of Indian Appeals vacated and remanded the Final Determinations to the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs for reconsideration, rejecting the use of state recognition of the Historical Eastern Pequot Tribe as evidence for criterion 83.7(b) “community” and 83.7(c) “political authority and influence” as defined in the regulations under 83.1. In response to the decision of the Interior Board of Indian Appeals, the Department reevaluated the specific state relationship with the Eastern Pequot to determine if it provided evidence of social interaction or political influence within the Eastern Pequot.

The reconsidered Final Determination found that the petitioners did not meet criterion 83.7(b), because of the division of the historical Eastern Pequot into two groups in the early 1980s. The two separate communities after the early 1980s are not the same community that existed before that time. Neither petitioner represented the entire Eastern Pequot group. The petitioners also did not meet criterion 83.7(c), because there was insufficient evidence of political authority or influence for the period 1913-1973. Also, since the division in 1983, the two groups did not meet criterion 83.7(c).

The Reconsidered Final Determination is final and effective for the Department of the Interior upon the date of publication of a notice, in the Federal Register, pursuant to 25 CFR § 83.11(h)(3).