Two Petitioners Acknowledged as One Tribe

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WASHINGTON – Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Neal A. McCaleb today announced his decision to acknowledge that the historical Eastern Pequot Tribe, of the Lantern Hill Reservation, North Stonington, Connecticut exists as an Indian tribe within the meaning of Federal law. The historical Eastern Pequot Tribe meets all of the mandatory criteria under 25 CFR Part 83, the Federal acknowledgment regulations, for a government-to-government relationship with the United States.

The historical Eastern Pequot Tribe was represented before the Department of the Interior by two petitioners: the Eastern Pequot Tribe (petition #35) and the Paucatuck Eastern Pequot Tribe (petition #113). The final determination finds that there is a single tribe composed of both petitioners. The Assistant Secretary has the authority to recognize a single tribe in the circumstance where it is represented by more than one petitioner.

A notice of the decision will be published in the Federal Register. The conclusions in each case are the same, but the analysis for each petitioner varies based on the arguments that they presented. The acknowledgment will become final 90 days from publication of the Federal Register notice unless either petitioner, or an interested party, files a request for reconsideration from the Interior Board of Indian Appeals (IBIA). The State of Connecticut, through the Offices of the Governor and Attorney General, the Towns of Ledyard, North Stonington and Preston, the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation and the Narragansett Indian Tribe of Rhode Island, as well as some unacknowledged Indian groups in Connecticut, are interested parties to this final determination.

After the Pequot War of 1637 the surviving Pequots were temporarily placed under the supervision of tribes allied with the English. Those Pequots whom the colonial government removed from the supervision of the Eastern Niantic sachem Ninigret in 1654 were subsequently governed by two Indian rulers: Harmon Garrett and Momoho. The Colony of Connecticut purchased the Lantern Hill land for Momoho's Pequots in 1683. Since then there has been an unbroken history of state recognition and a reservation for this tribe.

The historical Eastern Pequot Tribe has been identified continuously as an Indian entity since that time and has maintained a continuous community exercising political influence over its members from first sustained contact with non-Indians to the present. Members of the newly acknowledged tribe descend from persons identified by State and Federal records as members of the historical Eastern Pequot Tribe.

The Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs has responsibility for fulfilling the Department's trust responsibilities and promoting self-determination on behalf of tribal governments, American Indians, and Alaska Natives. The Assistant Secretary, who oversees the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Federal Acknowledgement Process, is also responsible for providing services to approximately 1.4 million American Indians and Alaska Natives who are members of the 559 federally recognized tribes.