Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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The Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs, Kevin Gover, today issued two proposed positive findings concerning petitions for Federal acknowledgment from the Eastern Pequot Indians and the Paucatuck Eastern Pequot Indians, both groups are headquartered in North Stonington, Connecticut.

Both petitioners meet the seven criteria for Federal acknowledgment under the federal regulations. (25 CFR Part 83) The positive proposed finding states that both petitioners are, singly and together, the continuation of a historically state-recognized tribe whose relationship with the State of Connecticut goes back to the early 1600's.

- The historical Eastern Pequot tribe has maintained a continuous historical government-to-government relationship with the State of Connecticut since colonial times;
- The historical Eastern Pequot tribe had a state reservation established in colonial times, and has retained its land area to the present;
- The historical Eastern Pequot tribe had members enumerated specifically as tribal members on he Federal Census, Special Indian Population Schedules, for 1900 and 1910.

The modem conflicts between the two have focused on their relationship with the State of Connecticut. The Eastern Pequot Indians of Connecticut have taken the position that there is only one tribe, but the Paucatuck Eastern Pequot Indians of Connecticut have taken the position that the ancestors of the other petitioner were not of Eastern Pequot ancestry and were never part of the tribe. The Department found that there was not sufficient information in the record to determine that there is only one tribe with two political factions.

The proposed positive findings for both petitioners do not prevent the Department, in the final determination stage, from recognizing a combined entity , or both petitioners, or either one of the current petitioners but not the other, or neither of the current petitioners, depending upon the evidence developed during the comment periods.

These are proposed findings based on available evidence. The next stage is a 180-day comment period during which petitioners and third parties may submit additional evidence and analysis. In addition to evidence and argument on the proposed findings in general, petitioners and interested parties, and informed parties may submit comments as to the Secretary's authority, under the circumstances of recent separation of the two petitioners, to acknowledge two tribes or only one tribe which encompasses them both as the continuation of the historic tribe. At the end of the 180 days, each petitioner will have 60 days in which to respond to comments from the other petitioner and third parties. The final determination will be based on both the new evidence submitted in response to the proposed finding and the original evidence used in formulating the proposed finding.