



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

SEP 10 2021

Dear Tribal Leader:

I am honored to serve as the new Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs. As I undertake the solemn duties of this position, I am making it a priority to reach out and garner input from Tribal leaders on several topics. The ability to protect and restore Tribal homelands is an important issue that the Department of the Interior (Department) will strive to improve and expand upon. As part of our process to undertake these efforts, we are seeking your input as to what the Department's top priorities should be with regard to several topics related to the protection and restoration of Tribal homelands. Please find enclosed a framing paper laying out topics and questions for your consideration.

To best accommodate your locations and ensure everyone's safety, we will be holding virtual sessions scheduled by time zone. If you are unable to make the session reserved for the time zone in which your Tribe is located, please feel free to join an alternate session. I look forward to speaking with you at one or more of the following sessions:

Alaska Time Zone

Monday, October 18, 2021
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. ADT
Please register in advance at:

<https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJItc-yopjqoHFybM7shIc8K5hb8oa0FJB4>

Eastern and Central Time Zones

Thursday, October 21, 2021
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. EDT / 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. CDT
Please register in advance at:

<https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJIscO6hpzwoHyTxxS4siXAZfsSB5ZixZRI>

Mountain Daylight Time Zone

Monday, October 25, 2021
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. MDT
Please register in advance at:

https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJIsduiuqjgsH74MwjdZpgw9uaCJVD_Uu_Y

Pacific and Mountain Standard Time Zones

Tuesday, October 26, 2021
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. PDT
Please register in advance at:

<https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJItd-qvqT4rGagVja9wUUoFds41BDPgMYc>

In addition to joining one of the consultation sessions listed above, please submit any written comments to consultation@bia.gov by 11:59 p.m. ET on Friday, November 5, 2021.

I look forward to speaking with you. If you have any questions regarding this effort in the meantime, please feel free to contact Ms. Elizabeth K. Appel, Director, Office of Regulatory Affairs & Collaborative Action, at (202) 738-6065 or elizabeth.appel@bia.gov.

Sincerely,



Bryan Newland
Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs

Enclosure



Framing Paper

Tribal Consultation on Protection and Restoration of Tribal Homelands

Protecting and restoring Tribal homelands is a key priority of the Department. While the importance of Tribal homelands undoubtedly touches upon many facets critical to Tribal sovereignty and self-determination, the consultation will focus on three specific topics: the land-into-trust process; leasing and rights-of-way; and sacred sites and treaty rights. As a starting point to facilitate discussion, the Department poses the questions stated below and organized by topic. Indian Affairs also welcomes additional comments and suggestions from Tribes beyond the questions listed.

Land-Into-Trust Process

1. Does the Department's land-into-trust process adequately allow Tribes to consolidate landholdings in or near existing reservations?
2. Does the Department's land-into-trust process adequately allow Tribes to establish homelands for landless Tribes?
3. How can the Department improve its land-into-trust process to facilitate protection of sacred sites, conservation, and the exercise of civil and criminal jurisdiction?
4. For Tribes in Alaska, how should the Department approach the land-into-trust process to adequately account for factors that are unique to Alaska?

Leasing and Rights-of-Way

5. Are the Department's existing regulations governing agricultural leasing on Indian lands adequate to protect the interests of Tribes and Indian landowners?
6. Are any changes needed to the Department's leasing and rights-of-way procedures to clarify taxing jurisdiction in Indian country and to promote economic development in Indian country?

Sacred Sites and Treaty Rights

7. What steps can the Department take to ensure that Tribes have the ability to protect their sacred places and access those sites to exercise religious rights?
8. What steps can the Department take to protect the exercise of off-reservation treaty rights, including habitat for treaty resources?
9. What actions can the Department take in relation to other agencies to ensure the protection of sacred sites and treaty rights?

Overall

10. What is the most pressing need for protection and restoration of Tribal homelands that the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs can help address?

Directions for Submitting Written Comments

Please submit any written comments in relation to these questions to: consultation@bia.gov by 11:59 Eastern Time on Friday, November 5, 2021.