U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

TRIBAL CONSULTATION

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR (DOI) REORGANIZATION

TRANSCRIPT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

Jackson Rancheria Casino Resort

12222 New York Ranch Road

Jackson, California 95642

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

REPORTED BY: Annette Romero, Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs and
Elizabeth K. Appel, Acting Chief of Staff, AS-IA

DATE OF PROCEEDINGS: June 19, 2018
ATTENDEES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY – INDIAN AFFAIRS:
John Tahsuda, III, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY – INDIAN AFFAIRS, OFFICE OF REGULATORY AFFAIRS AND COLLABORATIVE ACTION:
Elizabeth K. Appel, Director
Annette Romero

AUDIENCE MEMBERS

BEAR RIVER BAND OF THE ROHNERVILLE RANCHERIA:
David Montoya

CAHTO RANCHERIA TRIBE:
Aimie Lucas, Chairwoman

CLOVERDALE RANCHERIA:
Maria Elliott
Vickey Macias, Tribal Treasurer

CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF SILETZ:
Delores Pigsley, Chairwoman

IOWA TRIBE OF OKLAHOMA:
Michael Garcia

MECHOOPALA:
Cassy Wilson

NORTH FORK MONO RANCHERIA:
Leora Beihn
Elaine Fink, Vice-Chairwoman

REDDING RANCHERIA:
Jonathan Clifton
Jeremy Hayward
Michelle Hayward
Mike Hollowell, Attorney
Hope Wilkes
ATTENDEES (CONTINUED)

SCOTTS VALLEY BAND OF POMO INDIANS:
Shawn Davis

SUSANVILLE INDIAN RANCHERIA
Deana M. Boveé, Tribal Chairwoman
Rietta M. Amador

SQUAXIN ISLAND TRIBE:
Raymond Peters

TUOLUMNE BAND OF MEWUK INDIANS:
Dore Bietz

TRINIDAD RANCHERIA:
Shirley Laos

ALSO PRESENT:
Amy Dutschke, BIA, Pacific Regional Director
Michelle Deason, DOI, OST
PDAS TAHSUDA: Good morning, we’re going to kick off this consultation. This is a consultation on the Department of the Interior’s plan to reorganize the Department’s into unified regions and I have a slide show and I’ll, bear with me, I think the easiest discussion if I can go through it quickly just get that all out to you. We can go back and use that as a reference for discussion, that’s fine or we’ll just play it by ear after that. So, but I’d like to do that. We have a relatively small group here but our normal practice is to allow Tribal leaders for those who are representing their tribe formally for this consultation to speak first and then other folks will speak after that. We just want to ensure that we get all the formal Tribal comments on the record first. Having said that, we will have plenty of time after that anyone else after that to speak. We would also like if you can come up to the microphone, we don’t have a court reporter here today¹, we have a recording device. So if you speak, please come up to the mic it would help us in recording this consultation. And, if you will speak your name and what tribe you’re with before you either give your comments or if you have a question that helps with the record. My staff will also be trying to take notes as we go along as well. Also note, I don’t want you to be offended, but I have an iPad which I use to take notes as well during the session so that hopefully I get to all the questions that are raised. My brain capacity is not what is used to be so I find that helpful. So my name is John Tahsuda, I am the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, for the Department of the Interior. I have with me, Liz Appel who is our acting Chief of Staff and she is also head of our Regulatory Affairs group. So this is part of what she does as well as the pile of duties I have given her as well. We also have with me Amy Dutschke, I’m sure many of you know Amy is the Pacific Regional Director. We have other staff here

¹ This session was recorded and later transcribed by staff.
I’m sure you know most of them. If you have questions, you can reach out to them as well. But I want to ensure all of you that you can also reach out to my office directly as well, if you have questions or comments. We have a formal way to get written comments into the record you will see it at the end of the slide show I have. We would like to open up with a prayer to get us off on the right foot. Chairwoman Pigsley has agreed to do a prayer for us.

(A blessing was provided.)

PDAS TAHSUDA: Thank you, Chairwoman. So, part of this, I want to start off with as well and one of the questions is, where did this come from? So back in March of last year shortly after the change of office, President Trump issued an executive order that asked for each agency to give their own plan on how to reorganize and to solve the efficiency to the American people. Last year the Department sent out letters to Tribal leaders asking for input and also held listening sessions at six locations in May and June of last year. Since then we have had two listening sessions and this is the fourth of eight consultations that have been scheduled so far on this. Where are we now? So the reorganization plan, the formal plan that the President has asked for is still being worked out and still being drafted. We gave the agencies eighteen months... executive order sometime in October the Secretary will issue a [inaudible] plan to the President and Office of Management and Budget, who will review it. That will be really I anticipate that will be sort of a high-level plan discussion what his view or his vision is for the Department would be. So there is no finalized plan yet, there is still a lot of discussion. All of the bureaus are having with the various stakeholders they interact with. For you the Tribal leaders wanting to get through this initial discussion about the reorganization and your views on whether it is appropriate for the BIA to be a part of this or not, we haven’t gotten that far. Then there will be initial
consultation and initial discussion as to what the nuts and bolts of that would be

[inaudible] for our purposes now, we're just trying to get input from all of our stakeholders into the concept. So who are our stakeholders? For us, it is you guys, for other agencies, they have their own stakeholders. [inaudible] much of this group. We also have Congress who is a stakeholder for us, because much of this reorganization plan requires Congressional approval. So the plan will, ultimately plans for all the agencies will go to the President and to Congress and they will either approve or disapprove them. Hopefully they will approve them but we will have to wait and see. Now for [inaudible] restructuring how the government does work. A really important part, I would say a stakeholder for us is also our employees. This is a really big effort and they obviously have to have input and consensus from our [inaudible] stakeholders but this is also something that we have to have our employees committed to as well. It's a long term effort to change how the Department is restructured internally and for that we have to have consensus. So we are trying to do that as well. We're going around having these discussions with external stakeholders trying to talk to them as well. I've tried to do as much as I can in our regions and brief staff there with questions. We also have representatives from the Secretary's office who are going around to different regions of the country holding mass meetings across all the bureaus/locations trying to get this basic information [inaudible]. So, we're working hard on internal discussion as well. So, why is this important for Interior? One way to put it, is how big the Interior is so, we touch people in more ways in really probably more places than any other federal agency. We have over 2400 operating locations that include DC offices, field offices, bureaus, etcetera, twenty four locations in 12 time zones, that means literally half the globe. From US the Virgin Islands to the [inaudible] Pacific, we
have over 70,000 employees, and we have about 600+ thousand volunteers who help us with interaction at wildlands and parks. We also have a lot of folks who have volunteered at parks who work around various parts and has responsibilities. Surface area, 1/5 of the United States is in one way or another under the management and responsibility of the Department of the Interior. 530 billion surface acres, 700 billion sub-surface acres, 4.7 billion acres of outer farmland[inaudible]. And, really important in Indian Country as much as it is to the west, 45 billion acres of filled water the Department is responsible for. So, the Secretary’s vision for this is, was to say we should reorganize the Department. What does that mean? So really the Department has not been reorganized or [inaudible] and [inaudible] since the beginning, the Department was founded in 1849. Obviously the BIA is older than that. BIA got moved to the Department before to the Interior or Interior’s forearms to become civilians [inaudible] defense or war defense over time. Over the years, Interior has been given additional responsibilities. Expanded scope of [inaudible] responsible for as the country spread across the continent, as people thought of new things that the federal government who could take responsibility for. A lot of these things particularly in the West, Interior was handed responsibility for. As new responsibilities were handed a bit of stream of structures to deliver those services or handle those responsibilities for creating ultimately resulting in the spirit of bureaus across the Department. All the different visions have different things that are supposed to be accomplished and all on in service of the American people. What that means is we have a lot of bureaus and we don’t always communicate with each other at all. We have a lot of decisions that we actually have to interact with our sister bureaus with and Secretary’s goals is for us to improve that communication and coordination within the bureaus so that
ultimately we have better problem solving and more effective, faster decision making on your behalf or on behalf of other [inaudible]. So, the basic proposal that the Secretary has is create thirteen unified regions [inaudible]. So right now we have nine bureaus in the Department. 61 different geographic regions that we are operating under the Department. So, the Secretary would like to bring those different bureaus into common regions so that we all have similar agreements to operate in. After those regions, there would be created sort of a super-regional director, who will be able to be swapped before that unified region and be responsible ultimately for this communication and coordination amongst all bureaus who are operating geographically in that region. The Secretary has identified three primary functions that all the bureaus have a role in and that really are the ones that we have the greatest need for better communication between the bureaus and better and more coordinated decisions. These three things are recreation, conservation and permitting. Ultimately for our purposes that means the ultimate mission of the Interior is to respect and serve tribal sovereignty will be better accomplished through these functions. We will be able to ensure this ultimate mission on behalf of Indian Country. What is recreation, conservation? So, we have actions that we need to take whether it’s repairing a bridge or an [inaudible] on a river. We need to do for you or that you would like done or another agencies doing but that will impact water, or tribal roads or will impact in some other way the activities of the tribe. Those actions whether they’re done by us or by a contractor or even the federal government. They have a permit from us, Interior, right now all bureaus have a role in that permitting process but, they’re too isolated so our goal is for these permitting actions for the bureaus to begin communication and coordination [inaudible]. Similarly conservation, conservation includes both our environmental work as
well as relating biological opinions, etcetera, that we do for other conservation activities the Department does, those are really big ones for us. Environment and biological opinions, that we interact with the other bureaus, again the same thing, if there is a decision or an accident or a project that the Department has a role in. The Department at large whether it’s a small bureau or other, the Department at large ultimately has to make a decision on that or take an action. While one bureau will be the lead bureau that is usually the one with primary responsibilities, but again, all the bureaus in that region will likely have a role in that decision or that action. Right now[inaudible] the same process we tend to [inaudible] our different bureaus we come with our input and towards the end of the process the lead agency goes around asking for the other agencies for their input and nobody has coordinated that decision making, that thought process and added to that, that may be a priority for that bureau and region but that doesn’t mean that it’s a priority for the other bureau or region. They may have other decisions they’re trying to get through that are priorities for them so we have both this sort of this communication but this coordination issue as well on these issues. That would ultimately be a major responsibility as well Interior [inaudible] is to make sure that those bureaus start talking from day one. That the lead agency on this decision or action will have the coordination or that will have help from the other agencies from day one. And that there will ultimately be one decision coming up instead of three or four rather than bureaus to be reconciled. Again there would only be one decision that is reconciled all through the process. Recreation, is another one that, that we tend to be siloed into our bureaus, it’s not something you think is [inaudible] for Indian affairs. You think more often of wildlife refuges, park services, etcetera, While Bureau of Rec has a lot more recreation areas but, geographically accurate but is, for those parts of, or
for those reservations that abut onto other public land that we administer. The Secretary is
very intended Indian Country be included in this cohesive well-coordinated plan amongst
the different bureaus that have recreational responsibilities. So, parks, [inaudible] beaches,
our recreation areas, all these things right now outside of the park, outside of our bureaus.
They still are silent and so a park may get money, put money aside, put a stash [inaudible]
system [inaudible] their next wildlife refuge may [inaudible] an RV park. Wouldn’t it be
great to have those connected? There’s, for the Department that manages this so assisting
that process recreation process there is also an economic side to it. The recreation industry
is also over 800 billion dollars a year in this country and, so the Secretary is intent that one
Interior through its parks to facilitate that but for us he thinks this is a great opportunity
for tribes to be able to link themselves into this industry and into interior’s role in this
industry. So this is actually kind of an open door of opportunity that for tribes to be able to
have a bigger role in this and they can then in the same way that these decisions are made
or plans are made for recreation opportunities, etcetera Tribes will be able to be formally
part of that and if they see how our state of need to [inaudible] connect that to themselves
for their own needs or their own economic opportunities. They’ll have the ability to do that
at the very beginning. Where do we get the unified regions? So here are the proposed
unified regions in the black lines, we have superimposed over that. The colors are our
current BIA regions. So if you look at that you see, you see evidence of first look at this. The
Secretary said I want to throw aside history or throw aside politics. You look at the
different responsibilities the Department has for fish, and for water ways, for minerals, for
people of the tribes, etcetera. You know if you just took this from a scientist’s perspective,
how would you organize this Department? Geographically to try to meet all these
responsibilities and we have agencies, like the United States Geological Services, Survey.

And so they're basically going to [inaudible] the Secretary asked them to review the first
draft. So the original, unified region map came out of this concept, animal corridors, water
ways, ecosystems, etcetera. And then he turned it loose to the bureaus and he said, ok so
how can you work this, to fit more of your needs in the geographic regions and also the
people, that are the stakeholders that are important to you that you work with. And so that
kind of superimposed and brought us closer back to where the bureau or regions currently
are. And so you can see reflected still a lot of the State lines, right? A lot of them. Our
bureaus and our regions follow state lines while other bureaus do not. Besides they're sort
of reorganized in a way that still tracks major lines, wildlife corridors, etcetera [inaudible]
responsibilities. So, the ultimate goal for this, again, to have the thirteen unified regions is
to also not just improve this discussion between the bureaus which will allow more
decision be made in the field. So in the regions are we coordinating faster? Are we
coordinating better than they can hopefully reach a decision in that region without having
them come out to Washington, DC. What happens most of the time now, is you have a
decision or an action that needs to happen for one bureau, and they're often again waiting
‘til relatively towards the end of the process, getting input from the bureaus. There's
usually some kind of conflict, conflict in how they see facts, etcetera. So instead of having to
work that out through the process over the year or two it took to get there, that comes to
DC, and I'm sure most of you understand, when things come to DC, they slow down. So, by
better coordination, the hope is that one of these decisions will be worked out before they
have to be elevated to DC. But this Regional interior director will also have a responsibility
of doing everything he can to get those people into one decision, one agreed upon action in
that region. So again it doesn’t have to elevated to DC. That ultimately moves forward both
the [inaudible] and more resources should be left out in the field instead of coming to DC.
We have more action up there. And ultimately, the Secretary’s view on this, is this maybe
comes from his military background is that if we can get a clear direction and a clear
authority to the decision makers in the field, they can take that action and give them the
resources and they can take that action. It doesn’t have to back up come up through the
chain of command. That’s the best way for fast effective decision making and usually the
best decisions come out of the field. So this, Interior Regional Director will have a direct
line from the Deputy Secretary. So again, if he has a decision making from his region he has
the line directly to the Deputy Secretary if it’s a sort of a factual dispute the deputy
Secretary can solve immediately. If there is a policy question between the bureaus and the
Deputy Secretary can immediately tap the assistant secretaries working with those bureaus
and resolve that policy question. And again, there should be fast decision making because
it’s following the Deputy Secretary’s level of resolution. Again, the focus of this interior
Regional Director would be on those three primary functions, decisions that need to be
made coming out of those functions. There’s several concepts that have been discussed
about who this would be. We had a really good discussion back early in the year. Amy and
we had our regional directors and all the bureaus sent their regional directors to come to
DC. The Secretary hosted a two-day meeting there. This was a really good discussion. There
were several viewpoints on the Secretary’s proposal and one or the other but one option
would be to have a rotating interior director from the different bureau directors in that
region and so, I think that part of what we heard from the different regional directors for
us, was that there was good news about that in that each bureau will be able to elevate and
sort of instruct the other bureaus of why or what their mission or purpose are and how to
resolve those in other bureaus. It gives each bureau a chance to have their person also
understand other bureaus and their regional director and get the opportunity to work
directly with the, Deputy Secretary. There is another option, that the Secretary is also
considering would be the political person is the political appointee in that position to have,
that authority that carries with it a different authority than a career as a person does. And
they would then fill that role making sure that people know what they are supposed do in
that region and elevate decisions only when absolutely necessary to the Secretary. I
actually think that the Secretary is kind of leaning towards a rotating regional director
every two years at the bureau...um, he really I think, firmly believes that we ultimately have
the expertise we need out in the field management-wise. We just give folks the opportunity
to exercise this at different bureaus...but again, that's not the finalized decision. The
Secretary's Interior Regional Director is primarily intended to focus on those three
functions to resolve problems, get decision making out in the region, facilitating
interagency conflict if there is any and, one of the options that we hope will be possible
[inaudible] as well will be is to share some services in those regions. But I mean, services
like back-office services, like HR, IT, cranking out all the bureaus do their own pretty much
in their region seems like those would be areas for consolidation and free up resources.
The Secretary's vision for this is that if there are, and this is not a budget exercise, this is
not an intent to cut services or anything or consolidate, services between bureaus. But, I
mean, between services that we deliver to people or to the tribes but if there are resources
freed up, those will stay in the regions and to be used in the region. To better facilitate the
services that are used in that region. So, here's all the positives things, other [inaudible]
ultimately we would approve services equal, remove jurisdiction [inaudible] bureaus, it really, expands our ability in positive decisions between tribal lands, public lands, public water ways, etcetera [inaudible] Indian tribes. Alright, here is, here's where you can submit written comments, obviously you can provide oral comments today. We certainly encourage you to also take the opportunity to submit a larger written comment to this email address, consultation@bia.gov. We have put up as the target date for these first eight consultations, August 15th is the date to get comments in. We are already looking at scheduling additional consultations after these first eight as well. But we’re looking at doing additional consultations as well. So I want to tell you not to be worried that much about this August 15th date. Everyone can get your comments in sooner and we will have extend this comment period to accommodate these consultations probably later in August or September. So you can get your comments in. So, here is the current schedule we have, from here we go to Southern Cal, Alaska, Oklahoma and Mississippi. Part of the [inaudible] first initial [inaudible] one of the things we wanted to accomplish was to locate these and in what would be the new proposed unified regions. So, now that obviously means the inconvenience for some folks. The initial consultations that were going to be tacked on will make sure that all the Tribes be given an opportunity to have closer locations to participate in these consultations, so that’s it. I want to open it up for comments and I think since this is such a relatively small group, usually all the Tribal leader comments first and at the same time to respond but I think we can be a little more free-flowing. I have a couple of Tribal leaders on our list here and then we will open it up. We will start off with Chairman Lucas.

**MS. LUCAS:** Hi, everybody, my name is Aimie Lucas, Cahto Tribe of Laytonville Rancheria Chairwoman. We have, we’re located 225 miles northwest of here. Our traditional lands go
to the coast, coastal areas. I have 250 members on 200 acres of our tribal land, and excuse
the scripted speech, I gotta stay on track. I tend to let my emotions get in the way when it
comes to my native rights and my tribal members. So, I appreciate the opportunity to speak
with you here in California. I’m here today to voice the Tribe’s opposition of the proposed
BIA reorganization. The ....sorry, the lack of consultation: the Department did not request
tribal input in advance to the announcement that was proposing a reorganization of the
tribal regional boundaries across the Department, the bureaus including the BIA into
thirteen new regions that are designed primarily by the watersheds and ecosystem under
the proposed reorganization many of the current twelve BIA regions will be broken up and
drastically impacted. California will be cut into two. We are opposed to any proposal that
divides California tribes. Or eliminates the Pacific regional office. We understand that this
consultation is intended to be about the BIA regions and their functions should be include
in the Department of the Interior’s reorganization as stated in May 17, 2018 letter to
leader’s. However, it is narrowly impossible to comment on how to implement the, sorry, to
implement the principles of efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability. To improve
services to the tribes when there has been a lack of information in a restricted timeframe to
comment. This is not an effective tribal consultation. Tribes must be considered before the
Interior Department makes changes that directly impact them. So it is our recommendation
that a full assessment of the impact of the proposed reorganization and resulting
reassignment of the DOI program should be conducted by the Department in order to
provide meaningful guidance on the reorganization, a cost estimate and analysis on the
financial impact of the BIA and other programs serving Indian nations must be provided.
We also oppose any plans that favors states over Tribal nations. In the Department’s
presentation you stated that the proposed thirteen unified regions are based on the
watersheds and just for state lines. Where is the consideration for Tribal territories and
governments? We are nations, not ecosystems. It is unclear whether the Department has
already determined whether to apply the new regions on the map for the BIA regardless
we feel is unnecessary to achieve Department-wide consistency where the structure of the
BIA is considered. Regional consistency may be appropriate for the other divisions of the
DOI but is not appropriate for the BIA. In conclusion, a recommendation is that the DOI
take action on more pressing proposals put forward by Tribes to improve efficiency and
effectiveness and accountability of the DOI. Including correcting the current changes that to
the land into process. The administration has made it harder for the tribes to restore our
homelands. The regional office used to be, make decision on non-gaming land and to land-
into-trust applications. Currently the off land, reservation land into trust decisions are
made in Washington DC. We, at Cahto tribe, have been waiting since February to get our
one acre land into trust so we can build a gas station. And, currently we are still waiting and
there is a big developer that is getting ready to break ground across the way and is a big
impact on our, on my tribe’s economic development. And I would like to thank you for
letting me speak today and I’m also intended to write a written comment to the website.
Thank you, guys.

PDAS TAHSUDA: Chairwoman Pigsley.

MS. PIGSLEY: It was awful hard for me to get here but I’m glad you guys are here having
folks. It’s 200 miles away for me but I have to raise grandkids and it’s hard to get into all
this. Thank you, I appreciate your comments and thank you for hosting the meeting here at
the Rancheria. I would have never come here in other time cause it’s not on your way to anywhere. It’s kinda like where I’m from. Siletz is not on your way anywhere, you have to want to go there. I represent, my name is Delores Pigsley, I represent the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians in Oregon. We’re relatively a small tribe on the Oregon coast. We have, we’re a restored tribe. So when the tribe was restored we didn’t get a large land base, we actually didn’t get any. We had to buy land so we end up with about 10,000 acres of trust land. We have over 5,000 member, tribal member population. So we, have worked diligently to get land into trust and to be able to serve our people, the way other tribes that were not terminated are able to provide services. So whatever happens with the Bureau of Indian Affairs we’re very concerned. We lost our agency, it’s probably been three years ago. We were able to get services and we’re a timber tribe so we had to be able to have a fast process to approve timber sales. Since the agency is gone, the approval authority has gone to the regional director in Portland and that process has worked very well. Under the new reorganization, and we’re not opposed to change, we just want to understand what’s going to happen and how it is going to happen. And our recommendation is, when change happens, we need to know what it is and how it’s going to affect the efficiency of our operations. But what we’ve come to realize is that the regions need to have more authority than they have now. Everything that goes to DC goes in a big black hole and we spend a lot of money lobbying and trying to figure out where things are and what’s happening. One of the tribes in Oregon has been waiting for a decision on a gaming application for I think it’s about three years now. It’s an unfair process and hopefully this new process will make it more efficient. And it sounds to me like under the Secretary of Interior, he’s more concerned about opening up tribal lands for development for, natural resources, coal. I
know the agency has talked to tribes that have those kinds of resources. We do not, but we do have MOU’s with the [inaudible] National forest, the [inaudible] National Forest, the Willamette National Forest, so we already have a process by which to work with other bureaus and I don’t know what that looks like across the nation, if that’s true of other tribes. I know it’s true in Oregon. We also enjoyed having an area director that served us for many, many years. Probably too long but what I know about rotating people into jobs, it does not work. Every tribe has a different priority, different resources, different problems, there’s rural tribes, and there’s inter-city tribes, and if we look at the Bureau of Indian Education we know there’s big problems because they haven’t had a director for I don’t know how many director’s they’ve had, many. And so when we try to work with BIE, you have to talk to somebody in Albuquerque, you got to talk to somebody in Washington DC or you got to talk to somebody in Seattle. So rotating is, I think, a bad idea. Anyway, every two years. And like I said we are not opposed to change but we need to know how that change is going to affect us and how it makes the process more efficient. Cause we had processes taken land into trust, took eight years in most cases. We have not had a regional director since December. So that process is not working well. I know John has a big job but I think, his heart is with the tribes we know that. And we know that we need to stay on this and keep the bureau informed and make sure that the Bureau of Indian Affairs isn’t overlooked under the Department of Interior. Because I think the Department of Interior has this not prioritized Tribal people as much as a prioritized recreation and conservation and those things that, have been spoken of. And the other question I have is, what is the process for the Department of Interior employees participate? Because I’ve been told in some areas that, employees’ have been told not to talk to anyone about it. It’s somethings that will be
decided by the tribes and, Department of Interior. So, those are my comments. I hope this process has many more consultations cause we don’t really know what’s going to happen other than the map that we’re looking at has changed since the first iteration of the change. But it’s important because of the people that we represent and the fact that every Administration that comes in has proposed changes to how they do business, and it’s true none of those changes have occurred or not many of them. So, thank you to the Rancheria for allowing me to be here today. Thank you John and hope you all have lots of comments on this process. Thank you.

PDAS TAHSUDA: You raise some good points, both of you Chairwomen. Let me try to address a couple of them right off the bat here. So, if I think I hear you correct, you are asking a couple of questions about the Bureaus specifically, and our Bureau employees, how does this impact them and how does this improve our regional process including getting RD’s in place, etcetera So, these are again, so let me say first off, this reorganization is not a reorganization of the BIA. This is not intended to reorganize the BIA. This is an intent to reorganize the Department. And we want to [inaudible] Secretary's office. So one, it doesn’t impact our employees at all other than someone like at Amy’s level. Who will be able to get more direction and get more opportunity to interact with other or fellow regional directors. But our staff, are going to keep their jobs. They are going to be in their agency offices where they are and I know that we have some slight differences on how we place staff in the Department. [inaudible] tribes different means but so there is no part of this plan to pull anybody out of their offices. It’s not intended to make people move. This was a really big discussion we had back in January about our RD’s not just BIA but all of our needs. The Department on behalf of their staff, you know strongly emphasized this point,
which I think is really good is that, you know, any intent to, even to just co-locate regional
offices. There's consequences for our staff, we understand that. So that would be
something that would be carefully thought out in the future. And how we do that, again
none of the bureaus want to pull their staff out of district offices, regional offices, etcetera.
We have great people who are doing great jobs there. They have built lives in these
communities, kids in schools, so we have no intention to disrupt people's lives in that way.
And if that's our employees and it would obviously be a huge disruption for you, for other
communities, that other bureaus interact with. And so, that's not the intent of this. This is
really an exercise in, poor organizational management, strategic decision making for the
organizations, and I will keep emphasizing primary purpose in this is these intra-bureau
decisions that have to be made. And so again, this is not reorganizing the BIA other than if
we do this, it would be the change in the regional structure. And so what does that mean for
us, for regional directors? We have a large [inaudible] because [inaudible] so that 13
unified regions, so none of [inaudible] because the 13 regions are actually Hawaii islands. I
have not heard any plans to locate regional directors for BIA in Hawaii. If I hear that I'll
probably have my name top of the list, so number-wise [inaudible] there may be some
change. Probably do that. I guess I would say probably at this point and time would be the
best time for us to do that for our regional directors because we have so few. This is this is
our problem in particular we don't have, [inaudible] I should say the organization has not
done the best job in these past few years of preparing our next generation of senior
management to be able to step up. And so we have, have great people who have served for
many, many years. Stan, Amy they are not going to be with us that much longer. But, and so
we're struggling right now and to be honest to have people who qualify for positions that
we can put them in. So, that’s the challenge for us. We’re working on that, that’s obviously a workforce issue. It’s not going to get any easier across the Department and this includes our bureaus. One fifth of our workforce is available for retirement in five years. No, I’m sorry. Forty percent of our workforce is eligible for retirement in five years. Forty percent, that’s a huge impact on us and that’s not just numbers when you think about it. This is forty percent of our staff who have years of experience that we’re going to lose. So this is a Department-wide issue and we’re working on it. We have to come up with something. We have it for our bureaus, particularly BIA. So, one if you have anybody you know that wants to work for the BIA send us their names. We need people to come in and start building their careers through us. There is now certainly more opportunities with tribes than there were 30 years ago. So we end up with competition for Indian people for the jobs. At the end of the day, we need people for the jobs that we perform as well. So that’s, our regional directors are, we have the process of rotating people is not intended to be disruptive to their lives to our work. It’s just a fact of life that we have to deal with and we I would say the government’s HR policies that we have to deal with as well. These are career people so we have the processes that we have to follow in reorganizing positions around. We obviously have responsibilities and try to make sure that we have all our bases covered. This is kind of a juggling act right now to be honest. I probably said enough about that. Are there other Tribes, Tribal leaders that would like to offer oral comments?

**MS. LAOS:** Good morning, my name is Shirley Laos. I represent Trinidad Rancheria we’re located in Humboldt county. I’m currently the governmental affairs coordinator, but I do have 28 years of experience on Tribal council. A lot of good comments have been made so far and I agree with a lot of those issues and again like change, change isn’t necessarily bad
but if we had a little not more information on how that change. Because we don’t have that yet and it’s hard to make definitive comments without having more information on how some of these proposed changes will be implemented. You know as far as efficiencies and effectiveness that was mentioned by the previous two speakers. But also the rotating directors that may or may not be a good thing and again, I think our tribe would have to reserve some of our comments as we get more information. And we plan to submit more robust written comments directly from you know our Tribal council. But we've been following this rather closely and discussing it all along, but it’s hard to discuss something when you don't have all the pieces yet. So I’m glad we’re having you know, this open conversation today because it sparks a lot more questions and, you know a little bit different way to think about it. One thing that came up, John, in your comments, your opening comments, was that some of these changes might result in more, more decisions being quickly made in the field. Well, I hope that’s true regarding fee-to-trust. Because we all know that along that process is and you’re right when things get to DC and it’s even longer. So regarding fee-to-trust, that would be really helpful if that was one of the efficiencies and effectiveness that was on the positive side for any changes that might, end up in this reorganization. That a lot of times it’s just education and people being familiar with the tribe or the fee to trust application, all the particulars. The closer you are to on the ground, the better informed you are to make that end decision, not somebody in Washington, DC that has never been to your area or is not familiar at all. So hopefully that would really prove out if that were true. And I also share concerns like Chairwoman Amie Lucas pointed out that the tribes are nations, not ecosystems. And so this idea of basing the proposed regions on watersheds that’s all good and fine if that was your primary focus, but
it isn’t. Particularly in California, there’s over 110 tribes. And historically, California has
been in the low end of the funding, not across the board, in transportation and in health
care, housing, all of these different fields. California doesn’t get near the amount of money
in this whole funding process that the tribe’s need. And then if it’s split, if California is split,
how is the parity going to be determined especially in those programs that filter down
through the state and the local areas. How are we going to count, our populations when
that’s a factor in applying for grants or programs that aren’t directly federal to the tribes?
So that’s just a big study in and of itself, how is it going to impact us? Our tribe has all those
questions and there could be more, much more here to my comments. I’m just trying to you
know give a brief overview of what some our concerns are. So, California is pretty unique
and just the make-up and the number of tribes that are here. And the number of out-of-
state individual Indian people that live here, that aren’t members of California tribes but
receive their services here. So you know that’s an impact that may or may not be affiliated
with this reorganization. And, Delores’s comments from Siletz about employee’s
participation and, you partly answered you know, responded to that. But that brings up a
pretty good point that the employees really know what work is being done on their end. So
I think that uniformly across the country it sounds like that is what you are doing. Their
input can be factored into this. I think that is going to be key. Because they’re the ones who
know how to deal with Indian tribes. One of the other things if they have rotating directors,
we’ll just have to start over on our education of people of these positions. On every level
education tribally, educating people of tribal just information, your needs, all of that is key
from a local level all the way to national. If the more you can education somebody about
your specific needs and conditions, the more apt they are to understand why you are
applying a certain way or applying for a certain program or need, certain monies. Because everybody's situation is similar, but yet distinct. And so then if we have rotating people, they may not be somebody that's educated tribally. So that's just, yes, that is an ongoing, task that we face this education of people but it'll just add to it. You'll have to be doing this ongoing and that brings up another thought that it's already been happening not just only with the Indian, with the DOI reorganization plan but with the whole Trump administration. This idea about of moving everybody around, we've already seen that and have been affected by that of moving people from one bureau you know. A BLM director might go to BIA and vice-versa, or whatever. And so then they have to you know get up to speed and that directly impacts tribes at the local level. So then, this is just going to be more of that. So that's a concern. I tried to mark as I was taking notes which places, so I'll come back up to the microphone if I think of anything else. But like I said our tribe will be submitting written comments at a later time. Thank you. [Applause]

PDAS TAHSUDA: Is it Louise? Shirley Laos. So many good points and comments. So one of the questions that I've heard several times you know at the other consultations is about rotating directors. You know what's going to happen if we have to keep educating people, etcetera. So, I guess I think that that won't be very impactful for this reason - that person is not supposed to be a subject matter expert in Indian bureaus necessarily. The rotating will obviously have a lot more familiarity with their original bureau, but the other regional directors will be there. They will still be the management and subject matter experts for their bureaus. Now I caution that as well and will say that the regional directors conceptually in our management system are not expected to be deep subject matter experts. They're supposed to be management experts. They have a staff that are the real
subject matter experts. Now, obviously we have folks that have been with us a long time for their entire professional careers. So, they have, some of them have the expertise as well, but that’s not lost in this system. So you still have the regional director there, the people, the staff, all whom have those relationships with the tribes within the regions. This Interior Regional Director is really like a traffic cop in a sense. He’s going to impose discipline, and again, focus on those three core areas. Decision making, problem solving and resolving conflicts if there are conflicts between the bureaus in that regions. That’s what his focus is so, it may mean any particular projects or decision that there is a need for some specialized expertise. Conceptually, that should already be there in the region, if he needs to tap to facilitate what he’s doing. Facilitating or resolving a conflict or thought or policy for bureaus in that region.

MAN: [inaudible]

PDAS TAHSUDA: Please state your name. Sorry to be so formal, but we don’t have a court reporter here today².

MR. HAYWARD: Alright. My name’s Jeremy Hayward, from Redding Rancheria Tribal Council. I just want to know how you can make decisions if you are not an expert in that field. You’re director who is running a staff and they’re coming to you to help make decisions and but you are not expected to be an expert. How could you make decisions on something that you know nothing about?

PDAS TAHSUDA: So we have a decision-making process for the Department. We are, whether it’s at my level or down, we don’t just say I think that’s the decision. We can’t act

² This session was recorded and later transcribed by staff.
arbitrarily. We have to have a rationale, because these are the facts there’s something involved, a science, we have to have a scientific basis it.

MR. HAYWARD: So basically you gotta know something about that, right?

PDAS TAHSUDA: So we have staff who does this, right? My job falls for these decisions is to make sure that my staff has adequately prepared information in order to make that decision. And if there is ultimately a policy call, that I make or the Secretary makes, I am responsible for getting him the information so that he can look at it and make an educated decision based on the facts and policy choices that are available. So the Secretary of the Interior doesn’t necessarily need to be a subject matter expert in everything that the Department does, right? That’s why we have senior management. Their job is to fully manage the people and to manage the process.

MR. HAYWARD: But if you’re creating policies and you’re making these decisions for the directors of the BIA, you have no knowledge about the decisions or the policies that you’re making. You’re reading something that somebody written and submitted. If you don’t have any knowledge about it, I just don’t understand how you just read something and you make a decision. I mean, to me, you should be an expert in Indian country and you should be able to, know something about the decisions that you’re making, the policies that you’re making. And so, in my position if I have somebody coming to me to change a policy and I know nothing about it, I can’t make that decision, because I’m not an expert in that area. If they’re bringing me stuff that I know things about, I feel like, yeah, I can make a decision about it. I just don’t understand how you cannot be an expert in Indian country and be a director of the BIA and I just don’t understand that.
PDAS TAHSUDA: Again, so our directors will be there. This is an overlay on top to help
resolve interagency conflict. [inaudible] It’s helpful, I’ve been around Indian country a lot
in years. Sure it’s helpful for me, when I’m looking at things [inaudible] that I have a
number of years and history. I’ve worked [inaudible] I have a perspective and I find that
helpful to me personally, but the way the government management is supposed to work, it
shouldn’t depend upon on my level to make a decision. We have a bureau of people who
work on this and they can help many of us with policy decisions that get made. And for us
they’re also legal as well as science considerations and executive orders that apply
specifically [inaudible] so I can’t just sort of arbitrarily decide what I think is the best
policy. I have to have a basis for doing that. So it ultimately, Amy can tell you this, so she’s
what’s called an SES, senior executive service. That’s our top career management people.
It’s great that she has been around for a long time and has a great knowledge. But again
that’s [inaudible] top senior management. She didn’t really know anything about bureaus,
specifically, right? She knew how to manage people. She knows how to meet people, to get
them motivated to do their jobs well, so that at the end of the day we get the information
that we need to get these decisions made. So now it’s probably important to be clear, it is
not intended that there be major policy decisions to be made by the regional interior
directors. Those are still the responsibilities of the bureau leadership, right? Or the bureau
director not a regional director, but the bureau director up to through the Assistant
Secretary and [inaudible]. Some major policy decisions are still being made there. In the
instance of a policy conflict between two bureaus, that happens a lot, right, with bureaus
that have issues sometimes their policies in any region are developed differently than our
policies [inaudible]. We have to resolve those so if that’s the case, it’s not really the
hierarchy's position unless the policies have already been made or it is clear we just have to instruct another bureau for the actual policies in the Department on the decision. His job is then to say okay, Mr. Deputy Secretary that I directly report to, we have a policy conflict here that I can't resolve. The Deputy Secretary can resolve it, then the Deputy Secretary turns to the two or three, however, many bureaus that policies [inaudible] those Assistant Secretaries and say, ok, what's the conflict, resolve it for us and then we have a Departmental policy, right, that could be applied across the bureaus in that region and probably across the country. But that's where that policy conflict resolution comes in. It goes back down to the regional interior director. Again, this is intended to be a more efficient way and effective way of resolving this. What happens now is that each of the bureaus go through their Assistant Secretaries to complain that the other bureaus are not following or are taking a different policy position than us. The Assistant Secretaries have a discussion and they meet with the Deputy Secretary, they have a discussion, right. So instead of all that happening, this is supposedly a direct line for this regional interior director to the Deputy Secretary. And then let him tap what he needs out of the assistant Secretary's own policy. Again, it's not necessary that this Interior Regional Director have this great in-depth knowledge of all the different policies that the other bureaus in his region have. It's necessary for him to be the traffic cop, right, and say, ok, you stop and clarify for the other guy, or, it is not clear here. I need to get a higher authority to facilitate that in a faster, more feasible way.

**UNKNOWN:** Can you just clarify the statement on the options that the bureaus [inaudible]

**PDAS TAHSUDA:** That's other options that the bureaus have. Yes sir.
MR. PETERS: In Washington State, our homelands are the southern inlets of Puget Sound.

Thank you to the Jackson Rancheria, for opening up your homelands. And John, I know how much you have put in to this and the opportunity to have consultation with the tribes. And we’ll be at other consultations as the progress. Just on that two-year rotations you know that, that continuity of the efficiencies that we are trying to create with this reorganization.

I appreciate what you said because in the NW we have had the benefit of having Stan Speaks in that continuity through the years. I would say the he is an expert in all things BIA, but he knows BIA through and through. So I think that the two-year rotation is really comprises what we’re trying to do. So find the right person and put that person in there. I agree 100 percent with you, it is that person that knows how to lead, that person that knows the different bureaus, that can bring people together and can be consistent. Because in the Indian country, we have, too often the bureau doesn’t give us that consistency and I think after two years of a different director; that would affect that continuity of efficiency.

I’m glad that you commented that the savings will stay within those regions that it won’t be stripped away as far a budget. But the key is in the implementation I think somebody else talked about it. It’s going to cost some money to implement this reorganization. And those budgets and those bureaus that are being consolidated in, it’s important that those are held in whole. And those budgets aren’t stripped as we are implementing this process. And through those efficiencies then we can go ahead and get some of those revenues or that budget redirected to things that would really matter in the regions and in Indian Country, so just comment on that. In the President’s proposal, he proposes to bring the Army Corp of Engineers into the Department of Interior.

PDAS TAHSUDA: Some functions.
MR. PETERS: Some functions, yes. And so, I was wondering how this is going to occur when the Secretary develops his plan. Will he actually suggest that? Any comment on that, in a minute, I just want to know how you propose that going. And then at the end, when the Secretary does take in all these comments and has his draft plan, I really believe it's important that he comes back around and gives us the opportunity to comment on those plans as well. So just a few comments there.

PDAS TAHSUDA: Thank you, so again, I am still not sure I'm being clear. So there would not be a rotation of the BIA regional director that person will stay. It would just be this Interior Regional Director. Now, we had arguments were all in DC and we had a lot of discussion about this. Those arguments on several different concepts on the rotating director that gives each of the bureaus and regions a chance to help elevate their bureau in that region to reach their decisions. There was a discussion about if could we just put another career person there, and, you know, it didn’t seem like there was much support for that. Our career people felt like if there was going to be somebody superimposed above them, that is not already part of the team, that they thought should be a political person. The way government organization leadership works, we have career leadership, and we have political leadership. And sometimes there is a value to that kind of level [inaudible] political leadership, career leadership that we have. So there was some good input from our RDs and maybe that’s the kind of person that should be there, one with political authority. The Deputy Secretary is a political position and so maybe it should be somebody that has this close relationship with him. So that’s several concepts. Two years, I think there is a feeling like well if you go longer than two years then it’s almost like putting a permanent
person there. So it’s going to be a [inaudible] person that has some reasonable time for location. There has been a lot of thoughts on that.

**MR. PETERS:** I appreciate the idea but it’s again, that continuity that I worry about. So many projects in each bureau that then comes in to the director may emphasize or change that process that his predecessor used. So, just something to think about.

**PDAS TAHSUDA:** Well, so again, these were all things that were discussed. So one argument for the rotating factors, is that one, a career person might favor a bureau over the others and that happens. You might think it doesn’t, but it does. The rotation being that the different regional directors who take turns getting elevated particular on long term projects can’t favor their bureau over others because pretty quickly in a couple of years there will be another bureau regional director who will be there. So there’s an element of fairness to that we have to ensure that everyone gets treated fairly so that my bureau region doesn’t suffer. There is a lot of arguments on all sides so I appreciate your thoughts.

Chairwoman, let me address a question that you raised there too. From the very beginning we talked about how we came up with the map and using basically the ecosystem, corridors, waterways, etcetera So, I think that, it’s not an illogical way to look at restructuring our bureaus as well because traditionally a lot of tribes also followed the ecosystems and settlements, villages, tribes who have been traditionally in certain regions of the country follow the ecosystems as well. So, I think in some ways that’s if you purely follow that, it would be a better way to follow than our current system is to follow state lines. Our current system in our regions developed just like all the bureaus did ad hoc is the bureaus standing, as the nation took on more responsibilities in our country, new states
were added, and then we ultimately needed a bureau. We originally had just reservations, we had agents on reservations. And it was the Department that did its own reorganization of bureaus and added regions [inaudible] all the work they were doing in the region, we did the same thing. We kind of felt that these certainly some common, we have Oklahoma, eastern Oklahoma, the western Oklahoma regions [inaudible]. There's also a certain amount of ad hoc where we follow State lines because often times Tribes are grouped in a State together, right? That's just kind of how the history so, I mean, there's probably a billion ways you can try to design a common region. But I think the Secretary's thought was mixing all both these other responsibilities along with other responsibilities to the Tribes, ecosystems. In some ways maybe the most logical places to start from. Sorry, Chairwoman.

**MS. LUCAS:** All things really said and done, do we really trust what the Administration is saying? Are you afraid for your job? The Administration has not proven to be [inaudible] its word and moving their positions. It’s a little scary.

**PDSA TAHSUDA:** I'm not sure, I don't think that we have any issues in our bureaus. We have had to move staff around, more than any other reason, is to cover bases in leadership vacancies. We have a couple of regional directors who have expressed interest. They would love to move to a different region. Just like a being a coach where at some point of time, sometimes you lose your effectiveness with the guys because you’re all too familiar with each other. That happens a little bit where we have a couple of a good ones who have asked to be moved to different regions. We also had, and some of those were good leaders, and they actually developed some of their deputies who are ready now to move up. So
they're being tried out as acting directors in different regions, etcetera. We’re trying. We’re trying to cover our bases is what we are trying to do.

MS. LUCAS: [Inaudible]

PDAS TAHSUDA: So one of the things, I haven’t done it, the Secretary has this great, that when he does his discussions, he has this great graphic he does talk about a river. So if a river flows through a region you have a decision, again, it could be a bridge, something that we need from a Tribe, could be an embankment, repair a dam, on the a river so often times we’ll have responsibility for water level and temperature above a dam. Interior can be responsible for the dam. The water itself we may or may not be responsible for. Or if we are, we likely have an Indian reservation, often have non-Indian irrigators. We may have a wildlife refuge that borders all that. Forest Service, Department of AG might have trees on there that are affected. All these different bureaus need to have a say in fixing some little bridge over the river, right? That’s a fact in life we have to deal with. Some of those agencies we can’t but we’re doing our best, as best as we can because they’re not a part of our Department. The Secretary said within our Department, there is no reason why we can’t have better cooperation and coordination amongst ourselves. So that’s part of that concept. So, one of those is that and part of it is in draft as well. Just think about how crazy this is, in that stream the trout we manage, the Interior manages, through Fish and Wildlife, but if there’s salmon in that stream, it’s regulated by the Department of Commerce, NIMS. So if this goes forward, one of the policies that you saw in the president is that we deregulate. So that would be something that seems to be common sense. There’s this whole story about why NIMS at Commerce anyway, with Richard Nixon being mad at someone. So
there was no scientific reason for it at that time even then. The Army Corp, we have so much interaction on waterways and other things. And that there is civilian functions that they do that just makes common sense for us to do. And again, if those are moved under the Secretary of Interior then he can make sure that those actions are a part of our priorities for the Department. As it stands now, the Department of Defense, they have their own set of priorities. So, that sort of a level of efficiency can achieve that.

MR. PETERS: So my question, specifically is will the Secretary actually have that in his plan to bring in those other agencies, NIMS, Corps? Will he support that idea?

PDAS TAHSUDA: Yes that was actually so. At some point early on when an executive order went out, it came through our Department so I’m speculating [inaudible] I think that the different Cabinet secretaries kind of said here’s our initial thoughts on some things that will be helpful amongst the Departments. He had put forward you should give me NIMS, right. Because if you put salmon, other fish, Army Corps for our interactive [inaudible] other water responsibilities. And I think he had asked for the Forest Services but it seems ridiculous that we have all these forest responsibilities and parks and stuff. And right next to them is often a national forest but we can’t do anything with them. They have again, a full set of priorities that are better theirs.

MR. PETERS: From that perspective, NW Indian Fishing Commission has done a lot of work and the tribes going back in emphasizing that the different departments need to take in account when they are making these decisions of permitting each agency needs to look at their responsibility as a trustee to the tribes and sometimes they make those decisions in silence as you said. So that could be a positive if it’s going to be in the framework of
deregulation and not making sure that people are going through the correct process, that’s a negative. That’s a real problem. Because the tribes, Squaxin, we’ve used the Army Corps in situations to make sure that groups, businesses, industry are doing things correctly, and so, just another thought.

**PDAS TAHSUDA:** And so the Secretary, you know, has repeatedly since I’ve been there, and I’m sure before I was there, emphasized that one of our Department’s priorities is to follow the law and science. Whether we require this by law or the science. Not just any science, but the best science, right. So, with that in mind, I think his belief is however the decision comes out, right, with one of the decisions is time and management. Because whether you support or oppose something, going through and getting that decision if it takes years and years to get there. It’s not just time but the immense amounts of money. And for our purposes with the tribes, those are big costs. And the Tribes suffer. We suffer because we have our role in it and, you know, that’s ultimately resources in my mind that are kind of squandered. If we can’t come to a decision on the environmental impacts within a reasonable period of time there are unique circumstances because of that. For most projects, we are now experimenting those. The Deputy Secretary has issued direction to get for every day decisions. We had environmental reviews in one year in 150 pages. You would be amazed at how hard it is with the simplest things for folks to get those reviews done. Just think, it takes a year to get a simple priority or a project. You’ve got a couple more years for all the other decisions to be made. So that’s why we end up with years long process for simple fee-to-trust or other things [inaudible]. So, along with this sort of strategic decision-making or reorganization, we are, the Department is working on sort of the internal common sense, improving process I guess you call it. So again, we are looking
at better coordination. We are working on common categorical exclusions. So believe it or not, even though NEPA says and specifies how do we look at [inaudible] we have different EIS's than BLM has, why is that? We have no idea and [inaudible] so we’re doing internal things like that as well. There is a federal government-wide effort on a couple of fronts. One of these is environmental is a good example in which the President has expressed his view that we ought to have one federal decision. And so not only are we only trying to follow the Secretary’s vision for us internally but the different Cabinet agencies that have a say in each decision are supposed to be working towards how we can have better coordination so that the same concept will apply to State Department has to work with us on collaborative opinion or simultaneous review. That we’re doing this at the beginning and not reaching it at the end. You know the same thing applies in that situation as it does for our Department-only decisions. We get sued on most decisions that we make. And particularly if there is a required Departmental review and often resolve these results in a lawsuit. But it is something dear to my heart, is for Indian country, obviously those slow things down. We often have self-inflicted wounds and results are probably in [inaudible] but how do you resolve these faster? Well, we have two or three different of our own bureaus that have come up with conflicting opinions. We’ve [inaudible]. So IF we were working together at the beginning on a decision among the bureaus in the Department than we would at least cut down on that. That’s kind of a self-inflicted wound in my opinion. Conceptually there is a federal government wide kind of effort on things like this but for my purposes is to really focus on the Secretary trying to envision how that could benefit Indian country. Do you guys want to take a break? Yes, Mam?
FEMALE: I have a question, would you happen to have a map that shows these waterways and watersheds and what not that they used as a basis for this proposal? Would there happen to be? Or do we have to guess?

PDAS TAHSUDA: So, I’m probably guessing there is one. So there’s early iterations that were sort of ecosystems only. They were never intended to be the ultimate maps. They were just to show where the starting place was so you’ll see like the upper Colorado basin, that’s following the river, but also beginning of the Rio Grande.

FEMALE: I know, right, but I just wanted to see if there was a map that we could use as a reference for the waterways.

PDAS TAHSUDA: So the Department has this unified region map but I’m not sure if they have, it has gone through different iterations, they have put out the different maps.

FEMALE: I think that they did, I was at NCAI at a workshop on this topic and it showed all 3 maps and I think the middle one had the regular waterways overlays. Because it had all the overlays and I think that’s on the website. It’s the one where that they show the three versions. One of those has the major waterways.

PDAS TAHSUDA: I know. I didn’t go to NCAI.

FEMALE: I thought, oh no, I think where I found it was. I looked back at the NCAI, they closed everything, and that’s where I looked back at. And also if you attended that workshops and got on their email list, they sent it to you also. But the waterways were on there so that was helpful. So if you want you give your email and ask NCAI or I can send you what they sent me.
PDAS TAHSUDA: I’m sure we still have it somewhere too though, so if you want to contact my office. So, we’ll take a quick bathroom break, about ten-fifteen minutes.

FEMALE: Hey John, you want to put me on?

PDAS TAHSUDA: What’s that? Oh, no. [laughter]

FEMALE: Can I go before the break? Because, sorry, I’ve been standing over an hour, waiting patiently. No, just kidding.

DORE BIETZ: Good morning, John. [Speaking in Native language] Dore Bietz for those that don’t know me. My name is Dore Bietz and on behalf of my Chairman, Kevin Day, from the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk who apologizes he could not be here, but asked me to say a few words. I want to thank the Tribal leaders and the Tribal elders in the room. I know while we are small in number, we are here all in heart because it is a concern. First and foremost, on behalf of the Tribe, currently we are not in favor of the reorganization. There are many things that we would like to know more. Devil’s in the details and I think that’s been raised by multiple Tribal leaders and speakers before me. We have a lot of concerns and questions. Kevin Day, our Chairman is also the Chairman of the Central California Tribal Chairman’s Association which comprises of over half of the federally recognized Tribes in the State. Many of the Tribal leaders and Tribes here present are part of that organization. Tuolumne will be submitting written comments and I do believe that the Central California Tribal Chairman’s Association as well as Northern California and Southern California will be submitting comments as well, as this was discussed at a recent meeting that they all had together. A couple of quick comments and John is no, he’s not a newbie so I won’t sit here and talk about California and Indian history but some questions
for you John about the map and maybe this already exists. could be shared specifically for California, if you look at this map and understanding really where that lower line sits is Tuolumne on the upper side, is Tuolumne on the lower side. It would be really nice for us as Tribes in California to know exactly what that map means and what I say is where are the tribal lands on this map? If that could be uploaded and overlaid because it’s important to understand not just where our land sits on either side. But also to as a Tribe where our cultural lands were, our traditional lands may sit and reflect in, with concern to some of where these new boundaries might be. We have been so fortunate in California, you know that we are the second largest right next to Alaska as far as the number of federally recognized tribes in one state. It is a very large state if you have ever driven from the northern border down to the southern. It’s not something that can be done necessarily in a day and see all of Indian Country and look at the BIA employees in the room and they know it’s a several day, you know, trip to be able to sometimes get over to Old Man’s [inaudible] Valley or to get to southern California and some of our tribal communities, we can’t just hop on a plane. We physically have to drive to get to the regional offices. So the question for California and the question we have at Tuolumne is would this new California great basin regional office still be in Sacramento? Or is it going to be somewhere else? Where would then the agency offices sit? Will they still exist or would there be, changes to that? It is important to us as we develop our Tribal Communities, it’s already hard to get to as it is. So if you increase that, that geographic and I look at California great basin, it would now include Nevada. I think about funding and I am glad to hear that there wouldn’t be a decrease in the funding, but are you going to combine that? So Nevada Tribes have such a different demographic, geographic need than California Tribes do. I look at fire funding, I
look at natural resource. I look at this year land base issues. So are we going to have to then compete with a larger land-based tribes that sit in Nevada now because of those resources? So, all of these questions I think, need to be detailed out so the tribes can sit there and really analyze them and either support or not support as it was stated by several already.

Change is good, we get that. As Tribal communities, we understand change is good and we understand the idea behind business efficiency. But let’s be realistic. Tribal communities still have to deal with the Bureau of Indian Affairs face-to-face. That’s how we get business done. That’s how it’s been done traditionally. That’s how we ensure that our concerns and our needs are met, is when we have the ability to sit down with Amy or any of her staff and say, “hey, this is a priority”. So while it may look good on paper and it may look good in a business analysis to make these changes, is it truly good for Indian Country? And that’s one of the concerns and the comments that we have. So, having that detailed map would be awesome knowing exactly where, how the Tribes would be affected. You know, we have different demographics. It would be great also to know, what does that mean then?

California, 109 federally recognized Tribe but would California Great Basin mean? What number is that then? How many Tribes in California, how many in Nevada and then are there any Tribes and what Tribes would be coming from Oregon? So I think that that’s important for Tribes to know. Again, the details are needed. And if those services, I think that’s the biggest concern. We don’t want the services to be decreased. If truly the Department wants to increase or become much more efficient, then we got to guarantee that there will not be a decrease in services, existing to those Tribes. California, historically has been underfunded in every aspect. We are just now kind of getting our feet, we were running and we’re doing some great things. To just turn around and just change it all over
again. Really, sends a pretty negative message or could have a negative impact to our Tribal communities. And I think that’s it. So you will get written comments from Tuolumne and again, on behalf of our Tribal Chairman, Kevin Day, he apologizes for not being here in person. Thank you.

**PDAS TAHSUDA:** Those are some good points and I think I some responses to your questions for you, after we take a short break.

[Took a break at 11:10 a.m. Reconvened at 11:35 a.m.]

**PDAS TAHSUDA:** Alright, shall we get started again? So, Dorie had a couple of good questions. So I want to repeat and clear what I said earlier. One of the questions she raised is that we don’t want to decrease the level of services by I would say both regional and at the agency level. So the Secretary’s commitment to Indian country is that the Tribes will be held harmless. Again this is not a budget exercise, this is a hold harmless of Interior budget and it’s not intended to pull resources out of the region. His preference is to see go the other direction. [inaudible] So at worst it would be the commitment will be that the Tribes will be held harmless. I know there will be some budget discussions to be had as this moves with BIA about regional budgets and how we are going to divvy up into regions, etcetera. Making sure that the Tribes, that input is [inaudible] etcetera. So that will be a good discussion later on about how to accomplish that. The, question about regional offices, etcetera So, there is no intention to move agency offices. The regional offices, that’s a good question. So, I suspect that, there even long term, that there would be a desire to keep the Sacramento office here as a regional office. [inaudible] It would seem to make sense that it stay here. Again, there would be a discussion about Southern California and how it fits in
with Arizona. For that regional office, located possibly in Phoenix or have a regional office [inaudible] several of the other bureaus have regional offices here as well. And so, there’s I guess that would be something that would have to be fleshed out later down the road would be a discussion among the bureaus and amongst also our different stakeholders. So some bureaus have to deal with governors, even counties. [inaudible] For us, the Tribes, it would have to be like I guess a consensus among the stakeholders and our bureaus on whether it’s worth all the move and co-locating regional offices. It may be that because the different bureaus will still have their responsibilities in that region and their current regional office has facilities that it doesn’t seem logical that we would want to move that. [inaudible] in that office or another bureaus regional office. So, again, that would be a second-stage discussion. The question about where Tribal lands fall out on the new maps. So let’s take a look at the [inaudible] haven’t really gotten really that granular to see [inaudible] I will say this, so the Secretary said that we want to retain some flexibility in the new region and the new map, and so if at the end of the day a line needs to move three miles, it can if that doesn’t impact the others negatively. Certainly that is easy enough to do. There may be situations in which a bureau has a lot of responsibilities, I’ll use California as an example. They may have a lot of responsibilities in northern Cali. This northern California region, not so much in the southern California region but still have some. So, it may be worthwhile and the Secretary is open to this. That the Northern California region would continue to service that Southern California region. So, conceptually within this will remain some flexibility to make sure that the bureaus are still able to meet all their responsibilities in these new regions and if they can facilitate another region in responsibilities in that the current operation that’s located [inaudible]. So again, that’s
something that has to be fleshed out later on, I think. So, which brings me to this sort of overarching point that I want to make and I'll repeat it again before we close. The Secretary has made it very clear publicly with traveling around Indian country with him on a number of trips. And so his commitment to Indian country is not just that we keep your budgets safe. We would work to keep things right, but ultimately, he wants this decision to be Indian country's leadership decision. So, whether the Bureau of Indian Affairs reorganize its regions to mask the other unified regions will be up to Indian country to Tribal leadership. If you don't want to do that in your region, because there are some other regions of the country that are interested potentially and will end up with. And he, again wants to his [inaudible] own and retain the flexibility to tribes. If the regions in the Great Plains region wants to reorganize around this unified regional concept, then we will work with those tribes to make that happen, while we are working with the rest of Indian country to keep BIA regions intact for them where they are. So, there's sort of the option to be all in, there's an option to be partially in, and there's the option to not be in at all in Indian country. So, that would be ultimately your decision for the Tribes. But I do have to stress as well, that this reorganization will go forward for the other bureaus. And so at the end of the day in Indian country does not want its bureaus to be part of the Departmental reorganization, we will have to have a discussion at that point about how our bureaus for these inter-bureau decisions [inaudible] can considerably happen. How our bureaus can continue to be effective in working with other unified regions. So that will just kind of be a discussion that will be happening down the road, if that's the decision of Indian country. So I think that, so, on one level, that leaves the range of options completely open for Indian country, it leaves open also the possibility. Which is the issue we deal with now is that the
BIA’s priorities are not the priorities of other regions and of other bureaus. And that’s something that all the bureaus struggle with, we struggle with as much or more than the others. Because at the end of the day, our priorities are people priorities and Indian people. And the other bureaus have responsibilities for rocks, trees, and fish and stuff. So maybe I am biased by thinking that our priorities should be the greatest priorities for the Department but that is not necessarily the case. The other bureaus have their own issues along with responsibilities. For them, those are their greatest priorities. Without greater unification of cross-bureau decision within the Department, the BIA will still remain separated out for this unified decision. So, that’s where we are now I think. I would suggest that Tribal leadership think about that. If you think that, there is, positive benefits to be had for these inter-bureau decisions that get things held up for Indian country. Then let’s talk more about how we could make this work for Indian country. If you think it’s not worth, I understand the question of risk and change, always the status quo always brings change and risk. I understand that Indian country ultimately doesn’t want…but we will have to deal with that at that point. And, I'll be clear, I understand hesitation because most of the time in the past, I don’t know, in the past 45 years, there’s probably four times that BIA has been reorganized. Interior has been reorganized and those have often been budget exercises in trying to shrink the budget. So I understand, hesitation, weariness, that maybe that’s the way it’s supposed end. I will tell you that’s the Secretary’s commitment to my bureaus and my commitment to you is that that’s not a budget exercise, this is not an attempt to shrink the BIA’s budget. So, I understand the long term history here and in the past is [inaudible]. Chairwoman?
CHAIRWOMAN PIGSLEY: I just have a question. When you have the discussion with the Secretary of the Interior, does he listen and does he recognize that the Bureau of Indian Affairs is different than these other bureaus that you’re working with sovereign governments while the other bureaus work with animals, and land and natural resources.

[Inaudible]

PDAS TAHSUDA: That’s a really good question. So Chairwoman Pigsley from Siletz is asking whether the Secretary, I understand really you’re asking if the Secretary understands the unique nature of Tribes, and I would say absolutely. So if you don’t know this, he grew in Glacier Park in Western Montana. He played football and basketball against the Blackfeet Crows up around the Salish. So he’s familiar with Indian Country, he’s comfortable with it and he grew up around it. He understands Tribal sovereignty.

[inaudible] He sees Tribal leaders [inaudible] doesn’t understands their level, but he understands the importance to Tribes. One of the foundational planks of his administration is that we will make sovereignty mean something. He’s a straightforward guy. He’s a career military man so he’s a very sort of think about things in a very straightforward manner. I’ve traveled around a number of places in Indian country in the Southwest. We’ve been to Montana, Washington State and more. He loves visiting Indian country. Despite the fact that he has the coolest office in DC, I think the old fashioned cooler in the oval office. But despite the fact that he would rather be out in the country. He’s kind of a country boy. He loves visiting Indian country. He loves visiting all of the national parks we have. He loves to be out. So having traveled with him I’ve had the opportunity to both talk with him individually and observe and interact with Tribal leadership. I didn’t have to prep him to talk to Tribal leaders. He from his own history and intuitively, he understands, the
relationship that he has as the Secretary of the Interior, the relationship that the nation has
with Tribal nations, government-to-government relationship. So he always gets this great
response and I think in part of it is because of the his level of respect he gives so, I would
say that one piece of evidence that I think that he also does hear when we have
conversations about things. I had from early on in this discussion pointed out that as I said
earlier, BIA and BIE are really unique because we do everything that the other bureaus do
in this Department. We also do fish, rocks and trees. And then we have layered over on top
of that, people and Tribal nations. He started using that actually in his discussions with the
Tribes. So, one I think he does listen and he gets through [inaudible] and two, he
understands the importance of Tribes that’s why he ultimately is going to leave the
sovereignty to Tribal leadership. This is your decision. Now there is a practical side to this
as well. He also understands that there are a number of stakeholders that are very
important to us. And, you as an outside stakeholder are very, very important to us. But you
have your own relationships including your relationship with Congress. Congress is a very
important stakeholder in this as well and so they will play a large role in the ultimate
effectiveness and limitations. So one of the reasons that we need this level of consensus,
internal and external, is to achieve that because governors could derail this. They have a lot
of influence with Congress, obviously. You guys, Tribal leaders have a lot of influence on
Congress. If we’re going sideways with you on this it doesn’t help our overall effort to
ultimately accomplish this. So there’s kind of a practical side to this as well. He
understands, you know, to respect the sovereignty of the Tribes and needs to be your
decision, but also needs to be your decision as well so we can have your consensus in this.
MICHELLE HAYWARD: Hi my name is Michelle Hayward, I am Winnemem Wintu, and [inaudible] Wintu and Karuk from Northern California and I am the Vice Chair with Redding Rancheria. So the Redding Rancheria is pleased to accept Secretary Zinke’s to consider the proposed model of an Interior Department reorganization. In Secretary Zinke’s statement before a budget committee on April 11, 2018, he confirmed that the Tribes are a sovereign, are sovereign and that it is up to the Tribes to accept or reject this proposed model. The Redding Rancheria rejects the proposed model. The United States through the Department of Interior and Bureau of Indian Affairs owes a trust responsibility to federal recognized Indian Tribes. The proposed model would be a breach of that responsibility. The model would interrupt the direct relationship between the regional directors of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and BIA’s Central Office. For our Rancheria and others in California this model would break up California Tribe’s Fee-to-Trust Consortium. But the latest map we have seen, some Tribes would go east to the lower Colorado Basin region breaking up a well-functioning system is not a desired result of a reorganization. As our Tribal council reviewed the reorganization PowerPoint we noticed many pages without references to Tribes or Indians. This reorganization is obviously designed to address efficiencies related to basins, rivers, and land areas. The reorganization is equally obviously not designed to deal with Tribes. The relations to others to each other, I’m sorry I don’t have my glasses and I’m squinting to try to read them. The reorganization to equally obvious not designed to deal with Tribes. Their relationships to each other and their government-to-government relationships with States is that regard or in that regard, the addition to Nevada Tribes and the subtraction of the Southern California Tribes from the Pacific region would have a detrimental effect on government-to-government relationships.
with the State of California. We thank Secretary Zinke for his kind offer but we strongly
oppose this proposed model. Thank you and my other Tribal council member does have a
question so I would like to call him up. Thank you.

MALE: So I was wondering California...

PDAS TAHSUDA: Please state your name again.

MR. HAYWARD: Oh, Jeremy Hayward, Redding Rancheria, Tribal Council. California is
already set up. I feel like the way that you guys are trying to get the rest of United States set
up. All of our bureaus are already in the same office. And from my understanding and
correct me if I'm wrong, the only thing that would be different if you left California, the
Pacific Region the way that it is, is that you just need to appoint a new position. Somebody
who is basically a conflict resolution over all the bureaus, right? But right now, aren't all the
bureaus in California in the same office?

PDAS TAHSUDA: Sorry, so in Sacramento, we have a number of regional offices.

MS. DUTSCHKE: The only one that’s not there is the Park Service.

PDAS TAHSUDA: OK, but they are in San Francisco.

MS. DUTSCHKE: Right and then they’re actually moving out of San Francisco. But the Park
Service is, because USGS right now is [inaudible] state but they're actually coming back to
this area.

PDAS TAHSUDA: But the different bureaus don’t have the exactly same regions.

MS. DUTSCHKE: They don’t, but I guess he’s correct in their headquarters offices are all
currently housed in the federal building on Cottage. We don’t all have the same drawn
boundaries. [Inaudible]
MR. HAYWARD: You could accomplish what you’re trying to accomplish without breaking Northern and Southern California apart. And I feel like the Tribes in California, we didn’t make the State boundaries but we have dealt with them for a long time, right. And we’ve all fought together to accomplish the things that we have accomplished today. And by breaking up Northern and Southern California, you’re putting us with Nevada tribes, and northern California Tribes and Nevada Tribes have completely different interests. So when California gets together and we go to the BIA with an issue that we need addressed. We have a little over 100 Tribes to go to this one BIA office to put pressure on them that we need this changed. And if you are going to break up northern and southern California, and now we have to get with the Nevada tribes and get the Nevada Tribes to agree with our issues to go to our new BIA regional office to fight these issues or get our issues dealt with. Same with Southern CA, so southern CA now they’re gonna have to get, and they don’t have to, but it would help to get Arizona’s Tribes to agree with their issues. So that they can take their issues as a whole to their regional BIA office and get it dealt with. And so to me, California we’ve fought together for many, many years and I feel like breaking up California, having us have to go, making new relationships, isn’t a bad thing, but our interests are different. California as a whole, we’ve fought this fight for a long time. We have very similar interests and, reasons to go to the BIA. And I just feel like, you know, when you put Arizona in and you put Nevada in it, the issues they’re going to be dealing with are completely different from the issues we’ve fought for, for a long time for. So our Tribe is completely opposed to breaking up the Pacific region. We’ve dealt with things the way that we’ve dealt with for a long time and you know, we’ve fought a lot of fights and we’ve a lot of success. And I feel like now that we’re finally learning how to navigate around the BIA and, come
together that now you’re trying to separate us. I feel like this might be, and please do
correct me if I am wrong but this is more of a map that is favorable for the other bureaus
that you guys are trying to get together, not favorable for Indian Country. So that’s Redding
Rancheria’s stance.

PDAS TAHSUDA: I understand those are good points. There’s a lot of concerns and a lot of
questions raised by Tribes, they’ve had a history of working with one region, and how that
would be impacted. Again I guess Tribes [inaudible]. The flipside is, for us if for your
consideration, is would we be able to do our job for you better and so at the end of day, is
that worth switching a region and switching people around. I guess that’s a decision you
have to make. I would like to think that if we’re doing our jobs, and managing the
organization then it shouldn’t matter that much that you might have to work with
somebody different. In Southern CA have to work with the regional director but,
conceptually that shouldn’t matter. I know, some people do matter, and sometimes
relationships with all things some people are more effective leaders than others. But I
guess, I do find this kind of curious because I’ve heard some Tribes complain about they’re
going to be moved, their region will be split, so they’ll no longer be working closely with
Tribes which will now be in another state or a different region. At the same time these
Tribes have four sister Tribes, they all come from a common tribal ancestral groups that
got moved around country in different times, they still maintain those close relationships
even though these four other sister Tribes of theirs are in four other regions. And so, I
guess I’m not sure how the intertribal relationship will negatively impact that. What comes
to my mind is [inaudible] what kind of benefits we can bring to our service to you through
this system. So, I know it’s in one particular area but so use the example of C-NIGA. C-NIGA,
the reason it’s called C-NIGA is it was originally in California and in Nevada, so there is a
history of Tribes in Nevada working with Tribes in California and I think there’s some other
organizations that manage a close relationship on particular issues and certain matters. So
I also, again, this is something for you and your leadership to consider. In my mind I guess
too, so, if you look at it, you have a California-specific issue that needs resolution out of the
region you actually have two bureau Directors arguing for you instead of one. That
potentially brings more attention to that issue for you, for the Tribes in the state. Again I
would like to think that that doesn’t matter in what organization [inaudible]. There is an
issue that is sufficient weight that it impacts multiple regions, sometimes it becomes a
higher priority for Central Office. I appreciate the questions as well about interrupting the
relationship with our regional director, our central office. Again, I think to my mind that is
not the case we would still be working closely. Our Regional offices will still have the line of
authority reporting to our director and to the Assistant Secretary. Again, this IRD is really
focused on interagency resolution and the three primary functions. And really you have
once common project manager rather than a full time boss, if you want to call him that. He
or she will be ultimately responsible for decisions and projects, etcetera that come out of
that unified region making sure that the bureaus will work together so that the timeline
will be assigned. Timelines, etcetera for the sub-decisions that have to be made to get to the
final agency decision. So he or she will be the one cracking the whip to make sure the
bureaus are meeting these timelines, etcetera, working together to things done. That’s their
primary function and it’s not to have day-to-day management over all the bureaus in that
region. That’s what the regional director is there for. They have more knowledge of their
bureau and their bureaus leading that region and their Bureau director has more
understanding of what their day-to-day responsibilities and needs are and their mission.

So, I don’t think that should be an interruption to that relationship. Again this is to facilitate decision-making and again, if you think about on a project basis than there will continuous decisions to the actions that need to happen out in the region that will require either joint decisions or input from all the bureaus in that region or multiple bureaus in that region. This IRD is to facilitate that to make sure that happens more quickly and more efficiently.

Is there a comment?

**MS. BOVEÉ:** Good afternoon, my name is Deana Boveé, I’m the Chairwoman for the Susanville Indian Rancheria. First of all I would like to say thank you for being here today, and providing us the Tribes with the time and opportunity to actually have a consultation. I think for me part of the reason why I feel our Tribal people are having such a problem with this is that this realistically is the first opportunity that we’ve had to sit and ask questions and have that information provided to us. I was at the meeting in Sacramento where that was pretty much a listening session. There wasn’t any conversation really back to us. I was at NCAI where I listened to Secretary Zinke give us his proposed changes. And so today is the first time that I think really we’re able to start to obtain a better understanding of what it is that is being proposed. And how that might affect us, and/or not affect us and you know, so I agree. You know we look at California Indians, there are over 100 CA tribes in the state. We’re all Indian people but we’re all as different as we are, we’re the same. So we can’t say I come from Lassen County where it is so rural, and yet, you know, I have people here from Redding that now that you’re more urban. And but we’re so extremely rural, that yes we are a little more like Nevada. You know because we’re right there on the border. I think in my mind, what would help me as a Tribal leader, is to have the ability to have the
conversation with the Secretary to have more conversations with yourself, for us to really
be able to get down to the nuts and bolts of it and understand what this is going to do for us
or what it really is going to do against us. And that really is where it’s at. If we understand,
we’re intelligent people and we should have the respect paid to us to be able to sit down
and have those conversations. So that we do feel comfortable because if we do feel
comfortable, we can get on board with something. But if we don’t, we certainly will stand
up against it and we are all very well adept at going to Washington DC and having those
conversations with all of our Congressional leaders and senators, it happens all the time. I
don’t know that we want to do that but we want to be able to work together to try and find
a solution to this. Thank you.

PDAS TAHSUDA: This will be a good segue to this. I get asked these questions why haven’t
we come out and consulted sooner and provided more information sooner. The basic
explanation why we haven’t consulted sooner is that we had to get to a point where I had
sufficient information so I could give you a high level description of what’s being proposed
and you know consultations always a big of tricky thing for us, right? You kind of walk a
tight rope because if I came to you to reorganize the Department. And you just said well, I
need more information [inaudible]. Well I’m kind of wasting your time, right? Wasting my
time. But if I came out here and said, hey here is the plan this is how it’s going to work. Lot
of Tribal response would be, well, you’ve already made your decision to consult with us. So
we’re actually opposed to [inaudible]. So trying to find that sweet spot where I have
enough information to start that conversation but to ensure that we have plenty of time for
your input to effect that decision and this is ultimately making decision is important to us.
So that’s why we’re kind of coming to you now with this and, I think that so, let me repeat,
the Secretary’s commitment is that ultimately this is Indian country leadership, your
decision. I was going to get a round of consultation in about just the basic concept, which
would be do you think there is enough interest and value of the tribes to take this
collection to the next level. So, do we want to say that Indian country is interested in
participating in this. If the answer is an absolute no than there’s really no need for me to
waste my resources. These consultations are expensive for us and it’s certainly no need for
me go wasting your time and resources but if there is interest in continuing discussion then
we will have more consultation. And by that point, I expect that I will have a little more
detail on how this would work for us as well from the Secretary’s level and we can get into
more detail into how this could actually you know be handled, how this will work, we’ll
have the discussions again. How can we exercise the flexibility the Secretary has said he
will give us to try to accommodate [inaudible] one of the things that he’s done is he’s
traveled around in Indian country. He likes to tell Tribes this, part of the reason he enjoys
meeting with tribes across the country is he grew up in Western MT, he grew up with the
Blackfeet in particular and Salish and until he became a Congressman, those are really the
only two tribes he interacted with. When he became a Congressman from Montana, he got
to know the other Tribes in Montana. There’s a varying degree of variety in [inaudible]
Now that he’s the Secretary of the Interior, he’s got 573 Tribes. One, he finds it kind of cool I
think to meet more Tribes and learn a little of their history. But the other thing that he has
vetted in his meetings, he’s talked about reorg with them. He says I understand that your
history is unique so we try to reel into this greater flexibility in your region, and the Tribes
in your region, your unique history and the needs that you have. So I think California is a
great example of that. California has an incredibly unique history. The Greater Plains folks
they have, in some ways, these huge reservations and really big populations, and they’re in the greater plains with all their unique geography and weather and everything that goes with that. What we would like to do as well in a second-level discussion is to say not only we talked more about how we would work this [inaudible] but how do you see that we could have the bureau or better for you, given the unique history with the services [inaudible] of the tribes in your region. So, I think that I would love to get to a second-level conversation about that, but again, that’s ultimately up to you guys. And again, that can happen region-to-region. I think that I’ve been to several, meetings with the Secretary and the Great Plains Tribal leaders. We’ve done some consultations with them and I think that there is an interest there in continuing to learn more about this and so that’s one region. Again, it’s a unique region and if you look at the map as well you’ll see what is currently our Greater Plains Region would add in Montana, which is currently in our Rocky Mountain Region. Our current Rocky Mountain region includes Wyoming so again the discussion of flexibility, the Secretary has said that if you build into this growth, practical as well as historical. There’s only two Tribes in Wyoming and they’re on one reservation. There are at least three that are closely related to the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountain Tribes so why wouldn’t we basically let them continue to work with the Greater Plains Region and continue the relationships that they have with those offices. There’s no need for them to get swept into, for the day-to-day purposes, for the bureaus, for our purposes. That’s not a good reason for them to be swept into another whole region that has very little in common with them. I think we can build in some flexibility and common sense. You know, ways to deal with some of these issues and, you know, I would be happy to do that as we get further down the road. Yes, mam?
MS. MACIAS: My name is Vickey Macias, I’m the Tribal Treasurer for the Cloverdale Rancheria Pomo Indians of California. You know we agree with a lot of Tribal leaders and with what they have said. A lot of the problems that we have is splitting the state of California, that’s a big issue for us. Tribal consultation has always been a negative word for us. Everything you’re bringing forward is still so empty and I understand your position of coming in and trying to bring us something. But it doesn’t really bring the effects of Tribal nations. We’re hearing a lot about the watersheds and the ecosystems, and that’s what this is about. The Tribes should not even be included in this. You know and it’s hard for us because like you’re saying the tribes can opt out but what happens to us if we opt out and that’s where we come in to the unknown. What is best for us? You talked about the 100 years. Interior not being changed for a 100 years. Indian country, we’ve been changed how many times over? So this is coming and we’re trying to making a decision whether this is a best interest of our people for the next 1,000 years, but it’s hard to say yes or no when we really don’t know how this is going to affect Tribal nations. And that’s what I feel is missing. It’s not about the Tribes and what’s going to happen. Great to hear it’s not going to hurt our budgets but if we don’t opt are you guys going to hurt our budgets? What’s going to happen to us then if we don’t opt to be a part of this reorganization? There’s so many unanswered questions for us today that we still think we don’t know yes or no. And so you know and I’m not really making sense because I want to say a lot of bad things and I’m trying not to. [Laughter] You know because the rotating we’ve heard the Tribes say their opinion. We’ve heard you say bring in the definition of what the intent is. We’re going just say “no” – we don’t want any rotating. It’s just not going to happen for us, it won’t work. We don’t see it working. We heard your decisions on why you think it will work and why the best interest.
Maybe for DOI yes, for Tribal governments – no. So you know, for us, it’s the same thing, it’s about those three: the permitting, the conservation, the recreation, that’s what’s this is for, it’s not for the people, the people, the Indian people, and that’s being missing in the presentation.

**PDAS TAHSUDA:** So, I guess, I don’t see it that way. So, what I, how I see it is decision-making on behalf of people. What we’re talking about is getting better decisions on how the Department [inaudible] three primary missions at the end of the day if we don’t get good decisions, I think that’s a failure of trust responsibility and it’s not because we provide services to Indians. So I think too often because we, the BIA, Indian Affairs, are sort of the front line for you between the federal government. People assume that we have the trust responsibility but it’s not true. The Federal Government has trust responsibility and the Department of the Interior is the primary focus other than health care and they have the largest load on behalf of the federal government and we need that trust of responsibility. So if the Department reaches a decision that hasn’t had Tribal input from the beginning and I don’t know that we’ve really met our trust responsibility. How we achieve that, so each of the bureaus has a mission that they have to go on and ours is Tribes. We have functions that we use that are part of the decision making to deliver our service, etcetera and to meet our mission. So that’s what we’re talking about is where the functions are similar even though the bureaus in that region have a different mission. They have to come to a decision, that’s the ultimate goal, right? So if we are working the functions together then it allows the bureaus to each still reach their mission but they reach the same ultimate goal. Which if it’s a tribal decision that needs to be made we’ve made a good decision that will help out the other bureaus. If it’s a decision that could impact a tribe in that region, then they have had
their interests represented from the beginning of this decision. So, I look at as this is a way for us to represent Indian Country better in all decisions that the Department makes that impacts the Tribes and that’s what ultimately I think this would be a good thing for Indian country. So, again, it’s not leaving people out, it’s serving people better. So what happens if the Tribes opt out. Our budget is what it is and if Indian Country doesn’t want BIA and BIE, well BIE is a little different so the impact of – well, BIE has already been reorganized on a non-geographic basis. BIE schools and tribally-owned schools are [inaudible] so that reorganization is still happening, but it’s being implemented now. So, we’re really talking about the impact on BIA. Our budget wouldn’t change, if we stayed out of this reorganization. I think what the ultimate impact is on our ability to effectively participate in decision-making that is not entirely in our hands. Decisions that are made by other bureaus or decisions that we really need and have to happen and get the input from the other bureaus into those solutions. That’s where we will have the challenge, going forward if BIA is not part of the Department-wide reorganization. We will have a challenge. The BIA will be on the outside, understand, the rest of the Department is going to be reorganized. So how the bureau interacts with that we’ll have to have a discussion internally. We’ll certainly want your input. Now there are some Tribes in some of the regions that have done a great job themselves at developing relationships with other bureaus and they get a lot of mileage out of that. So I think it’s great that actually happens and so lots of the regional directors involved with those bureaus were interacting with each other on behalf of Indian country. If Indian country isn’t joining the reorganization, BIA is not a part of it, then we’ll have to figure that out. How we can still try to deliver the best services we can
for these multi-bureau decisions. That’s ultimately where we’ll have to go if Indian country
opts out.

**MR. PETERS:** So John, can you talk a little bit when you say Tribes, is it all or nothing in
regards to this idea of opting out? Or is it by regions, you know? Again, who makes that
decision? I mean is it affiliated Tribes of Washington State, you know that will get together
and decide if we’re gonna opt in or opt or is it individually? If it’s individually, it just seems
like it would be chaotic for those agencies in current regions. Can you talk a little bit about
that opt in?

**PDAS TAHSUDA:** So, this is intended to be a regional reorganization or creation of unified
regions for the bureaus. So we really couldn’t have a piece of a Tribe in a region that
wanted to opt out.

**MR. PETERS:** So, it’s all or nothing?

**PDAS TAHSUDA:** So, it could be all or nothing for Indian country at large and the entire
bureau or again, if the tribes in a region have a consensus that they want their region to
participate. Then the Secretary has to write us to see what we can do. Any other questions?

**MALE:** I have a question. [Inaudible]

**PDAS TAHSUDA:** Only if, I guess, conceptually that decision required input from the other
bureaus. Otherwise it’s our bureau’s decision to come through our process so if it’s
continuous or on-reservations it stays in the region. If it’s off reservation it goes to the State
office.
MR. HOLLOWELL: Mike Hollowell, Attorney, Redding Rancheria: Continuous any oversight on that IRD.

PDAS TAHSUDA: Just a second ... So conceptually so, if that that fee-to-trust decision required an environmental review decision that impacted another bureau's responsibilities, then possibly be triggered.

MS. DUTSCHKE: How about Lummi, a need for the same discussion? A need for a biological opinion.

MALE: So if there's a conflict there for instance,, that the Interior Regional Director might not be able [inaudible] with the BIA. [Inaudible]

PDAS TAHSUDA: Again, he's not making a policy call, right? What he's doing is requiring, let's say in this case, Fish and Wildlife to work with the BIA from day one. So as soon Amy can say send her Regional Director, as soon as she sees it and identifies or Fish and Wildlife says hey, hey, hey, you know we got the same issue too. Then he or she can go to this Interior Regional Director and say OK this is triggered, he will give a timeline for Fish and Wildlife to work with her to come to this opinion. The work from the beginning will be important meetings instead of us having lunch, blah, blah, blah and then that part would be done. If there was, I guess, conceptually so if that interaction revealed a difference in policy between BIA and Fish and Wildlife, then you would say okay I'm going to elevate this to DC. Which happens now anyways, right? The Deputy Secretary will get the resolution of the policy issue come back to Amy, he's not making a policy decision. He's getting direction from the Deputy Secretary on the policy, and we would tell Amy and Fish and Wildlife, OK, here's the policy answer that will be implemented in the decision. Then Amy would
continue on with her fee-to-trust application.

**Male:** Just curious. Have you gotten input from all the BIA regional directors?

**PDAS TAHSUDA:** In January, the Secretary brought in all of the regional directors and all bureau leadership. We had a really big discussion and to be fair, the Secretary introduced this and said, we want your opinion. But I don’t want to just hear what you like about it. I really want to hear what you don’t like about it. As we got to resolve this and tell us what doesn’t work. It’s just or more important than what you think works. So with an exercise I think there’s been several more rounds that has asked for input from the RD’s, etcetera. I have tried, we’ve had a session to talk with our RDs to talk about it, but my schedule is the problem. So this is an ongoing discussion with the RD’s. I think the general consensus is this could work well. Obviously, there are some details that would have to be worked out. There are things about Amy’s job that only she knows. I don’t know, so I would have to have her input. At some point, as we have discussions with our counterparts, again the Assistant Secretaries and their bureaus that they oversee. And so Amy’s got to tell me, “well this is something that I really need from that bureau” and I could advocate that to the other Assistant Secretary. And that’s partly ongoing, I think though, right now the Secretary himself, from his office has been trying to really get, we’ve had this sort of regional director input, but he’s had his staff going around trying to get the next level of input. Whether the rest of the staff what you think wants is to tell him that I don’t think you did a good job, you know, to be honest. Tell him during when the staff holds this meeting, I think people in your reorganization, their first thought is “oh my God, I’m going to lose my job”, or “I’m being moved somewhere”. To be honest, I don’t think we did a great job because everyone is getting so concerned. It’s such a big thought process that people didn’t really, we didn't
focus enough on making sure that our staff understood that you on the ground, this doesn’t mean, you know, any change, right? Changing a job or losing your job, changing where your kids go to school, right. So, the last about two months, the Secretary’s has had his staff try to go out around the country and meet with more of the grass roots level staff to get that information across, very basic, solicit the comments, but really, as much as anything get across the point that what we’re talking about is structural decision making. We’re not talking about moving bureaus around, moving agency offices around. So we’ve been engaging in that. I don’t know if that answers your question.

MALE: I mean, it still sounds like there isn’t really a consensus among the BIA RD’s.

[Inaudible]

MS. DUTSCHKE: Again, just for a comment. I guess that’s one of those instances I think we’re like a lot of people in this room. We don’t have a lot of information because it’s being developed. I personally heard something, I’m not sure where I heard it from. There are a couple of options. In Indian Country I think it might be an easier sell. But there are things that we do in California specific that may not happen across the rest of Indian Country and that is partially facilitated due to the fact that all of us are located in one building. So I without question, interact with the Fish and Wildlife director or the Bureau of Reclamation director, or the BLM director, as needed. You know, I can call them up or go down there or they would come to my office. The BLM director is literally down on the 1st floor from me. Fish and Wildlife is 100 feet from me. Reclamation, I mean, listen, we do that because of the fact that we’re physically located and we do a lot of things in a consolidated fashion within that building already. Just because it scales upon what John talked about earlier, you know.
So there are things that I believe definitely can benefit, there are things that, of course, are still very much [inaudible]. So, you know, that’s kind of where I’m at.

FEMALE: And I think that’s what we just said here. How this was going to be good for Indian Country by having all these relationships. So that’s why we don’t understand why it has to be the way it’s going. I guess that’s where I’m coming from. So thank you for pointing that out Amy. You kind of heard me talk about your agency today. But we already do this in California. So I’ll shut up sorry.

MS. DUTSCHKE: Maybe if you look at the IRD as a facilitator. They’re a facilitator to the other Regional Directors within any given region, or any given area. So, while I would still work with Tribes, depending on how the regions fall out, ok. With a specific group or whatever of Tribes, the Interior Regional Director would facilitate activities amongst the organizations and bureaus within that different area. And I think that some people think that person will be in charge or whatever but really they are a facilitator. And whether they are political or career employee when they talk about moving that person, I don’t think they’re talking about moving has kind of been in the news lately. But they’re talking about within let’s say, CA was the same, so we have the same group, that one of those six or seven regional directions within Interior would be the one that would facilitate the activities for the rest. Or the other option might be that they would bring another person in. That would be that facilitator. So I think all of those other people would still be there then they would be separated out. I just want it to be a little easier for some discussion.

MS. BIETZ: I know my Tribal chairman will ask, maybe the other Tribal leaders might ask as well, if August is the deadline for Tribes to comment whether or not we support the idea,
and then we get details and we don’t like the details and the idea, will we be able to pull out
then or if the majority of tribes in California say yes we want to see where this organization
with BIA should go with the Department of the Interior in the reorganization plan. Will
there be an option to pull back out or will this be the obvious deadline be pretty much, hey
you know the majority of the Tribes are in support of this and we actually [inaudible] ...

PDAS TAHSUDA: So, that August is a comment deadline and that will get moved. So we
will add a few more consultations on, so the comment period will, I would say probably the
real deadline would fall back, would be in October, when the Secretary wants to send this
plan to the President. So it would be helpful for us to say it that Indian Country is interested
in having a discussion about how BIA can participate in this or Indian Country generally is
not a part of it.

MR. HAYWARD: It would be helpful for us to know what exactly it is you are wanting to do
or talking [inaudible], because there’s not enough information.

PDAS TAHSUDA: So it would be helpful for me is to know what kind of information you
need to be helpful for you because right now, I don’t have a lot more information than I
have provided to you. It is sort of structurally this overlay or facilitation on inter-bureau
decisions by the IRD, a map showing how the unified regions for this hierarchy plan.

MR. HAYWARD: How the map was created and why. It’s negotiable.

PDAS TAHUSDA: Well, so I think, I mean at this point, we could make some changes, if it
could facilitate making it work, the Secretary, the other question would be if what you’re
asking it be facilitated by just some flexibility in the system, would that do it as well. I’ll use
the Wyoming tribes as an example, so potentially having their direct services running
through Great Plains, what will be the new Missouri Basin region instead of the upper Colorado. That would be more efficient for us probably. I think they would appreciate it more, and so, we could look at options like that.

**MR. HAYWARD:** Have you met with Great Lakes yet?

**PDAS TAHSUDA:** We did one with Michigan which is Pokagon, which is the far southwest corner of Michigan. So, that includes what would be the Great Plains now. And we had several Tribes from Wisconsin come over as well come over and comment. Every tribe that commented said they were opposed to it but you know, I guess I’m not sure because a lot questions they raised or the statements they gave were opposed to it seemed based on misinformation. So, somewhere down the line someone told them do we move the Michigan agency office to Ohio, which I have no idea who would come up that idea. That is the most ridiculous I have ever heard. There are no Tribes in Ohio. Our Michigan Agency has been used by the Tribes for over 100 years. It seems to be pretty well located there. So I’m not sure and I hope that you maybe will clear up some of that misinformation.

**MS. BOVEÉ:** So, I would like to know, so where did the second steps look like to you. So that the reasons you just stated you know, we’ve all stated that we don’t have enough information right now. And a lot of the information that we received is missing information. And it sounded like this was being put upon us period. And so the second steps for us I think is very important. I mean my comments that the Susanville Rancheria will submit will probably be more questions, because I think that instead of just saying I oppose or I’m in favor, I really need more information in order to bring this back to my Tribal council and for us to really have a well-educated decision made upon what/we really are.
PDAS TAHSUDA: So, second-level decisions I guess, in my mind would require us to talk about issues like splitting California up, how does that impact the tribes? What could southern California tribes currently get out of our Pacific Region Office? How would we make sure that this new lower Colorado Basin office which is probably going to be in Phoenix I would guess. Or we already have a regional office. But there’s some similarities with the southern California and some of the western Arizona Tribes. There’s a lot of differences. How can we make sure that their needs are fully taken care of by this new regional office that they would be moved to that they would be a part of. At the end of the day, we have I think we would have these sort of top-level goals. We don’t want to impact the Tribal budget. We want to make sure that decisions and how you need them made for your tribes in your region, are facilitated and they’re working properly. If you think that they could be changed, how could we change them some to make them work better. So, so what would that look like to you I guess is part of the question. To be honest, the budget question could be a really big one. We have a very unique budget. Indian Affairs, we have like 250 budget line items, BLM, other big bureaus have like 30 budget line items. Part of it is because of people. We have very different budget lines than most or all of the bureaus. But we also have some of these things developed over time. Some of these are specified by Congress, they demanded we do a program and have a budget line for them. So, we have that many nature of a budget and we also now have developed over a number of years sort of an incentive [inaudible]. California, because of your history, has got to be dealt with equitably budget-wise by BIA or IHS [inaudible]. But we have Tribal shares now that fall through regions we would have to work through that. Again the Secretary’s commitment would be to hold tribes harmless at worst, right. So, we’d have to work through that. I think
we can have the goal of doing it, it would just be a pretty intense technical discussion on
how we accomplish that. So but we would have a goal, right? At the end of the day, it
would be no harm, it's just we have to get there. So I think that would be a big part of the
Secretary's discussion. If there are regional differences that we don't adequately reflect
through our regions now. We give a fair amount of flexibility to our regions to meet the
needs of Tribes in that regions. But is there a way we can do that and in particular, how in
your region we would need input from our regional folks and your input from the Tribes.
What is it that you need from the other bureaus and how we can make sure that that’s
structure can get you what you need from those other bureaus in a timely and efficient
fashion. So, those are sort of the top line Secretary discussions. Again I just, I don’t know
that would be a really big discussion. I know until there’s a decision whether to keep
moving forward with the discussion. You know, it’s hard to spend the time and energy
[inaudible].

**MR. PETERS:** In one sense, I applaud the BIA and the Secretary in not developing
something and just throwing it out and say this is what we’re doing and comment. Because
you hear time and time again or maybe we’ve got to be part of the process. It’s got to be
ture consultation. So I appreciate that it’s not fully developed but at the break, we talked
about the Secretary communicating with Indian County on what he’s going to propose in
that October plan and, so for this to be meaningful, I hope that you send back to the
Secretary, John, that as he is developing, because I’m sure he’s not going to wait until the
end of this process to hopefully incorporate some of these concerns. But as he develops it
that he communicates back to you so you can share it with Indian Country. So as this
process rolls out, we get to comment on what he’s developed or what he is proposing. And I
think another important piece is that the Secretary comes back to Indian Country even if we got to go to one place to hear or be able to give feedback on his final draft. That would be true consultation in Squaxin Island Tribe’s mind.

**PDAS TAHSUDA:** Alright, anybody else? We are formally still 20 minutes away from ending the session. Although we can stay here longer if you wanted to talk yourselves out.

**MS. MACIAS:** Well, I just have a question. Can you just erase that little line between and Colorado, so we can think about it? [Laughter] Maybe we’ll think about it.

**PDAS TAHSUDA:** I hear you. And just so you know, you’re not alone, in that some of the other bureaus have had questions from their stakeholders and it’s the same questions they have. So a lot of the other bureaus do follow state lines for things. So they’re having to have their own discussions and deal with as well. You see too there’s on top of California, jutting into Oregon[inaudible]. I would say one of the other impacts the scientists who by large, the scientists kind of came up with this ecosystems map. That was one thing and I’m not entirely sure, it has to do with the Klamath River. But the scientist absolutely insisted, so they won that one argument, they won, right there, that line. And I think other than the one bureau the only other bureaus were not happy about it. And so scientists won that one. You asked about the consultation we had in Michigan, interestingly enough, I was kind of surprised there wasn’t more interest from the folks that would be in the Eastern Region. We have a huge Eastern Region as you know, and a couple of Tribal leaders came also from the Eastern region from Massachusetts and, anyways. I thought they would be interested in getting more attention instead of having this region that stretches from Texas to Maine.
down to Florida. They would actually have a smaller region but instead of splitting would
be more focused on Maine.

MR. DAVIS: My name is Shawn Davis. I’m from Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians. IS this
Zinke’s plan? I just Googled his name and I mean you’re not supposed to really, you know,
believe everything on Google but there’s a lot of negative stuff about him going on. From
Halliburton, to fracking, to I mean, how can we trust a man to deal with Indian Country
when he’s got his little hands in other people’s, I mean, assuming he’s got his hands
[inaudible], everything’s an assumption. I’m not judging the man but you know.

PDAS TAHSUDA: Well, if you get the chance, at some point probably [inaudible], there’s a
lot in the media about everything as there always is. This time period seems really crazy
but so one is he’s a decision-maker. Again like I said, follow the law and the science in
making decisions. That’s sort of his thing. There are people that don’t want the Department
to make decisions. They want to part of [inaudible].

MR. DAVIS: I think that the Administration is pretty chaotic right now. It does affect Indian
Country, you know. I would hate your job.

PDAS TAHSUDA: I work for him. I think we have the best Department in the government,
and part of this is his leadership. He a career military man so he has a definite
organizational mindset that he was trained in. And part of that is there’s several things and
he talks about this constantly is this huge philosophy. One is the best decisions come from
the front line if you give them direction and resources and then in decisions. That’s the
best. Part of this comes from a soldier’s perspective, right? If the guys in the front line know
the situation there is, have the resources and the authority to make the decision. They will
make the right decision 99% of the time as opposed to someone in DC. So that’s a part of it, part of it again is one of the reasons and I feel like we have a lot of open field running in the present. Part of it is because the President is also comfortable with his leadership and his willingness to make decisions. Whatever you think of the President, he’s a man that likes decisions just to be made and move forward. So that’s the Secretary’s, that’s kind of his motto too. So we have a great esprit de corps in the Department. Our leadership amongst the bureaus is great. When I’m talking to people that preceded me about coming into Indian Affairs. I have some pride because I have a great relationship with the other Assistant Secretaries down the hallways and they talk about how they couldn’t get the attention from them before. And that’s one of the reasons personally that interested me as well. That the fact that I can get things done across bureaus now shouldn’t depend on my relationships or even my personnel. It should be an organizational structure that facilitates that. But again, that’s a part of the Secretary’s leadership. He is insistent that we all work as a team. He’s constantly both talking about and when its’ brought to his attention, trying to tear down these silos between the bureaus, between leadership. He’s you know, a military guys also love ceremony and he gets it’s obviously part of his conscious team building. It’s also part of how he thinks, right. When he does a lot of little things to recognize folks in his organization, he does all these, every so often he has leadership meetings. The leadership in the Department he has little ceremonial things he does to recognize them. So I think that leads to us having a very busy and effective Department. To be honest, I look at some of the other Departments, they don’t seem to be operating [inaudible].

MR. DAVIS: Is he going to read this transcript? [Laughter from audience.] Thank you.

PDAS TAHSUDA: I’m sure he is.
MS. DEASON: Hi, my name is Michelle Deason, I’m with the Department of the Interior, I work with the Office of the Special Trustee. For Tribal leaders here, I would like to introduce myself as your Fiduciary Trust Officer for Central California. Just out of respect of all the Tribal leaders speak, I held my comments until the end. I just want to, I hope the Bureau does its homework in this scenarios of how impactful this will be at the regional offices because I think that information would be very helpful to the Tribes in providing more details for instance you know how would the Pacific Regional Director, all the decisions that are coming across her desk now as a regional director for making regional decisions. Hypothetically, how is that going to change if it’s from a Nevada Tribe? What information is she going to need to know making a regional decision for a Nevada Tribe and the Nevada laws, that may play into that. Same thing for Phoenix, you know what’s their Regional Director in Phoenix up for the bureau going to have to consider about the decisions that are coming from their agencies in California that need to be a regional decision. What laws in California and what Tribal information do they need to know that would be very helpful I think for the Tribes and how impactful it might be to change things up. Thank you.

MR. HOLLOWELL: What about pending processes that are currently only cleared through a region? So for instance, a Southern California currently has a fee-to-trust application for a continuous on-reservation that’s pending when this shakeup happens, what’s going to happen to those pending applications, are they going to move to the new Regional Director?
PDAS TAHSUDA: That’s a really good question. I guess I would add that to the list of what we would want to talk about in the second-stage level. I presume we would have some kind of transition period and at the end of the day, I would want to make sure that an impact to the Tribes in the short term with those kinds of things would be minimal. That this will continue and we have to talk about how we would facilitate on our end. Hopefully for your end it would be very little.

MR. DAVIS: Just following up on his question. Would that include landless tribes that have applications?

PDAS TAHSUDA: Conceptually, it shouldn’t impact that at all but we would have to have some discussion about both the transition and some kind of period probably Amy will continue to still be responsible for everything in California until we get some transition underway and down the road.

MS. FINK: I have a question as far as how is it going to be determined whether California is for this or against it? We have two consultation sessions will it be from, because not all tribes respond and yet we’ve got over 100 Tribes in California. How is that going to be determined as far as we’re for this or if we are not?

PDAS TAHSUDA: That’s a really good question. [Laughter from audience.]

MS. FINK: You know by majority. By just the ones that represents the Tribes.

PDAS TAHSUDA: Well, I, so, I think it’s it would be difficult for us to move forward without a general consensus from the Tribes in that Region.

MS. FINK: Right, so if they don’t respond, is that an automatic yes?
**PDAS TAHSUDA:** Well, I, before a final decision is made I guess, it’s a good point. We would either make an additional outreach to make sure they do have a comment to something. A nonresponse means you don’t care or that you’re willing to...

**FEMALE:** If they don’t care, they don’t participate so why is it an automatic no, why not a yes. [Laughter from audience.]

**PDAS TAHSUDA:** Because other Tribes in the region may want to reorganize and if they don’t care or are not as passionate to respond then my preference would be to listen to Tribal leaders.

**MS. FINK:** I’m thinking maybe we have a Northern California Chairman’s Association. I’m saying maybe as a group, join that response. Would that take care of it?

**PDAS TAHSUDA:** I’m happy to talk you guys. Maybe we can meet again and just talk through that.

**MR. HAYWARD:** So you’re talking about a second round, right? And is that after the comment period is over?

**PDAS TAHSUDA:** We will have more and if you think of these as introductory. As of right now, we have conceptually at least have three more. The second round would be if Tribes across the country or Tribes in a region have a consensus that they would like to move forward and discuss further how they would like to accomplish this. And that would be a second round of consultations about how we can do that. That’s a good question to ask on how do we accomplish this.
MR. HAYWARD: In that second round, is it going to come back as this is more information or is it going to come back with options? To me, you’re telling us what you’re going to do, and then with very little information behind it, we have to say yes or no in these consultations. If we say no, because we don’t like the way the map is made or some things that we’ve heard [inaudible]. The second round of consultations would it be where you would address the issues at these consultations and you come back with options to answer our concerns about [inaudible]. I would like to see you come back with timelines and tell us when these consultations are going to take place, when the comment periods are going to be [inaudible], and if [inaudible] options that allow us to truly have input on those kinds of [inaudible] either in or you’re out.

PDAS TAHSUDA: Good questions. I think that, so part of what I have to do is an initial, sort of a wrap-up conversation with Secretary. I guess it would be probably important for us to say that we need to have a safety valve for the Tribes. If there’s interest in having this second discussion Tribal leadership, can we still pull out. At the end of the day, if we can’t work out all these details, than we will have a second round of discussions. So I guess at the end of the day, that’s his call, cause it’s his plan. I’ll explain to him how important that is for Indian Country. There’s a lot of additional discussion that.

MR. HAYWARD: You understand, I’m sure when I say don’t trust the US Government, right? We need some input in this. We need to have options, we need to have input on how this thing is going to be done.

PDAS TAHSUDA: Of course.

MS. MACIAS: I just want to clarify it’s October 2018. In that timeframe [inaudible].

PDAS TAHSUDA: I hope so. Yes, it’s eighteen months from March executive order. I hope
so. Again, we will add three more on in early September. Time starts getting crunched. I think, so that’s why, I would say it seems to me it would be helpful to have a safety valve there. I think it’s fair to say we have a lot more detailed decisions to be worked out that some of the other bureaus do with their stakeholders.

**MR. HOLLOWELL:** [Inaudible] Executive doesn’t have delegated authority. It has to be approved by Congress.

**PDAS TAHSUDA:** Right, so restructuring requires Congress as there’s budget appropriations, to allocate. So following to restructuring the Department into allocating new responsibilities [inaudible]. There’s some minor reorganization that the Secretary and the President has authority to do, and this type of, particularly moving something from other cabinet agency to us, requires Congress.

**MR. PETERS:** As you said in your opening remarks, you know, Governors have a lot of influence on this reorganization. Congress has a lot of influence on it, if this goes forward so I hate to keep being repetitive but if the Secretary wants his plan to go through, all the comments that you’re hearing from the Tribes about coming back to us after these consultations to get further input, is critical for him to be able accomplish the goal. So, I thought you pointed out the process pretty good for us. Governors have big influence in Congress and you know the Tribes in the northwest have a good relationship with the Governor and we’ll be in his ear.

**PDAS TAHSUDA:** Thank you. So shall we wrap up? It is one o’clock on the dot. We’ll close this consultation. Alright, thank you guys, we’ll close this consultation and thank you guys for being patient with me too. I appreciate it.
The session closed at 1:00 p.m.