Dear Tribal Leader:

On November 5, 2009, President Obama made an historic commitment to strengthen the government-to-government relationship between the United States and Indian tribes pursuant to Executive Order 13175. Secretary Salazar has echoed the President’s dedication to regular and meaningful consultation with tribes, and is taking action to assess and improve existing consultation practices with Indian tribes. I am pleased to announce the Department of the Interior’s Tribal Consultation Team (Team) whose focus will be to draft a proposed consultation policy for the Interior.

Tribal representatives from all regions and Federal officials from across Interior comprise the Team’s membership (list of Team members enclosed). In creating the Team, tribal leaders identified representatives with the appropriate skills for representing regional and issue-specific concerns. Like tribal representatives, the Federal officials on the team were selected for their knowledge in this unique process. Both delegate and alternate representatives will contribute to the Team’s work over the coming months.

During the next few months, Interior’s work on implementing the President’s Executive Memorandum of November 5, 2009, will accelerate and heavily involve the Team’s efforts. All of the Team’s members will be involved in the drafting process and there will be regular communication with regional and tribal interests. A public comment and review period will follow the drafting process.

We anticipate that tribal leaders will have an opportunity to review the draft Departmental consultation policy in early fall, before the formal public comment period. In the meantime, please direct any questions or concerns on the Team’s work to Mr. Paul Tsosie, Chief of Staff for the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs at (202) 208-7163.

The Team’s service to improve Federal procedures on governmental relations with Indian tribes will have a profound and positive impact on how the Department of the Interior formulates policy in years to come. The contribution the Team makes will be invaluable to improving how the United States meets its responsibilities to our Country’s tribal nations. I am confident the Team will produce a consultation policy that honors tribal sovereignty and self-determination while strengthening Federal-tribal relations.

Thank you for the contributions you have made on behalf of Indian Country, and for those you will make in the future.

Sincerely,

Laura Davis
Associate Deputy Secretary
Alaska Region Delegate
Edward K. Thomas, Village Delegate
Village of Kasaan

Alaska Region Alternate
Evelyn F. Thomas, President
Crooked Creek Tribe

Eastern Region Delegate
Brian Patterson, Clan Representative
Oneida Nation

Eastern Region Alternate
Marjorie Colebut-Jackson, Council Member
Mashantucket Pequot Nation

Eastern Oklahoma Region Delegate
Glenna Wallace, Chief
Eastern Shawnee

Eastern Oklahoma Region Alternate
Tom John, Administrator
Chickasaw Nation

Great Plains Delegate
Rodney Bordeaux, President
Rosebud Sioux Tribe

Great Plains Alternate
Charles Murphy, Chairman
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

Midwest Region Delegate
Erma Vizner, Chairwoman
White Earth Ojibwe

Midwest Region Alternate
Derek Bailey, Chairman
Grand Traverse Band

Navajo Region Delegate
Marcelino Gomez, Asst. Atty. General
Navajo Nation

Navajo Region Alternate
Veronica Blackhat, Nation Attorney
Navajo Nation

Northwest Region Delegate
Chief J. Allen, Chairman
Coeur d'Alene Tribe

Northwest Region Alternate
Harry Smiskin, Chairman
Yakama Nation

Pacific Region Delegate
Robert Smith, Chairman
Pala Band of Indians

Pacific Region Alternate
Archie Super, Chairman
Karuk Tribe

Rocky Mountain Region Delegate
Ivan Posey, Business Council Chairman
Eastern Shoshone

Rocky Mountain Region Alternate
Jonathan Windy Boy, Vice-Chairman
Chippewa Cree

Southern Plains Region Delegate
Robert Tippeconnie, Secretary/Treasurer
Comanche Nation

Southern Plains Region Alternate
Steve Ortiz, Chairman
Prairie Band of Potawatomi Nation

Southwest Region Delegate
Norman J.Cooeyate, Governor
Pueblo of Zuni

Southwest Region Alternate
Gary Hayes, Vice-Chairman
Ute Mountain Ute
Western Region Delegate
Mervin K. Wright, Chairman
Pyramid Lake Paiute

Western Region Alternate
Billy Bell, Chairman
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