



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

JUN 30 2016

The Honorable Gerald Gray
Chairman, Little Shell Tribe of
Chippewa Indians of Montana
2804 3rd Avenue North
Billings, Montana 59101

Dear Chairman Gray:

I am writing to follow-up on the meeting we had on February 9, 2016, regarding the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana (Little Shell). I appreciated the opportunity to meet with you and discuss the newly revised Federal acknowledgment process and how it relates to Little Shell.

In this meeting, you inquired about the current status of Little Shell in the Federal acknowledgment process under 25 C.F.R. Part 83, revised as of July 31, 2015. You also inquired as to the priority your petition would receive and also the status of the issues referred by the Interior Board of Indian Appeals (IBIA) to the Secretary under the prior 1994 regulations.

We reviewed the November 2, 2015 letter sent to you from the Office of Federal Acknowledgment (OFA) confirming Little Shell's choice to proceed utilizing the standards and processes of the current 2015 regulations, "Procedures for Federal Acknowledgment of Indian Tribes" (80 FR 37887-37895), and that it intends to supplement its petition. Under these regulations, the acknowledgment process will start when Little Shell:

- (1) Sends its supplementary petition materials, in which it has redacted or removed any privacy or other information protected under FOIA, and provides a copy of those pages without redactions;
- (2) Provides its updated and current membership list including all data specified in § 83.21(a)(4)(i); and
- (3) Provides a GEDCOM export of its genealogical program.

Enclosed, please find a copy of this November 2, 2015 letter, as it provides additional details regarding the next steps after Little Shell provides the three items listed above. Under the regulations, priority is based on the timing of receipt of the items listed above. Should another group provide a documented petition before you submit the items above, it will receive priority.

Since Little Shell chose to proceed under the 2015 regulations, the Department will not proceed with the process in the now superseded 1994 regulations that would have addressed the questions remanded by the IBIA. Instead, your petition will be reviewed under the current regulations. We therefore consider the issues referred by the IBIA to the Secretary to be a closed matter.

Please contact OFA should you have any questions regarding the 2015 regulations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ann Marie Bledsoe Downes', written in a cursive style.

Ann Marie Bledsoe Downes
Deputy Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs for
Policy and Economic Development

Enclosure



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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

NOV 02 2015

Mr. Gerald Gray
625 Central Avenue West, Suite 100
Great Falls, Montana 59404

Dear Mr. Gray:

Thank you for responding to the letter from the Office of Federal Acknowledgment (OFA) dated August 31, 2015, issued pursuant to 25 CFR 83.7(b). Section 83.7 of the regulations allow petitioners that have submitted a complete petition but have not yet received a final agency decision to choose whether to proceed under the current 2015 regulations applying those standards and processes, or the standards and processes of 25 CFR Part 83, revised as of April 1, 1994 (superseded regulations). OFA received your timely response under 83.7(b).

OFA confirms that the Little Shell Chippewa Indians of Montana (Petitioner #31) notified this office that pursuant to § 83.7(b) it chooses to proceed utilizing the standards and processes of the current regulations and that it intends to supplement its petition. The time periods in § 83.22(a) will not begin to run until the following occur:

- (1) The petitioner sends its supplementary petition materials, in which it has redacted or removed any privacy or other information protected under FOIA, and, provides a copy of those pages without redactions;
- (2) Provides its updated and current membership list including all data specified in § 83.21(a)(4)(i); and
- (3) Provides a GEDCOM export of its genealogical program.

When OFA receives these items, the time periods in § 83.22 will begin. Within 30 days, OFA will acknowledge receipt of the required material. Within 60 days of receipt, OFA will publish in the *Federal Register* the notice of receipt and post to the OFA Web site:

- 1) The petition narrative and any supplemental narrative, redacted as necessary;
- 2) Information to identify the Petitioner;
- 3) Date of Receipt;
- 4) Notice of the opportunity for individuals and entities to submit comments and evidence within 120 days of Web site posting; and
- 5) Notice of the opportunity for individuals and entities to request to be kept informed.

OFA will also provide written notice to the governor of the State in which you are located, the attorney general of the State, the local government, and any recognized tribe and petitioner that appear to have an interest as provided in the regulations. OFA will post on its Web site any

public comments (including comments, if any, received under the previous version of the regulations), other releasable portions of the petition, contact information for the petitioner, notified parties and persons who request to be kept informed, and other documents. The petitioner will have 90 days to respond to any comments.

OFA will notify the petitioner and others when the petition review begins (§ 83.24), and continue to inform the petitioner of subsequent critical dates. We look forward to working with the petitioner as it completes the Part 83 Federal acknowledgment process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "R. L. Williams".

Director, Office of Federal Acknowledgment