



THE ASSOCIATE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

DEC 27 2005

Dear Tribal Leader,

As part of the implementation of trust improvements, we began a regulatory initiative to develop regulations to further the goals of the Fiduciary Trust Model (FTM). This is the most comprehensive updating of trust-related regulations in decades. The regulatory initiative brings together working groups consisting of employees from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians, Bureau of Land Management, Office of the Solicitor, Office of Hearings and Appeals and Office of Historical Trust Accounting. The groups have been brainstorming about necessary changes, using their varied expertise to identify improvements, and working together to create drafts. The goals of developing the regulations are to further the FTM, comply with requirements of the American Indian Probate Reform Act, and streamline other business processes.

The Regulatory Initiative work groups have developed preliminary draft regulations in the following areas:

- Probate/Life Estates (25 CFR 15, 25 CFR 179, 43 CFR 4 and 25 CFR 18)
- Land Records and Title Documents (25 CFR 150)
- Land Acquisitions and Disposals (25 CFR 151 and 25 CFR 152)
- Leasing (25 CFR 162)
- Grazing (25 CFR 166)
- Administrative Accounting and Appeals Process (New)
- Whereabouts Unknown (New)
- Fees (New)

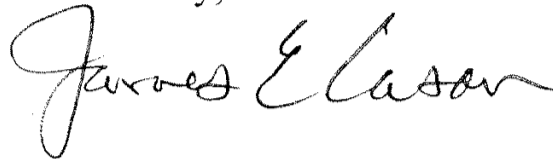
While the drafts produced by the work groups are a good start, we are anxious to get feedback and input from Tribes, tribal leaders, trust beneficiaries and other individuals working with and on behalf of these groups before we publish the proposed rules in the Federal Register and begin the public comment period. In order to facilitate this consultation process, we are distributing the early drafts of these regulations. We plan to conduct tribal consultation meetings in January and February to discuss these drafts. The consultation and meeting schedule will be provided as soon as the dates and locations are finalized.

We welcome any comments you may have on the attached drafts. We are in the process of setting up an additional opportunity to accept your comments electronically. Until that time, you may submit comments in writing to Michele Singer, 1849 C Street, NW, Mail

Stop 4141, Washington, DC 20240. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Singer at (202) 273-4680. To help ensure that your views are carefully considered, please provide your comments to us by close of business March 3, 2006.

We look forward to a thorough and productive consultation process on these very important trust management reform regulations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James E. Cason". The signature is fluid and written in black ink.

James E. Cason