

MATTHEW H. MEAD
GOVERNOR



2323 Carey Avenue
CHEYENNE, WY 82002

Office of the Governor

December 13, 2017

John Tahsuda
Acting Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs
Office of Regulatory Affairs & Collaborative Action
Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs
1849 C Street NW, Mail Stop 4660-MIB
Washington, DC 20240

Attn: Fee-to-Trust Consultation

Dear Acting Assistant Secretary Tahsuda,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Department of the Interior's (DOI) proposed changes to the process for potentially taking land in trust. The State of Wyoming and the two tribes within the Wind River Indian Reservation – the Northern Arapaho Tribe and Eastern Shoshone Tribe – have experience with this process.

The current process directs the Secretary of Interior to notify state governments that have jurisdiction over the land proposed to be acquired of the nomination and affords a 30-day period to provide information on the potential impacts of a transfer. When lands are taken into trust, it may have repercussions on Wyoming's ability to provide services to its residents. It can deprive the state of taxes from business operations, property or other sources. These may be important revenues. These actions require careful scrutiny and consideration of the ramification from all perspectives.

The proposed changes continue the 30-day period for State comment. For nominated lands the more distance they are from the jurisdictional boundaries of a tribal reservation, the greater the scrutiny of the application. This is not the proper standard. States should be afforded opportunity for input at every stage of the process and regardless of the distance of the nominated parcel from a reservation. The change of land status is too important and a detailed analysis is critical.

All interests – federal, state and tribal governments – should be equal. There are many ways to implement this principle. Providing the state only this opportunity to comment late in the process falls short and does not give the state equal voice with others.

Acting Assistant Secretary Tahsuda
December 13, 2017
RE: Fee-to-Trust Consultation
Page 2

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. If you have additional questions or are prepared to meet to discuss further, please contact my office at 307-777-7434.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Mead', is written over the printed name.

Matthew H. Mead
Governor

MHM:dp

cc: The Honorable Mike Enzi, U.S. Senator
The Honorable John Barrasso, U.S. Senator
The Honorable Liz Cheney, U.S. House of Representatives