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**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
LISTENING SESSION**

ON

**REORGANIZATION OF THE
EXECUTIVE BRANCH (E.O. 13781)**

**HELD ON
JUNE 22, 2017
8:30 A.M.**

PAGES 1 THROUGH 49, INCLUSIVE

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Bruce Loudermilk
Director
Bureau of Indian Affairs

Miles Janssen
Counselor to Assistant Secretary
Bureau of Indian Affairs

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10

11 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Well, good morning,
12 everyone. We gave it a few extra minutes, and we
13 are just going to go through here. And I'm going to
14 let Miles kind of open things up here, kind of give
15 us a review. I suppose maybe the first thing we
16 ought to do is probably get some introductions in,
17 if we could, for the court reporter. And as
18 everyone knows, we do have a court reporter here
19 that will be asking -- we need to make sure that we
20 identify who we are, our tribal affiliation, our
21 organization so that she can get that all taken care
22 of.

23 Again, my name is Bruce Loudermilk. I'm
24 the Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs out of
25 Washington, D.C.

1 And I guess we'll just start off here to
2 the right.

3 **MR. LYNN POLACCA:** Good morning, everyone.
4 My name is Lynn Polacca. I'm the Acting Regional
5 Director right now for the Alaska Region here at
6 BIA.

7 **TELEPHONE OPERATOR:** I'm sorry. Excuse me.
8 Hello?

9 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Yes.

10 **TELEPHONE OPERATOR:** This is the operator
11 on the line. We can barely hear you. You are going
12 to need to speak up for the phone participants.

13 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** We will do our
14 best.

15 **TELEPHONE OPERATOR:** I need to join you to
16 the main call. Are you ready to begin?

17 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Yes, we are.

18 **TELEPHONE OPERATOR:** The line is open at
19 this time, sir.

20 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** All right. Thank
21 you. So we will go ahead. Again, my name is Bruce
22 Loudermilk. I'm the Director of the Bureau of
23 Indian Affairs. We're here for a listening session
24 on the Department of Interior restructuring
25 Executive Order. And Miles will give a little bit

1 more information on that, but at this point in time,
2 we'd like to go through and get introductions from
3 folks, and then we will proceed.

4 **MR. LYNN POLACCA:** Good morning. My name
5 is Lynn Polacca, Acting Regional Director for BIA
6 here at the Alaska Region.

7 **MS. KATHY CLINE:** Good morning. I'm Kathy
8 Cline, the Deputy Regional Director for Native
9 Services at BIA.

10 **MR. BEN MALLOTT:** Good morning. Ben
11 Mallott. I'm the vice president of AFN.

12 **MS. JULIE KITKA:** Good morning, Julie
13 Kitka, president of AFN.

14 **MS. LINDA LORENSON:** Cama'i. My name is
15 Linda Lorensen and I'm the grants manager for the
16 Native Village Afognak in Kodiak, Alaska.

17 **MS. MADELINE SOBOLEFF LEVY:** Hello.
18 Madeline Soboleff Levy, general counsel at Tlingit
19 Haida.

20 **MS. DESIREE DUNCAN:** Good morning. Desiree
21 Duncan, Native lands manager with Tlingit Haida.

22 **MR. KEN TRUITT:** I'm Ken Truitt, Deputy
23 Chief Operating Officer at Tlingit Haida.

24 **MS. VIVIAN KORTHUIS:** Good morning. My
25 name is Vivian Korthuis. I'm the CEO for AVCP in

1 Bethel.

2 **MR. JAMES LANDLORD:** I'm James Landlord,
3 Asa'carsarmiut Tribe and first chief of my tribe,
4 Mountain Village.

5 **MR. WILL HARTMAN:** Will Hartman, Tribal
6 Administrator, Native Village of Georgetown.

7 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** I guess, Miles, you
8 want to go ahead and introduce?

9 **MR. MILES JANSSEN:** Sure. So my name is
10 Miles Janssen. I am a counselor to the Assistant
11 Secretary of Indian Affairs. I have been in that
12 position for the last two years. So I'm a career
13 counselor.

14 I'm an enrolled member of the central
15 council of Tlingit Haida. So family is originally
16 from the village of Kasaan in Southeast, so it's
17 always good to get back to Alaska.

18 I just want to thank everyone again for
19 taking the time to be here this morning to discuss
20 the Executive Order. Bruce introduced himself, so
21 I'll just go over a little bit of how things will
22 work today and a little bit about the Executive
23 Order. We are here to listen. This is a listening
24 session. And so we're here to listen and to answer
25 any questions that you might have regarding this

1 Executive Order.

2 So today's listening session is for tribal
3 leader input and comment as part of the nation to
4 nation relationship between tribes and the federal
5 government. We are here primarily to listen and to
6 ensure that your views are considered and part of
7 the record for the administration's steps moving
8 forward.

9 As Bruce mentioned, transcripts, this is
10 being recorded by the court reporter. Transcripts
11 and any written comments that you might have will be
12 analyzed, and recommendations will be reported up to
13 the chain.

14 So Executive Order 13781 is the
15 Comprehensive Plan for Reorganizing the Executive
16 Branch. It was issued on March 13, 2017, and it
17 directs agency heads to send proposals to the OMB
18 director for the reorganization of their agencies,
19 if appropriate, in order to improve the efficiency,
20 effectiveness and accountability of that agency. And
21 so more information about the Executive Order has
22 been provided in the handouts.

23 So some of the questions that might be helpful
24 for today's discussion are: Do the structures of
25 the Department of the Interior and Indian Affairs

1 currently meet tribes' and villages' needs? We
2 provided an organizational chart of Indian Affairs
3 so you can kind of understand how the organization
4 is structured both within BIA and then outside of
5 Indian Affairs -- or within Indian Affairs.

6 What changes to the structures, if there
7 are any, do you recommend and why? What structure
8 would improve the efficiency or, in other words,
9 would promote the efficiency of efficient delivery
10 of services? What structure would improve the
11 effectiveness in order to meet tribes' and villages'
12 needs, and what structure would make the Department
13 and Indian Affairs more accountable?

14 So those are just some of the things to
15 kind of think about. And like I said, I'll open up
16 the floor and take comments.

17 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** I guess I've got
18 one question. I'm wondering if there is anybody on
19 the phone line. Do we have any call-ins? We
20 haven't opened --

21 **TELEPHONE OPERATOR:** Yes. We have parties
22 on the phone. Would you like their lines to open?

23 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Yes, please. We'd
24 like to ask them for introductions.

25 **TELEPHONE OPERATOR:** Just a moment. Their

1 lines are open.

2 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** We would like to go
3 through and ask the parties that are on the call-in
4 if they could please introduce themselves and their
5 organization or tribal affiliation.

6 **MR. LLOYD PANINGONA:** Hello, good morning.

7 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Good morning.

8 **MR. LLOYD PANINGONA:** Yes, hi. This is
9 Lloyd Paningona. I'm with Inupiat Community of the
10 Arctic Slope in Barrow. I'm the realty director,
11 and I also have --

12 **MS. AUBIE GREGG:** I'm Aubie Gregg. I'm the
13 natural resources director for ICAP.

14 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Do we have anyone
15 else on the line?

16 **MS. MILLIE HAWLEY:** Good morning. This is
17 Millie Hawley with the Native Village of Kivalina,
18 President.

19 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Could you please
20 repeat that.

21 **MS. MILLIE HAWLEY:** Millie Hawley, Native
22 Village of Kivalina, President.

23 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Okay. Thank you.
24 Next person.

25 **MR. RONNEY TOOLIE:** Ronney Toolie, Native

1 Village of Savoonga, President.

2 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** We will go ahead,
3 then. And operator, if we can make sure that when
4 folks have questions, if they can cue those
5 questions up. But again, this is a listening
6 session, and we are here to listen to you and get
7 your input. So I guess with that, we can kind of --
8 we can kick off. So if there is anybody that has
9 any questions or any -- anything you would like to
10 discuss or any ideas or need further clarification,
11 please let me know.

12 Yes, Vivian.

13 **MS. VIVIAN KORTHUIS:** Can I go first?

14 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Absolutely.

15 **MS. VIVIAN KORTHUIS:** Thank you. So I
16 wrote out some things that I'm going to go over.
17 Good morning. My name is Vivian Korthuis. I'm the
18 Chief Executive Officer for the Association of
19 Village Council Presidents in Bethel, Alaska.

20 Thank you for the opportunity to share
21 some thoughts on reorganizing the federal
22 government. AVCP serves the 56 tribes in 48 villages
23 along the Yukon River, Kuskokwim River, and Bering
24 Sea coast in Western Alaska.

25 I want to emphasize that in this listening

1 session that the federal government has a trust
2 responsibility to all our tribes. That trust
3 responsibility needs to be honored in this
4 reorganization. Reorganizing the federal government
5 in any way cannot diminish this trust responsibility
6 in any fashion.

7 Some key points to remember: The federal
8 government must maintain the government's trust
9 responsibility for all tribes in the United States,
10 in Alaska, and in our region. The federal
11 government has the obligation to protect tribes,
12 tribal self-governance, tribal waters, tribal lands
13 and all our resources. This obligation sits with
14 the federal government and cannot be delegated.
15 Protection of funding for tribal programs is
16 fundamental to fulfilling this trust responsibility
17 and its obligations to tribes. Indian programs must
18 be protected and must be held harmless in
19 reorganizing the federal government.

20 The federal government must conduct
21 appropriate tribal consultation in the
22 reorganization effort. What does this mean? In the
23 AVCP region, we would welcome a listening session so
24 that our tribes can participate in this process. So
25 we invite you to Bethel, and we will do our best to

1 invite our tribes in our region to Bethel so that
2 access to the listening session can be at the
3 community level.

4 Office of Tribal Self-Governance must be
5 adequately funded and, in my opinion, it should be
6 increased. Self-governance in all our tribes in our
7 region is important and that access to those
8 resources needs to be maintained.

9 Lastly, I wanted to share something that I
10 heard about three or four years ago at a -- at an
11 economic conference held in Washington, D.C. One of
12 the guest speakers at this conference said Anchorage
13 is the new Singapore. That statement stuck with me
14 because what he was saying was that geopolitical and
15 economic focus points on a global level is changing.
16 So not only the federal government, but the world's
17 political and economic forces are going through
18 reorganization. If that is true, then everything,
19 all the issues, all the challenges we have in our
20 villages, our way of life, our land, our water, the
21 need for safe communities, our language, healthy
22 families, good economy and especially the future of
23 our youth, our children, are issues on the table and
24 we need to protect them.

25 All these issues at the village level, the

1 tribal level are then to me automatically needing
2 attention in the context of a global discussion. In
3 this government reorganization, Alaska Native people
4 have to be at the table. In this paradigm shift,
5 the federal government must live up to its trust
6 responsibilities to our tribes. Thank you.

7 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Thank you, Vivian.
8 Anybody else? And if you have questions or
9 anything, please feel free to ask. I mean, I know
10 we are just kind of throwing everybody in here cold.

11 Secretary Zinke has come in and he
12 basically mentioned that he has a vision of
13 supporting folks in the field at the -- on the
14 lines, if you will. He's a military person who
15 believes that the resources and all that should not
16 be consolidated in a central office, but should be
17 looked at in place out at the levels where the -- I
18 guess where the rubber meets the road, if you will,
19 or the pavement. Maybe not the greatest metaphor
20 for Alaska, but anyway, he basically wants to get
21 the resources out in the field. So that is part of
22 his dialogue that he is having now with tribes.

23 He was recently at NCAI and mentioned the
24 same thing. I know he came up to Alaska and had
25 visits with folks out here. But that's what he's

1 been telling us from day one when he first came into
2 the department. Many of you have seen him. Indian
3 Affairs was probably the first office he visited
4 within the Department of Interior and, that was a
5 message that he mentioned to us.

6 He mentioned that consultation should mean
7 something. Self-determination should mean
8 something. And that was his thoughts. So that's
9 what we are trying to build off on these listening
10 sessions.

11 As we have told folks in the past, there
12 is nothing on the table, there is nothing off the
13 table. I do know that the Department has some other
14 things that are going on, but in the same respect
15 when we start looking at restructuring, it's not
16 just BIA that he's looking at. So if there is a
17 host of other offices within the Department of
18 Interior that need to be looked at, then that is
19 certainly something, too, that if folks have
20 comments on, you can certainly provide those.

21 As Miles mentioned, with the comments that
22 we are looking at, of course we have a court
23 reporter here that will take all these comments, and
24 we will basically get all the information compiled
25 and we will forward that up to the Secretary's

1 office for review. But at least we will have
2 everything that folks talk about here will be on
3 record. So that is really the main purpose of this
4 listening session is to get your ideas, get it on
5 the record, and make sure that we get that
6 information up to the Secretary.

7 So with that, if there are any questions -
8 -

9 **MR. KEN TRUITT:** We will make a comment
10 for the record, Mr. Loudermilk. And for the record,
11 my name is Ken Truitt. I'm the Deputy Chief
12 Operating Officer for Central Council of Tlingit
13 Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska. My Tlingit name is
14 Tuk Saek. I'm a child of Woosh'kee'taan, Eagle,
15 Shark. Raven, Coho by my clan affiliation. Thank
16 you for the opportunity to meet with you and to go
17 over the Executive Order to reorganize the federal
18 government.

19 We, like AVCP, share -- I would say that
20 we share every one of AVCP's concerns, so I won't
21 belabor making those points again, but just the
22 highlights. I think anytime that we hear about
23 reorganization of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the
24 first thing that we worry about is what that will do
25 to the trust relationship and responsibility the

1 federal government has to its First Peoples. And
2 this is -- this is historically a responsibility
3 that the federal government has taken upon itself
4 and not one, I think, the tribes have done as well
5 with throughout history because of that.

6 But at this point in history, that's one
7 of the strongest things that we have is that trust
8 responsibility from the federal government. So we
9 would like to -- and our comment is going to be we
10 would like to make sure that any reorganization of
11 the Department of Interior doesn't diminish the
12 trust responsibility that the government has in its
13 responsibility to Indian tribes. It starts to sound
14 an awful lot like determination.

15 And I personally think that the era of
16 Indian policy that we are in right now is probably
17 the best that we have had in history. That is self-
18 governance and self-determination, recognition that
19 Indian peoples haven't lost the desire for self-
20 governance for themselves and for their people. So
21 reorganization starts to sounds a little bit like
22 determination, and our interest is to make sure that
23 that doesn't occur in any sort of reorganization,
24 that the commitment to self-determination is still
25 honored.

1 We worry that any kind of reorganization
2 would also dilute the effectiveness or reduce the
3 Indian voice in Washington, D.C. We would hate to
4 see a reorganization of the Bureau of Indian Affairs
5 lead to a lesser voice within the Department of
6 Interior for Indian interests.

7 We would welcome with the reorganization
8 more consistent, if you will, policy and
9 determinations that are communicated more clearly;
10 just more effective, I guess, management. Internally
11 we are always striving for more effective and
12 consistent management with ourselves, so in any
13 reorganization we would hope we could accomplish
14 that, as well.

15 Finally, just in kind of a summary of my
16 earlier points, very specifically we would hate to
17 see the Office of Self-Governance diminished in any
18 way. And we also agree with AVCP that we think that
19 that office should be strengthened. Certainly we
20 would hate to see any reduction of services or
21 diminution of status of compact tribes.

22 But again, thank you for this time that we
23 can come and share our thoughts and our concerns.
24 And we stand with our brothers and sisters of AVCP
25 and the villages there and the comments that they

1 make, as well. Thank you.

2 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Thank you very
3 much. We appreciate that. Any other comments? It's
4 going to be a quick meeting. And that's okay. You
5 know, we have been in other regions, too, where we
6 have run just a couple hours. When we were out in
7 Connecticut here a little bit back, if we would have
8 had eight hours, they would have taken up the time.
9 But it is for you and what you want to comment on.
10 So is there any other comments?

11 **MS. JULIE KITKA:** For the record, my name
12 is Julie Kitka, and I have the honor of serving as
13 the president of the Alaska Federation of Natives,
14 which is the largest statewide organization within
15 the state of Alaska whose membership is comprised of
16 federally recognized tribes, ANCSA village
17 corporations, ANCSA regional corporations and tribal
18 consortiums. And comments I make today are in no
19 way intended to lessen the comments coming in from
20 the federally recognized tribes and the tribal
21 consortiums, but we want to come out in support of
22 their comments and initiatives.

23 First of all, we would like an annual
24 report to go back to the Secretary that we expect
25 and hope that he would do everything in his power to

1 hold harmless Indian programs in this time of
2 austerity in the federal budget, not only for the
3 federal trust responsibility of holding harmless,
4 but also this Administration is asking for the
5 cooperation of the Native people in furthering their
6 goals of energy dominance and development of natural
7 resources, including on Native lands.

8 With getting our assistance and our help
9 in the national interest, we do have an expectation
10 we would be held harmless on our programs and that
11 the capacity that's being built -- and I'm speaking
12 particularly in regard to Alaska because I can't
13 speak for (inaudible). But that the capacity that's
14 being built, that it be recognized for the high
15 value that it is and how important it is for the
16 survival of indigenous people in Alaska, both in our
17 villages and our regional hubs and our cities.

18 The more that we can build our capacity
19 and have the capacity to do things for ourselves,
20 the better our state is going to be and the more we
21 can contribute to national interests. So first of
22 all, I want to convey that expectation of holding
23 harmless.

24 In addition, we want to raise to the
25 Secretary's attention that many of the programs that

1 are funded now are drastically underfunded. And he
2 needs to work with the appropriators in getting a
3 chart that goes over, you know, 10, 20 years to
4 track the appropriations that has funded these
5 things to see how it has not kept up with inflation.
6 It's not kept up with population growth. We have
7 many programs in which it looks really good on paper
8 that we have the program, but they only serve maybe
9 25 percent of the eligible beneficiaries of the
10 program. And the Secretary needs to recognize that,
11 that not is all well in what they are funding and
12 they need to catch up with the funding. So I would
13 even argue that there needs to be increases.

14 And how you deal with increases in a time
15 of austerity is, one, you increase tax credits so
16 that Native Americans can do more public/private
17 partnerships and incentivize some of the things that
18 need to be done, and both our tribes and our Native
19 corporations can invest their own resources and make
20 this happen. So focus on public/private
21 partnerships and incentivizing that through tax
22 credits, as well as preferable agreements.

23 One of the things that we were very proud
24 of in the last administration was Secretary Jewell's
25 Secretarial Order advancing cooperative management.

1 And we have people that are interested in doing
2 that. We think that that's a good step, but that
3 needs to really be a lot bolder and urge the
4 Secretary to use his own Secretarial Order advancing
5 that.

6 That was limited in many regards in the
7 last Administration because it was national in
8 scope, and we recommend that he do a Secretarial
9 Order that is Alaska specific. We have such a large
10 geographic mass and land mass and unique things in
11 the state that would justify having a Secretarial
12 Order advancing the cooperative management, as well
13 as co-management in that Secretarial Order. And we
14 are glad to provide some drafts on what that would
15 look like. But that would also accelerate the
16 capacity being built and the self-reliance that we
17 are trying to get within our communities.

18 Then what we need to do is we need to move
19 to real true co-management. One of the things that
20 Secretary Zinke said when he was in the state, that
21 he wanted Alaska Natives as full partners in the
22 management of federal public lands in the state. And
23 to us that means not only within the public lands
24 Department of Interior manages, but also the U.S.
25 Forest Service, the Department of Agriculture and

1 the forests. So we expect that there will be
2 opportunities for people to be sitting down in
3 negotiations and to get that real opportunity to
4 make it real. We have the capacity. We have the
5 interest. We have just not had the path to do that
6 in a sensible way.

7 So we would urge both a new Secretarial
8 Order on that, as well as a real focus on the
9 management and the opportunities for the federal
10 public lands. And we intend to work with the
11 Secretary further on that.

12 In addition, when you get back to what are
13 some of the really good things that are going on
14 with BIA is compacting. I have not seen something
15 that builds greater efficiencies in government and
16 delivers more resources to the local level than
17 compacting. So that definitely has to be
18 strengthened and expanded.

19 In addition, the Secretary needs to open
20 up the opportunity for expansion of compacting to
21 other agencies within the department. There is no
22 reason we can't be compacting things in the Park
23 Service and BLM and other agencies. We have got the
24 mechanisms, and the government just needs to use it.
25 It will save you money. It will get more money to

1 the grassroots level, and it will accomplish the
2 Secretary's goal of not having a bloated federal
3 bureaucracy in D.C. because you are pushing it all
4 out. Let us with our mechanisms of compacting take
5 on these opportunities. So we want to strongly urge
6 that.

7 Also, when we take a look at the big
8 picture of our survival in this day and age and in
9 this economy and, as Vivian talked about Anchorage
10 being the new Singapore, that's really real. There
11 is a lot of rapid change going on in regard to
12 economics and political spheres on that.

13 We need to have additional attention and
14 resources put to emergency preparedness and
15 response. The political situation with the
16 militarization of the Arctic on that creates real
17 dangers for our communities in the state. And
18 that's evidenced by, you know, the whole missile
19 defense system that's being built up in our bases up
20 here. We are protecting from Alaska all the way
21 over to London. Well, if we can do that and we can
22 build that, the least we can do is make sure we have
23 in every single village an emergency preparedness
24 plan and food security for the people and what could
25 happen if airfare stops for two weeks or

1 communications drop. We need redundant
2 communications. We need guarantees of food security
3 for our communities. And the way to get some of
4 that is expanding the compacting.

5 In addition to the -- our security
6 interests, BIA really needs to understand as far as
7 Alaska how much continuing supporting the Native
8 people is in the national interest. And it just
9 can't be overestimated how important that is. But
10 then also what we need is we need some new tools. We
11 need to have built within the bureaucracy of the
12 Bureau of Indian Affairs areas that stimulate
13 innovation. And innovation that Native people can
14 put our own values and aspirations in, as opposed to
15 reading about some university or somebody's
16 innovation ideas on that. We need to indigenize
17 innovation and have the BIA supporting that type of
18 stuff. That will pay dividends in the long run for
19 a lot of reasons.

20 But also technology. The Bureau of Indian
21 Affairs needs to not walk away from technology and
22 the importance of technology for Native communities
23 across the country. And there ought to be a leading
24 advocate for high speed Internet connections and use
25 of technology in our communities. We should be

1 relentless in making sure that we have every
2 community and every tribe totally connected. There
3 ought to be an advocate for including the low rates
4 on the Internet that's provided to our health system
5 on that that is included for every one of our tribal
6 communities and our small businesses in our
7 communities.

8 But the BIA is uniquely positioned because
9 your responsibilities to Native people is to look
10 beyond where things are right now and try to push
11 and make those connections.

12 In light of that, I also would recommend
13 structurally that you consider some type of
14 intergovernmental relations component within the
15 Bureau of Indian Affairs, and possibly even with a
16 liaison with the Secretary's office. We have so
17 much work that we do with the Department of Justice
18 and Health and Social Services and agriculture that
19 if the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Interior had
20 stronger mechanisms for its own intergovernmental
21 relations on that, they don't have to have the
22 burden of paying for everything within Interior.
23 They just will be using their unique position in the
24 federal government to draw on resources from the
25 others.

1 So that's as far as my comments. Like I
2 said, we are very excited about working on advancing
3 our people's interests. And just in closing, the
4 compacting and contracting is the way to go. Thank
5 you.

6 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Thank you. Thank
7 you. Any other comments? Are there any questions?

8 **SPEAKER DELORES:** Good morning.

9 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Go ahead.

10 **SPEAKER DELORES:** I'm sorry. This is
11 Delores with the Native Village of (indiscernible).
12 I just wanted to point out that I'm on the call, as
13 well, with one of my council members, Raven Jacks. I
14 just wanted to ask real quick, you had mentioned in
15 the beginning that there were handouts. I wondered
16 if they were provided to those that were calling in,
17 as well.

18 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Do we have that on
19 the website? I tell you what: We can get that
20 information to you if we can get like a fax number
21 or an email or something like that.

22 **MR. LYNN POLACCA:** We can send it out to
23 the all email notice that we sent out earlier.

24 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** We will send it out
25 to the all email notice that we have here set up in

1 the region to the tribes. All right?

2 **MS. JULIE KITKA:** I've got one more
3 comment. I apologize for taking so much time. One
4 of the ideas that we have been looking at for a
5 number of years is how the United States deals with
6 the people around the world and how does -- if you
7 turned Alaska upside down and said we weren't part
8 of the United States, how would the U.S. government
9 deal with us.

10 And during that process when we were
11 looking at that, we saw the main institutions that
12 the government would work with would be the World
13 Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Asian
14 Development Bank as well as the Millennium Challenge
15 Corporation, which was set up during the Bush
16 Administration.

17 We started taking a look at what are the
18 things that they are doing that's really good and
19 what are the things that we actually were doing
20 better. And one of the things that came to mind a
21 couple years ago was a real focus on the compacting
22 that's going on through the Millennium Challenge
23 Corporation internationally. And if you look at
24 President Trump's budget that went to the Congress
25 on the Millennium Challenge Corporation, in the OMB

1 budget, which was very austere -- many budget cuts
2 all over -- advanced 800,000,000 for the Millennium
3 Challenge compacts and continued support.

4 Where that gets to our thinking is we
5 really think that there is a need to test out that
6 model, the way they are doing the compacting and
7 doing the domestic version of that. And we in
8 Alaska are willing to test out a domestic version of
9 that. And what's unique about the compacting that
10 they do through that one is they are five-year
11 compacts and you get the money up front for the
12 whole five years.

13 What that would do in compacting in the
14 demonstration would allow you to build efficiencies
15 into what you are doing and hold down administrative
16 costs. We look at forward funding many different
17 things, from education to health care on that. I
18 think that we need to be looking at forward funding
19 BIA compacting. And this idea of demonstration on
20 the five-year compact is something that we are very
21 interested in. It's been suggested. And Vivian is
22 one of our big leaders on that, that the
23 demonstration might be focused on ways to support
24 the energy dominance agenda of Secretary Zinke in
25 this demonstration. And we would like to invite the

1 Secretary and his team to be involved in discussions
2 on that, as well as our congressional delegation.

3 And as I said, this is not a new idea. We
4 actually have drafted up legislation on how to do a
5 demonstration, and we actually had the first
6 president of the Millennium Challenge Corporation on
7 contract going through all the pitfalls on what they
8 were doing in assessing that. Just the time was not
9 right. The time is right under this Administration
10 and this time frame. And the efficiencies and the
11 decrease in costs that could be generated by this,
12 as well as the fact that Secretary Zinke was asking
13 for bold ideas, and this is an example of a bold
14 demonstration project that we would like to test out
15 in Alaska.

16 So that was my last comment I was going to
17 make.

18 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Very good. I think
19 one of the things I didn't mention before was that I
20 had the privilege of serving as a regional director
21 here from January 2014 till the end of November,
22 December 2016 prior to going to Washington, D.C. So
23 I got a very unique perspective of Alaska by getting
24 to visit the villages and go out and see the
25 importance and the needs and the desires in working

1 with the people out here. So I mean, it's been very
2 eye-opening. And I definitely see the need for the
3 contracting and compacting and strengthening those
4 programs. So I think those are all great comments.
5 So I just want to put that out there.

6 I didn't know if we had any more comments
7 or questions. Is there anybody -- over here, sir.
8 Go ahead.

9 **MR. JAMES LANDLORD:** My name is James
10 Landlord, Asa'carsamiut tribe in Mountain Village.
11 We are one of the villages in the AVCP region in the
12 compacting programs. Anytime there is funding cuts,
13 we feel the effects of it. It's pretty hard. We
14 had a meeting and we saw this letter, and we didn't
15 prepare a statement. We thought BIA was coming to
16 let us know how they were going to implement the
17 reorganization. We didn't prepare one, so -- but
18 our -- our compacting -- we wanted to create jobs in
19 our Kusilvak region, census region district. That
20 Kusilvak used to be called Wade Hampton census
21 district, and it was changed. Our region is the
22 most -- we have no jobs available. We are dependent
23 on the programs from the State or federal
24 government.

25 And we pulled out of AVCP to try to create

1 jobs in our village. We don't have very many
2 working in our town. Not many work, so we try to
3 create jobs with our tribal membership. And it
4 helped our community. But funding -- our proposed
5 fundings are being cut. Our tribes can feel it. We
6 don't get very many funding.

7 In this last proposed cuts from the
8 Department of Interior, we saw part of it in one of
9 the -- that there were going to be cuts in
10 scholarships and the HIP program. A lot of villages
11 utilizes HIP a lot. I don't know how many HIP
12 housing we received from BIA, but it really helps
13 our Elders. And the NAHASDA program is not -- we
14 also contract NAHASDA, but we can't -- it's not very
15 much, and we have to try to stretch it out, leverage
16 it. But with HIP, those are low income housing, and
17 a lot of our houses are -- some of the people,
18 sometimes there are about maybe four to six families
19 living in those houses under HUD. And when they
20 receive the HIP program, we can build one, and some
21 of those families move out.

22 So we were kind of disappointed when the
23 funding was being cut. And one of our students that
24 go to college, they are dependent on our
25 scholarship.

1 And with the reorganization, the trust
2 responsibilities from the federal government, it's
3 important for -- for any Native American, including
4 Alaska. When we first heard about reorganization,
5 we were kind of afraid that I hope that -- our tribe
6 was hoping that they are going through a process of
7 another -- try to terminate -- cutting down all the
8 funding. It will hurt our tribes in Alaska,
9 especially those that are compacted. We don't have
10 very much funding for the compacting. Thank you.

11 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Thank you very
12 much. Appreciate that. Anyone else?

13 **MR. DELBERT PUNGOWIYI:** Am I on?

14 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Yes, you are.

15 **MR. DELBERT PUNGOWIYI:** My name is Delbert
16 Pungowiyi. I'm president for the Native Village of
17 Savoonga. I do have -- I don't have anything in
18 writing, but I have highlighted some of the
19 concerns, and I'll just go through them as quickly
20 as I can.

21 On the trust responsibility from the
22 federal government for the Native tribes throughout
23 the United States to Alaska, that really needs to be
24 strengthened. I was born in 1959, Statehood Act, and
25 I'm speaking from my life's experience with the

1 political -- political issues that we have dealt
2 with. And I have been watching this since I was a
3 young man. The trust responsibility has not really
4 been enforced, I don't believe. It needs to be
5 strengthened.

6 And the biggest fear we have right now is
7 one of the gentlemen was saying that it sounds like
8 determination. And it always is -- is -- in whose
9 administration. And the biggest fear we have from
10 the council and from our people here is that with
11 everything that our tribes have fought for for years
12 to better our communities, education, health, the
13 whole nine yards is being rolled back. And we are
14 already feeling the effects with the education and
15 economics.

16 The trust responsibility for the tribes,
17 the small and needy tribes allocation for years have
18 never been adequately raised. And yet everything is
19 -- according to the Consumer Price Index is -- what
20 do you call it -- raised to the economic status that
21 we are in. Our small and needy tribes have never
22 been adjusted to the Consumer Price Index. 64,000 a
23 year doesn't really cut it.

24 Back in the 1980s, I do believe, the -- I
25 don't know what year -- or '70s, the federal

1 government appointed what they called the Alaska
2 Eskimo Commission to study our issues and problems
3 in the state, and they did one volume identifying
4 all the problems within our tribes in the state of
5 Alaska. And it was a lengthy book. I don't know if
6 any of you ever have read that. And they came up
7 with a volume, and they were charged to do this one-
8 year study and identify all the problems and then
9 come up with recommendations.

10 They came up with recommendations that
11 were not fulfilled or done, such as helping the
12 tribes become self-sufficient and independent, which
13 would eliminate the financial aid to the tribes. I
14 think in this time and age that really needs to be
15 thought about and considered and pursued.

16 Right now with our climate change
17 impacting, I'm sure some of you have read about our
18 impact that we are having on -- on the island, on
19 St. Lawrence Island. Right now we are faced with
20 the greatest threat in our food security and our
21 identity. That's the real scary part. And with all
22 the budget cutting that's going on, I think we do
23 believe that the remote -- the rural communities and
24 the remote communities are going to be the ones to
25 suffer the worst.

1 As it has been all my life, we have been
2 struggling already, but with all the budget cuts and
3 rolling back everything that we have fought for to
4 make things in our community better are being cut
5 and rolled back. --

6 So in closing, I will just say that I do
7 believe the federal government, as the gentleman
8 said, took this responsibility, trust responsibility
9 for the tribes in the U.S. I do believe it was --
10 the trust responsibility was taken with some
11 conscience on what the sacrifices our people have
12 given willingly and unwillingly to our nation. The
13 sacrifices I will mention real quickly is the loss
14 of lives, the loss of land, the loss of identity.
15 And now we are faced with the greatest threat. Those
16 of us that depend on the Bering Sea for food
17 security is at its greatest threat and our identity
18 is on the line.

19 And I thank you all for this very
20 important call. I hope that -- and also on this
21 climate change -- I'll just add quickly, too -- on
22 the policy making government-to-government
23 consultations, too often we have government-to-
24 government consultations with branches, with
25 (indiscernible) that don't have no decision making,

1 no authority.

2 On the Arctic policy on climate change,
3 our people need to be there at the table on every
4 decision that's going to be made in the Arctic,
5 particularly in Alaska. After all, we are sovereign
6 nations as God put us here like all the other
7 nations have. And I thank you.

8 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Thank you, sir.
9 Gentleman in the back.

10 **MR. WILL HARTMAN:** Will Hartman, Native
11 Village of Georgetown. I just want to reiterate
12 what Julie had talked about and the importance of
13 co-management of natural resources. We have just
14 started organizing the Kuskokwim River Intertribal
15 Fisheries Commission. That's the first time we have
16 had the opportunity to really be a part of resource
17 management. And it -- the State has a long history
18 of kind of obstructing, you know, tribal
19 jurisdiction and our ability to manage resources for
20 ourselves. So my worry is that, you know, if there
21 is any reduced funding for participating in those
22 type of co-management organizations, you know, it
23 will be harder for us to work with the State.

24 Also on just jurisdiction and tribal
25 justice, it hasn't been until recently that the

1 State has actually been willing to work with tribes
2 on tribal justice issues in the villages. For years
3 they have neglected their responsibilities to make
4 sure people are safe out in the rural villages. In
5 Georgetown the closest trooper station is in Aniak,
6 so you are hours away.

7 Now that the State is going broke, you
8 know they are opening up more opportunities for the
9 tribes to provide for themselves, have a seat at the
10 table. There just needs to be a better mechanism to
11 kind of, I guess, prevent the State from limiting
12 our abilities to serve ourselves.

13 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Thank you, sir.

14 **MS. LISA RIEGER:** Hello. Lisa Rieger,
15 Chief Legal Officer at Cook Inlet Tribal Council.
16 My apologies for being late. To follow on on the
17 previous comments, we also want to make sure that
18 the department takes back the message that justice
19 funding to Alaska, which has been a policy decision
20 not to do is something that's really concerning in
21 the Alaska Native community here.

22 And secondly, we also want to stress that
23 the 477 program is a really great opportunity to
24 highlight the benefits of streamlining services,
25 reporting, and generally a good way of managing an

1 overregulatory environment. We really appreciate
2 the recent efforts the department has made to
3 support that program in conjunction -- or asserting
4 really the authority of the department against -- I
5 don't want to use that word -- with its federal
6 partners and want to really stress how important
7 that tool is and ask you to keep on advocating on
8 its behalf.

9 And then we have a corollary, which is
10 really not 477 related so much, but our cognizant
11 agency is the BIA. We have a negotiated indirect
12 cost rate with the department, and we think it's
13 another potential way of reorganizing the executive
14 branch to allow tribes and tribal organizations to
15 use their negotiated indirect cost rate at their
16 discretion as opposed to the administrative caps
17 that are imposed by other agencies. And so we ask
18 that you advocate for that, as well.

19 And then just the last thing is I think
20 all of this would be better in writing, so is there
21 a deadline for when written comments should be in?
22 You probably addressed that before I came in, and I
23 apologize if that's the case.

24 **MR. MILES JANSSEN:** I think it's July 15.
25 And they can be submitted to -- on-line. I believe

1 it's consultations@bia.gov.

2 **MS. LISA RIEGER:** Thank you.

3 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Thank you very
4 much. Any other questions or comments?

5 **MS. JULIE KITKA:** I've got another one,
6 and that pertains to the Bureau of Indian Education.
7 I'd like to ask the Secretary to engage with the
8 Alaska Native people and invest in Alaska Native
9 people's education. It's very unfair and
10 unacceptable for education to fund a whole bunch of
11 schools and a whole bunch of things and then not
12 step in and try to help us. And we urge the
13 Secretary to at least do some demonstration, let
14 Alaska Natives, through our compacting, contracting
15 and that, show that we can do quality education and
16 efficiencies. And we might be able to do models
17 that he can use in the other schools around the
18 country on that.

19 It's really criminal when you think about
20 the BIA schools and reports that so many of them are
21 just really among the worst of the worst in the
22 country. And it's not in regard to bad teachers or
23 anything. There is a whole host of reasons why they
24 are ranked some of the worst. But if the Secretary
25 supports investing in Alaska Native education, give

1 us the chance to develop education models that might
2 be able to be replicated and supported and allow us
3 to put our culture and values into the education
4 system. There is a whole host of people that would
5 be willing to do a demonstration and prove out those
6 ideas. And it might help in these other
7 responsibilities.

8 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Very good. Any
9 other questions, comments? Telephone line?

10 **COURT REPORTER:** Can I get everyone else
11 on the phone to state your name and spell it again,
12 please. I didn't quite get it the first time.

13 **MS. MELISSA THAISZ:** This is Melissa
14 Thaisz from the Cook Inlet Tribal Council.

15 **MS. MARIE AHSOAK:** My name is Marie
16 Ahsoak, and I work for the Inupiat Community of the
17 Arctic Slope in Barrow, Alaska. And I have the
18 natural resource director here with me, and her name
19 is Aubie Gregg.

20 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** I guess if that's
21 it, going once, twice. All right. Thank you all
22 very much for coming. We certainly appreciate it.

23 **MS. JULIE KITKA:** Can I ask you one
24 question?

25 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Sure. Absolutely.

1 **MS. JULIE KITKA:** Are you able to share
2 what internal ideas on restructure is going on? We
3 know that the department wouldn't be holding
4 listening sessions unless they had some ideas that
5 they were wanting to do. We feel very strongly we
6 want to keep an area director here in Alaska and an
7 area office on that, but we also have concerns about
8 the Native American employees that are affected by
9 this restructuring to make sure that they are dealt
10 with well. If we encourage people to work for the
11 Bureau of Indian Affairs and the federal government,
12 we have got to expect that they are treated well and
13 not shabbily. Can you tell us anything on the
14 restructure?

15 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** You know, I can
16 tell you right now that the Bureau of Indian Affairs
17 doesn't have any plans. That doesn't necessarily
18 mean that there aren't things going on in the
19 Department of Interior. Okay. So I mean, I know
20 that as we are doing these listening sessions, the
21 information -- we have been saying is there is
22 nothing on the table, nothing off the table. But I
23 do know that there are folks within the department
24 that are taking bigger pictures and taking a look at
25 things, and that has been at the absolute highest

1 level within the Secretary's office and has -- I
2 would imagine they will brief us on it when they get
3 an opportunity.

4 I know we kind of read things -- as you
5 can all tell, or you have probably read in the
6 newspapers and things like that, we are looking at,
7 you know, looking at the VERA, VISP, the buy-outs.
8 Basically, I guess I would say, maybe right-sizing,
9 the term that they would use, the federal government
10 and the number of employees. We all know what the
11 budget has done. I think we took about a \$330
12 million reduction throughout Indian Affairs. And I
13 think that's pretty evident in the budget.

14 And obviously, you know, that hasn't been
15 enacted or anything, but that was the President's
16 budget that was submitted up to Congress, as I think
17 everybody has probably seen that by now, or will see
18 it.

19 So that's really -- I mean, they haven't
20 shared a whole lot of information. They talk about
21 restructuring the regions to a certain degree, but
22 Alaska is one of those unique areas that you would
23 be your own region. So I don't know what else they
24 have out there. They have shared some information,
25 but not a whole lot of information. They talk about

1 restructuring regions to fall in line. And I don't
2 think this would necessarily really impact Alaska
3 because up here with the Department of Interior you
4 have got your BLM, you have got your Fish &
5 Wildlife, and basically it's the Alaska region. So
6 I would imagine that that would probably stay the
7 same for Alaska and not necessarily change.

8 Now, it may have an impact down in the
9 Lower 48 with the way things are set up, but that's
10 going to be -- that's yet to be determined what
11 that's going to be. Okay.

12 **MR. MILES JANSSEN:** One additional thing.
13 I think we are going out with this round of
14 consultations to get ideas. And I think before
15 anything would be finalized, once a plan was kind of
16 in place, there would be an additional round of
17 tribal consultations before anything is finalized my
18 understanding of the process.

19 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Some of the
20 conversations we've had with Mr. Cason and folks --
21 and Mr. Cason is a primary contact person within the
22 Department of Interior. Everything is subject to
23 change. There is nothing hard and fast just yet. So
24 that's why doing the listening sessions is so
25 important because we feel -- we feel that it's

1 critical to get the tribes' input early as we can
2 and at least get that on record so that we can
3 funnel those inputs and those comments up to the
4 Secretary's office. And that's exactly what we'll
5 do.

6 We have another listening session coming
7 on in Tulsa. We have done them, you know -- several
8 of them throughout the United States already. So
9 that's kind of where we are at. So --

10 **MS. LISA RIEGER:** I'm sure it's already
11 been stated this morning, but we would just add our
12 support to the idea that to the extent that
13 resources -- financial resources follow the
14 function, contracting out with tribes and tribal
15 organizations is a really effective way of making
16 sure that we continue to have Native hire. But we
17 also are doing the functions with the success of the
18 IHS as demonstrated, especially in Alaska,
19 contracting out those functions, I think that's a
20 really good case to be made in the department.

21 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Absolutely.
22 Everybody is so somber looking. This is a
23 government meeting, right? Yes, sir.

24 **MR. JAMES LANDLORD:** There was a Molly
25 Hootch case when it came in, and BIA totally pulled

1 out of Alaska, and there was concern about that.
2 Right now there are -- there were some people that
3 wish that BIA didn't totally pull out. I think
4 there is some talk right now that maybe BIA should
5 have some demonstration program or maybe funding to
6 bring back to Alaska.

7 Alaska right now is kind of broke. And we
8 are kind of disappointed that -- some people are
9 kind of disappointed that BIA just pulled out of the
10 education system.

11 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Okay.

12 **MS. JULIE KITKA:** Since we are talking
13 about the budget up here, I just want to put in the
14 record clarification. Alaska has been hit really
15 hard by the drop in oil prices. Alaska is driven
16 strongly by the oil industry in Alaska, as well as
17 government and defense components of our compacting,
18 and then within government transfer programs and
19 then the service economy. We are in the middle of a
20 recession, and we have not yet hit bottom on the
21 recession. So as bad as it is right now, it is
22 expected to get worse.

23 What a result of this recession happens is
24 typically the rural areas and the Native people are
25 going to get the harshest part of that because

1 everybody else is protecting their interest on that.
2 So we expect not only to keep going in a recession,
3 but a deepening recession that hasn't hit the
4 bottom. But we will be getting the brunt of that.
5 We are not broke as a state. We do have a \$60
6 billion Permanent Fund, but we have a fiscal
7 structural problem where that can't be used to fund
8 the government services. And our legislature has
9 been unable to come up with a long-term fiscal plan
10 to use that.

11 In the meantime, our people are hurt
12 because we don't get capital projects to replace
13 aging infrastructure that we have. We don't have
14 investments in building new schools or repairing
15 schools.

16 You look at health clinics as an example.
17 The State of Alaska hasn't built a new health clinic
18 in decades. The federal government through the
19 Indian Health Services and the Denali Commission is
20 the one that built the last 120 health clinics in
21 our communities. That's really in my mind awful for
22 a state to say you haven't provided access to health
23 care for your remote communities, and you had to
24 depend on the Federal government to do that.

25 But we hope that our legislature and our

1 governor are going to be able to come up with an
2 agreement and fix the fiscal problem on that. They
3 may not be able to fix the low oil price, so we may
4 have long-term impacts on our economy. That's why
5 it's all the more important that we be able to have
6 greater capacity to help ourselves and the
7 compacting and contracting be greatly expanded
8 because that helps our economy. It helps us through
9 these tough times. But it helps us get our people
10 jobs doing these things as opposed to our people
11 sitting on the sidelines as somebody else does the
12 work. So that's just for a little background for
13 the record.

14 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Thank you. Okay.
15 Well, unless there is any objections, I guess we
16 will bring this meeting to a close, unless there is
17 any other comments.

18 **MR. DELBERT PANGOWIYI:** Mr. Chairman, one
19 last comment from Delbert in Savoonga.

20 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Yes, sir.

21 **MR. DELBERT PANGOWIYI:** I was just
22 thinking about this, and I hope that when they do
23 the reorganizing, that they will have people in the
24 cabinet who have experience with Native politics and
25 issues. That would at least give the tribes some

1 comfort. And also I think it would -- it would be
2 good to have this -- all the transcripts that we
3 have had on this teleconference, to have all of it
4 sent to all the tribes in the state so that
5 everything will be transparent to all the tribes of
6 these teleconferences.

7 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** And they will be.
8 And we will -- they'll be on the website, and you
9 will also be able to see the comments from the other
10 listening sessions throughout the United States. So
11 that information will all be out on the website,
12 also. Thank you, sir.

13 **MR. DELBERT PANGOWIYI:** Okay. I thank you
14 very much. Appreciate that. And God bless to all.

15 **MR. BRUCE LOUDERMILK:** Thank you, sir.
16 You, too. All right. Thank you all very much.
17 Appreciate it.

18 **(Proceedings adjourned at 9:44 a.m.)**

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1 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

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3 I, MARY A. VAVRIK, RMR, Notary Public in and for the
4 State of Alaska do hereby certify:

5

6 That the foregoing proceedings were taken before me
7 the time and place herein set forth; that the proceedings
8 were reported stenographically by me and later transcribed
9 under my direction by computer transcription; that the
10 foregoing is a true record of the proceedings taken at
11 time; and that I am not a party to nor have I any interest
12 in the outcome of the action herein contained.

13

14 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my
15 and affixed my seal this 30th day of June 2017.

16

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21 _____
MARY A. VAVRIK,

22 Registered Merit Reporter

23 Notary Public for Alaska

24 My Commission Expires: November 5, 2020

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