



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

DEC - 9 2021

Dear Alaska Native Leader:

Please join me for a consultation session for Tribes in Alaska on what the Department of the Interior's (Department) top priorities should be regarding several topics related to the protection and restoration of Tribal homelands. Enclosed is a framing paper laying out topics and questions for your consideration. As promised during the October 18, 2021, consultation session, I am hosting this additional session to discuss the unique perspective of Tribes in Alaska on this issue.

To best accommodate your locations and ensure everyone's safety, we will be holding the session virtually. I look forward to speaking with you at the following session:

Monday, December 20, 2021
11 a.m. – 1 p.m. ADT

Join ZoomGov Meeting either by clicking this link:

<https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1615430694?pwd=NmY4UEtFMkhnbFZLNNDJIWkE0a1VyZz09>

Or by phone by:

+1 551 285 1373 US
+1 646 828 7666 US (New York)
+1 669 216 1590 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 161 543 0694
Passcode: 995160

In addition, please submit any written comments to consultation@bia.gov by 11:59 p.m. ET on Friday, January 14, 2022. If you have any questions regarding this effort, please feel free to contact Mr. Joaquin Gallegos, Special Assistant, Office of the Assistant Secretary — Indian Affairs, by email at joaquin_gallegos@ios.doi.gov or by phone at (202) 208-7163.

Sincerely,

Bryan Newland
Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs

Enclosure

Framing Paper

Tribal Consultation on Protection and Restoration of Tribal Homelands

Protecting and restoring Tribal homelands is a key priority of the Department. While the importance of Tribal homelands undoubtedly touches upon many facets critical to Tribal sovereignty and self-determination, the consultation will focus on three specific topics: the land-into-trust process; leasing and rights-of-way; and sacred sites and treaty rights. As a starting point to facilitate discussion, the Department poses the questions stated below and organized by topic. Indian Affairs also welcomes additional comments and suggestions from Tribes beyond the questions listed.

Land-Into-Trust Process

1. Does the Department's land-into-trust process adequately allow Tribes to consolidate landholdings in or near existing reservations?
2. Does the Department's land-into-trust process adequately allow Tribes to establish homelands for landless Tribes?
3. How can the Department improve its land-into-trust process to facilitate protection of sacred sites, conservation, and the exercise of civil and criminal jurisdiction?
4. For Tribes in Alaska, how should the Department approach the land-into-trust process to adequately account for factors that are unique to Alaska?

Leasing and Rights-of-Way

5. Are the Department's existing regulations governing agricultural leasing on Indian lands adequate to protect the interests of Tribes and Indian landowners?
6. Are any changes needed to the Department's leasing and rights-of-way procedures to clarify taxing jurisdiction in Indian country and to promote economic development in Indian country?

Sacred Sites and Treaty Rights

7. What steps can the Department take to ensure that Tribes have the ability to protect their sacred places and access those sites to exercise religious rights?
8. What steps can the Department take to protect the exercise of off-reservation treaty rights, including habitat for treaty resources?
9. What actions can the Department take in relation to other agencies to ensure the protection of sacred sites and treaty rights?

Overall

10. What is the most pressing need for protection and restoration of Tribal homelands that the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs can help address?

Directions for Submitting Written Comments

Please submit any written comments in relation to these questions to: consultation@bia.gov by 11:59 Eastern Time on Friday, January 14, 2022.