



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

Northwest Regional Office

911 Northeast 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Portland, Oregon 97232

**In Reply Refer To:**  
Tribal Government Services  
Chinook Distribution Plan

**January 12, 2022**

*Sent via email*

Dear Tribal Leader:

On December 2, 2021 the Bureau of Indian Affairs held a virtual public Hearing of Record to receive oral testimony regarding a proposed plan for distribution of the Chinook Judgment Fund. Additionally, written testimony was accepted through December 15, 2021.

The BIA provided notice of the Hearing through a 'Dear Tribal Leader' letter sent to the forty-five (45) tribes within the Northwest Region on October 28, 2021. Public notice of the meeting was also published on multiple days in six regional and local newspapers in Oregon and Washington, and northern California. Further notification was posted at [www.bia.gov](http://www.bia.gov).

The plan presented at the Hearing would have been to establish a six-member board consisting of two members each selected by the Grand Ronde, Chinook and Siletz to oversee an educational scholarship program for descendants of the 1914 Lower Chinook and Clatsop Payment Rolls.

Thirty (30) individuals testified at the hearing, including members of the Grand Ronde Tribal Council, the Chinook Indian Nation, and individuals with Chinook ancestry, many of whom were enrolled in another tribe. Enrolled members of the Siletz also presented testimony supporting further dialogue with the Chinook Indian Nation. Siletz elected representatives were not represented. In addition to oral testimony, twenty-three (23) letters and emails were received. No one supported the proposed plan. An overwhelming majority urged that we work with the non-recognized Chinook Indian Nation in developing a plan benefitting the Chinook people.

The BIA takes oral and written testimony seriously. While this is not to be construed as a change in our position regarding federal recognition, we will adjust our course and work with the Chinook Indian Nation to develop a plan that will be of benefit to and administered by the Chinook people and acceptable to Congress.

Sincerely,

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Bryan K. Mercier  
Northwest Regional Director