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VIRTUAL TRIBAL CONSULTATION
WORKFORCE EFFICIENCY/PRODUCTIVITY AND
EMERGENCY PERMITTING CONSULTATION

TRANSCRIPT OF VIRTUAL TRIBAL CONSULTATION

HELD ON

FRIDAY JUNE 6, 2025

10:00 A.M.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

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1 VIRTUAL TRIBAL CONSULTATION
 2 WORKFORCE EFFICIENCY/PRODUCTIVITY AND
 3 EMERGENCY PERMITTING CONSULTATION
 4 HELD ON
 5 FRIDAY JUNE 6, 2025
 6 10:00 A.M.
 7
 8 SCOTT DAVIS: All right. Good morning,
 9 everybody. Good Friday. (Native language spoken).
 10 Good day. Scott Davis here, Acting
 11 Assistant Secretary for the Interior under Doug
 12 Burgum. Welcome everybody.
 13 This here is almost getting to the end of
 14 our first consultation round with this
 15 administration. There are the items today for
 16 discussion, for consultation, and we'll get into
 17 that here momentarily.
 18 But welcome everybody online. Again, we
 19 offer this virtually for Tribal leaders, Tribal
 20 Nations across the nation, for those who cannot
 21 travel. This was one of the requests we've gotten
 22 over the years for -- from Tribal leaders of having
 23 a virtual session, so again, welcome.
 24 I will begin by just going down the line
 25 with our staff, beginning with Bryan Mercier and

Page 3

1 going down the line of staff who is part of the
 2 consultation today.
 3 Bryan.
 4 BRYAN MERCIER: Thanks, Scott. Good
 5 morning, everyone. This is Bryan Mercier. I'm the
 6 director of the BIA. I'm an enrolled member of the
 7 Federal Tribes of Grand Ronde, and I think this is
 8 the seventh consultation we've done. So appreciate
 9 y'all joining.
 10 I think we'll hand it off to folks in the
 11 auditorium.
 12 KELLY RAEL: Hi, I'm Kelly Rael. I'm
 13 serving at senior advisor to the Assistant Secretary
 14 of Indian Affairs.
 15 KEVIN BEARQUIVER: Good morning. Kevin
 16 Bearquiver. I am the deputy bureau director for the
 17 Office of the -- or for the Bureau of Trust Funds
 18 Administration.
 19 TRAVIS CLARK: Good morning, everybody.
 20 My name is Travis Clark. I'm an associate deputy
 21 director with the Bureau of Indian Education, and a
 22 citizen of the Osage Nation. Thank you for being
 23 with us today.
 24 SCOTT DAVIS: All right. I think that's
 25 who we have. Rebecca, if you want to -- turn it to

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1 Rebecca or Kelly to begin. Thank you.
 2 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: Sounds good. Thank
 3 you all, and good morning. Welcome to today's
 4 consultation session for Tribal Leaders and
 5 Representatives.
 6 This meeting is being hosted by the Bureau
 7 of Indian Affairs. We are here to gather your
 8 comments on two topics; the Assistant Secretary for
 9 Indian Affairs reorganization plan as part of
 10 Executive Order 14210, Department of Government
 11 Efficiency workforce optimization initiative, and
 12 the DOI emergency permitting procedures as part of
 13 Executive Order 14156, declaration of a national
 14 energy emergency.
 15 For clarity, throughout today's session we
 16 will refer to these as workforce efficiency and
 17 productivity, and emergency permitting procedures.
 18 Today's consultation session is being
 19 recorded.
 20 My name is Rebecca Beauregard. I'll be
 21 supporting facilitation in today's consultation. My
 22 colleagues and I are contractors to the Department
 23 of the Interior. We are here as impartial
 24 facilitators supporting the department's team in
 25 conducting these consultations.

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1 Also with us is Derrick Beetso from
 2 Hayilka who is part of our contractor team, and
 3 recording your comments made here today.
 4 Representatives from the Department of the
 5 Interior are here and actively listening to your
 6 comments. All comments you share today will be
 7 passed along to them after the session.
 8 This is an opportunity for Tribal leaders
 9 to provide input on the workforce efficiency and
 10 productivity, and emergency permitting procedures.
 11 We greatly appreciate you all for taking time to
 12 attend today's consultation.
 13 This is a virtual consultation, and all
 14 attendees will be joining online. I will walk us
 15 through some information to get us on the same page
 16 about how this will go.
 17 We are supported by Kyle Vint and Jacob
 18 Burnstein. Jacob will be our main point of contact
 19 for technical support. They will share their name
 20 and email in the chat, and you can use the chat
 21 function to address any technical challenges you
 22 encounter.
 23 Close-captioning services are available.
 24 Please go to the bottom of your screen, click on the
 25 three dots that say more, select captions, and

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1 choose show captions. You can also use the live
 2 captioning service available at the link in the
 3 chat.
 4 Zoom may ask about your spoken language.
 5 Select yours and hit save or cancel to close the
 6 box. This will not impact your ability to
 7 participate in the meeting or use closed-captioning.
 8 Attendees will be muted and off camera
 9 until the comment period. We will provide full
 10 instructions for comments in a few moments. You
 11 will be invited to unmute and turn on your camera
 12 when it is your turn to speak.
 13 If you have questions about the meetings
 14 or the virtual schedule, you can email RACA@BIA.gov,
 15 that's R-A-C-A at B-I-A dot gov.
 16 Errin Kent is attending virtually as the
 17 court reporter capturing your input today so that a
 18 complete transcript can be prepared and shared with
 19 DOI officials.
 20 If you choose to comment, please state
 21 your name, title, and Tribal affiliation. This
 22 information will assist the court reporter.
 23 This session will run for approximately
 24 five and a half hours, concluding at 3:30 p.m.
 25 Eastern time. We will queue for a 30-minute break

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1 at approximately 1:00, but as it is a long meeting
 2 we encourage you to take breaks as needed.
 3 Official from the Department of the
 4 Interior will begin the consultation with a brief
 5 presentation on the respective topics. Following
 6 the presentation, we will invite comments from
 7 elected or appointed Tribal leaders or their
 8 designated representatives. Additional
 9 participation instructions will be shared at that
 10 time.
 11 We want to ensure that all comments are
 12 heard and captured. To create space for all voices,
 13 we will hear from everyone once before offering
 14 second opportunities to speak. Given the number of
 15 attendees and the limited time, we respectfully ask
 16 that speakers be mindful of the time they take to
 17 share comment.
 18 As facilitators, part of our role is to
 19 help manage the flow of this consultation session to
 20 allow for broad participation. We may offer gentle
 21 time reminders to ensure we hear from as many Tribal
 22 perspectives as possible.
 23 This consultation session is specifically
 24 intended for elected officials or designated
 25 representatives of federally recognized Tribes. If

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1 you're attending as a member of a non-federally
 2 recognized Tribe or a member of the public, we
 3 welcome you to submit written comments. The public
 4 comment period will remain open until July 7th.
 5 Please edit your Zoom name to include your
 6 affiliation. If you would like to submit written
 7 comments, you can submit those through email or mail
 8 by 1:59 p.m. Eastern time on Monday July 7th. The
 9 email address and mailing address will be posted in
 10 the chat.
 11 I will now welcome Cheryl Andrews-Maltais,
 12 Chairwoman of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head
 13 Aquinnah for an opening blessing.
 14 And do we have Chairwoman Cheryl with us?
 15 CHAIRWOMAN CHERYL ANDREWS-MALTAIS: Thank
 16 you so very much for the honor of doing the opening
 17 prayer today. Please everyone feel free to pray in
 18 your own way.
 19 Creator and Ancestors, thank you for all
 20 the many blessings that we have been bestowed and
 21 for all the many sacrifices that you have made in
 22 order for us to still be here today. Thank you for
 23 the gifts of strength, courage, and resiliency in
 24 order for us to continue the work that we do, and to
 25 work on behalf of all of our Peoples.

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1 We thank you for our Mother Earth and all
 2 our living creatures that live within, upon, and
 3 above her. We thank you for the privilege of
 4 representing our People. We thank you for the good
 5 will that we share with our counterparts and our
 6 federal partners.
 7 We hope that you continue to guide our
 8 thoughts and our actions to make good decisions for
 9 all of our relatives, now and for the future
 10 generations to come.
 11 We ask for your compassion and blessings
 12 for all those that are suffering, and those who need
 13 your wisdom and your guidance, and your care and
 14 love.
 15 We thank you for all these gifts, and we
 16 hope to have a very positive outcome to a very
 17 robust discussion, to make really good decisions for
 18 our People moving forward. Aho.
 19 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: Thank you,
 20 Chairwoman. I will now hand this over to Kelly
 21 Rael.
 22 KELLY RAE: Good morning, everyone.
 23 Thank you for joining us for this virtual Tribal
 24 consultation. I will open up with a statement from
 25 the Secretary of Interior's office.

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1 During his tenure as North Dakota
 2 governor, Secretary Burgum was recognized for
 3 fostering positive relationships with the state's
 4 Tribal Nations.
 5 The Department of the Interior and Bureau
 6 of Indian Affairs remain committed to our trust
 7 responsibilities of protecting Tribal treaty rights,
 8 land assets, and resources, in addition to its
 9 duties to carry out mandates of federal law with
 10 respect to American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes
 11 and Villages.
 12 Before proceeding with any potential
 13 reduction in force actions, the department will work
 14 through the Tribal consultation to ensure any
 15 proposed actions are informed by meaningful input
 16 from Tribal nations, and fully consider the delivery
 17 of services to Indian Country.
 18 The purpose of consultation is for the
 19 Department of Interior Indian Affairs to engage
 20 directly with federally recognized Tribes and BIE
 21 stakeholders to receive direct input as we develop
 22 plans to implement the executive orders and
 23 secretarial orders, specifically Executive Order
 24 14210 on government efficiency workforce
 25 optimization, Secretarial Order 3429 on

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1 consolidation on the functions and the Secretarial
 2 Order 14156 on regarding the national energy
 3 emergency.
 4 Next slide.
 5 Okay. Executive Order 14210, Department
 6 of Government Efficiency. The purpose of this order
 7 is for federal bureaus to restore accountability to
 8 the American people by eliminating waste and bloat
 9 through critical transformation. Specifically as we
 10 develop a plan, we seek your feedback on
 11 restructuring Indian Affairs to support more
 12 efficient interactions with Tribes, addressing
 13 critical funding structures including efficiency
 14 barriers to expedite funding to Tribes and Tribal
 15 programs, and increasing support for Tribal self-
 16 governance and self-determination.
 17 Next slide.
 18 Secretarial Order 3429, consolidation.
 19 The purpose of this secretarial order is to
 20 authorize and direct actions for consolidation,
 21 unification, and optimization of administrative
 22 functions within the Department of Interior.
 23 Following your feedback, we will consider
 24 if we at Indian Affairs will consolidate some of
 25 these functions at the department level.

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1 Next slide.
 2 In this slide I'll give a brief summary of
 3 each of the functions from the Indian Affairs
 4 offices and programs, starting with the Office of
 5 the Secretary of Indian Affairs.
 6 Our major functions include providing
 7 leadership over Indian Affairs, AS-IA, BIA, BIE, and
 8 BTFA. Overseeing the development of new and revised
 9 regulations, developing operational policies,
 10 overseeing the White House Council on Native
 11 American Affairs, as well as congressional relations
 12 and public affairs, and providing oversight for
 13 management and operations of Indian gaming, federal
 14 acknowledgement, self-governance, and Tribal
 15 economic development.
 16 Next slide, please.
 17 DASM. The Deputy Assistant Secretary
 18 Management major functions include providing
 19 executive leadership, guidance, and directions for
 20 the following Indian Affairs operations. The Office
 21 of Budget and Performance Management, the Office of
 22 Chief Financial Officer, the Office of Human Capital
 23 Management, Office of Facilities, Properties, and
 24 Safety Management, and the Office of Information
 25 Technology.

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1 Next slide.
 2 We'll discuss BIA. The Bureau of Indian
 3 Affairs' major functions include carrying out
 4 federal responsibilities to protect and improve the
 5 trust assets of American Indians, Indian Tribes, and
 6 Alaska Natives. BIA is responsible for the
 7 administration and management of 55 million
 8 subsurface acres and 57 million acres of subsurface
 9 mineral estates held in trust.
 10 BIA is the primary agency charged with
 11 carrying out the United States' trust
 12 responsibilities and maintain the federal government
 13 to government relationships with federally
 14 recognized Tribes and promoting self-determination.
 15 BIA implements federal laws and policies,
 16 and administers programs established for American
 17 Indians and Alaska Natives under the trust
 18 responsibility. The BIA director provides direct
 19 oversight to the deputy bureau director's four core
 20 agency components.
 21 Next slide.
 22 These major components include the Office
 23 of Justice Service who is responsible for upholding
 24 Tribal sovereignty and providing safety for Native
 25 American communities through enforcing laws,

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1 maintaining justice and order, and by ensuring that
 2 sentenced American Indian offenders are confined in
 3 safe, secure, and humane environments.
 4 The Office of Indian Services who managing
 5 programs in human services, Indian self-
 6 determination, Tribal government, transportation,
 7 and workforce development. The Office of Trust
 8 Services who carries out the Indian Affairs trust
 9 responsibilities associated with the management and
 10 protection of trusts and restricted lands, natural
 11 resources, and real estate services.
 12 These programs administer real estate
 13 services, land titles, and land records, probate,
 14 natural resources, forestry, wildland fire
 15 management, irrigation, and power safety of dams.
 16 Environmental services, Tribal community resilience,
 17 Indian energy development, land consolidation, and
 18 geospatial services.
 19 The Office of Field Operations who support
 20 the director of BIA by overseeing 12 regional
 21 offices and 86 agencies across Indian Country. The
 22 office provides organizational direction and
 23 coordination of ensuring field offices adhere to BIA
 24 policies, aligned with strategic goals and effective
 25 meet for customer needs.

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1 Next slide. Bureau of Indian Education.
 2 Major functions include in partnership with Tribes,
 3 BIE proceed notes culturally based and comprehensive
 4 education that prepares and empowers students to be
 5 healthy and successful. BIE provides direct
 6 services and funding to support education for more
 7 than 400,000 Indian students across the U.S.
 8 These direct services and funding support
 9 include 183 bureau funded elementary and secondary
 10 schools on 64 Reservations across 23 states. 55 are
 11 BIE operated and 128 are Tribally controlled charter
 12 schools.
 13 BIE oversees direct operations for two
 14 postsecondary institutions which include Haskell and
 15 SIPI, and funding support for 33 independent Tribal
 16 colleges and universities and higher education
 17 scholarships.
 18 BIE supports the operations of off
 19 Reservation residential school, peripheral dorms
 20 near reservations, prenatal, infant, and toddler
 21 services. Adult education services, and preschool
 22 programs.
 23 Next slide, please.
 24 The Bureau of Trust Funds Administrations.
 25 Core functions include fulfilling the secretary's

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1 fiduciary trust responsibilities by managing the
 2 financial assets of trust beneficiaries to include a
 3 portfolio of over 9 billion in investments, which
 4 include more than 4,300 Tribal accounts and 414,000
 5 individual Indian monies, IIM accounts.
 6 BTFA offers robust technical guidance on
 7 trust accounts which enhances beneficiaries'
 8 understanding and ensures that specific needs can be
 9 met. BTFA provides timely support and assistance to
 10 beneficiaries across all 50 states, three U.S.
 11 territories, and 27 countries through proactive
 12 outreach and the trust beneficiary call center.
 13 BTFA oversees trust records and operates
 14 the American Indian records repository which
 15 preserves historical documents related to federal
 16 treaty and trust obligations to Native Americans.
 17 And finally BTFA handles critical document
 18 production for litigation and manages historical
 19 accounting issues, ensuring fairness through the
 20 administrative appeals process for beneficiaries.
 21 Next slide.
 22 In the next two slides I will summarize
 23 Indian Affairs' proposed workforce efficiency
 24 strategies including the bureau specific strategies
 25 for BIE and BTFA.

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1 Next slide.
 2 The proposed Indian Affairs workforce
 3 efficiency strategies. Across Indian Affairs, we
 4 remain focused on upholding our trust
 5 responsibilities to Tribes, ensuring alignment with
 6 the executive orders and efficient use of the
 7 Department of Interior's resources.
 8 As we look for ways to strategize around
 9 workforce efficiencies, we are proposing the
 10 following core approaches.
 11 Number 1, focus on continuity and
 12 improvement of federal services by expanding Tribal
 13 self-determination and self-governance to reduce
 14 federal bureaucracy and regulations.
 15 Number 2, focus on data-driven decision
 16 making to align with priorities and needs for Tribal
 17 communities, including investments in technology
 18 modernization to support this effort.
 19 Number 3, realign internal resources and
 20 mission objectives to better meet Tribal priorities
 21 by exploring merging of office and removing
 22 management layers. In addition to building capacity
 23 in critical function areas, to improve performance
 24 and service delivery.
 25 Next slide.

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1 All right. Additional proposed BIE and
 2 BTFA specific workforce efficiency strategies. BIE
 3 and BTFA have additional proposed strategies to
 4 support their specific population. BIE remains
 5 focused on their commitment to high quality
 6 education.

7 As BIE looks for ways to strategize around
 8 workforce efficiencies, they are proposing the
 9 following core approach. Invest in front line
 10 educators through empowerment of students support of
 11 teachers, counselors, and student leaders.
 12 Including the use of data to access student needs
 13 and drive resource allocation decisions that are
 14 support academic achievement and well-being.

15 And lastly, straightening Tribal
 16 consultation in education policies and program
 17 development to ensure culturally responsive
 18 practices are embedded at every level.

19 BTFA remains focused on their commitment
 20 to streamline and prioritize. As BTFA looks at ways
 21 to strategize around workforce efficiencies, they
 22 are proposing the following core approach.

23 Number 1, focus on statutory regulation by
 24 prioritizing the key fiduciary duties of receding,
 25 investing, disbursing, reconciling, and reporting.

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1 Strengthen beneficiaries' understandings of
 2 financial trust assets and utilizing comprehensive
 3 data to modernize and improve systems and processes
 4 for transparency, access, and efficiency.

5 Next slide.

6 All right. I'm going to, in the next few
 7 slides, I'm going to give a brief summary of the
 8 emerging emergency procedures under the national
 9 energy emergency declaration.

10 Executive Order 14156, emerging permitting
 11 procedures under the national energy emergency
 12 declaration. Under the declaration of the national
 13 energy emergency, the department and BIA will
 14 implement emergency permitting procedures to
 15 accelerate the development of domestic energy
 16 resources and critical minerals.

17 Next slide.

18 Executive order 14156, emerging permitting
 19 procedures. For NEPA, the department will be
 20 adopting an alternative compliance process for more
 21 concise documents and compressed timeline.
 22 Specifically, projects analyzing environmental
 23 assessments will be completed within approximately
 24 14 days.

25 Projects requiring a full environmental

Page 20

1 impact statement will now be reviewed in roughly 28
 2 days. For the Endangered Species Act, pursuant to
 3 the executive order we will exercise an expedited
 4 Section 7 consultation process that involves the
 5 appropriate bureaus notifying Fish and Wildlife
 6 Services under the emergency consultation process.

7 Following notification, the appropriate
 8 bureau can then proceed with whether to approve the
 9 action. For more details, please click on the link
 10 on the PowerPoint slide deck.

11 For the National Historic Preservation
 12 Act, the executive order requires bureaus to follow
 13 alternative procedures resulting in the notification
 14 to Tribal Historic Preservation officers and Indian
 15 Tribe or Native Hawaiian organization that may
 16 attach religious and cultural significance to
 17 historic properties likely to be affected.

18 This process will afford impacted Tribes
 19 the opportunity to comment within seven days of the
 20 notification.

21 Next slide.

22 We seek your questions and comments
 23 related to the three topics related to Executive
 24 Order 14210, first restructuring Indian Affairs.
 25 Second, how to better support Tribes in reducing

Page 21

1 administrative burdens to assess and administer
 2 funding, improving communication with Tribes on
 3 funding, and improving technical assistance to
 4 obtain and administer funding. And lastly,
 5 increasing Indian Affairs' support to Tribal self-
 6 governance and self-determination.

7 Next slide.

8 Questions for the national emergency
 9 consultation. We seek your questions and comments
 10 related to the national energy emergency and
 11 emerging permitting procedures. Specifically, do
 12 you have any concerns with the proposed process and
 13 time frames? Are there any applicable situations
 14 that are not covered by the proposed process and
 15 timelines?

16 I'll now pass the mic back over to
 17 Rebecca.

18 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: Thank you, Kelly.
 19 Now we will turn to your input on workforce
 20 efficiency and productivity, and emergency
 21 permitting procedures topics.

22 We first invite input from elected or
 23 appointed Tribal leaders, and next from their
 24 designated representatives. These comments will be
 25 prioritized before we hear comments from any other

Page 22

1 attendees.

2 To indicate your intention to provide

3 comment, please use the raise-hand function at the

4 bottom of the Zoom screen. Zoom will generate a

5 queue of attendees wishing to comment. At this time

6 elected or appointed Tribal leaders who wish to

7 comment, please virtually raise your hand.

8 We will follow the order in which you

9 appear on my screen. I will announce that it is

10 your turn, and you will be prompted to unmute and

11 share your comment. If you encounter issues, we can

12 work with you on chat to resolve it and get you back

13 into the queue.

14 For those attending by phone, please press

15 star 9 to raise your hand and join the queue. You

16 will use star 6 to unmute your phone when it is your

17 turn to provide comment.

18 If you choose to comment, please introduce

19 yourself with your name, affiliation, and role or

20 position. Our court reporter will note this

21 information for the transcript.

22 And with that, we will turn to Chairwoman

23 Teri Gobin.

24 CHAIRWOMAN TERI GOBIN: (Native language

25 spoken). Good morning. (Native language spoken) is

Page 23

1 my Traditional name. Teri Gobin is my English name,

2 and I'm the Chairwoman of Tulalip Tribes.

3 I wanted to get on here early because I

4 have my regular board meeting starting in a half

5 hour, because it's 7:30 a.m. our time, so we start

6 at 8:00.

7 We are here today in response to our Dear-

8 Tribal-Leader letters that had been sent out from

9 the Department of Interior, Secretary Burgum in

10 April, and the second addendum sent in May,

11 concerning the department's emergency permitting

12 procedures and response to the national energy

13 emergency declared by President Trump.

14 The Tulalip Tribes is a federally

15 recognized sovereign Indian government in Washington

16 State, successors to the interest of the Snohomish,

17 Snoqualmie, Skykomish, and other allied Tribes and

18 Bands signatory to the Point Elliott Treaty of 1855.

19 Members of Tulalip Tribes, together with

20 other Coastal Salish Tribes have strong historical

21 and spiritual ties and treaty rights reserved to

22 hunt, fish, and gather on federal lands and waters

23 managed by the United States government and its

24 agencies.

25 First I'd like to provide some context.

Page 24

1 Tulalip Tribes is located approximately 35 miles

2 north of Seattle on the I-5 corridor, with our

3 southwestern boundary extending to the Salish Sea.

4 Like 21 other federally recognized Tribes in

5 Washington State, Tulalip holds rights reserved

6 under the treaty with the United States.

7 A signatory to the Point Elliott Treaty,

8 the Tulalip Tribes and other signatory Tribes retain

9 rights to fish and harvest shellfish in our usual

10 custom grounds and areas, as well as to hunt and

11 gather plants, wildlife throughout open unclaimed

12 lands including state and federal public lands.

13 These treaty reserved rights have been

14 affirmed repeatedly in federal courts, most notably

15 in the landmark decision United States versus

16 Washington commonly known as the Bolt decision. In

17 interpreting these rights, the courts have

18 constantly recognized that treaties are binding

19 agreements between sovereign nations, and constitute

20 the supreme law of the land.

21 As the 9th Circuit Court has clearly

22 stated, treaty signatory Tribes reasonably

23 understood that not only did they retain access to

24 exercise rights in these areas, but also that

25 resources would be sufficient to sustain them.

Page 25

1 The ecosystem and habitats that support

2 the exercise of these off-Reservation treaty rights

3 are critical to fulfilling the federal government's

4 treaty obligations.

5 As such, the United States, through its

6 federal agencies and its roles as trustees must not

7 take action that would degrade or destroy any

8 natural resources upon which these rights depend.

9 Before I provide comments on the proposed

10 alternative emergency procedures related to EPA,

11 ESA, and NHPA, we want to make it clear that it is

12 not timely or meaningful consultation, especially

13 given the breadth of the topics listed in the

14 consultation notice and second addendum to the

15 notice.

16 The issues that are set to be discussed

17 today are staggering. Each law is unique, and the

18 department's consultation with the Tribes for each

19 deserves far more attention and discussion. The

20 department must offer further consultation

21 opportunities to gather Tribal input, and we request

22 that you ensure that these occur even simultaneously

23 so that we can continue to make progress.

24 We also need more transparency with the

25 thoughts, plans, and proposed actions under

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1 consideration. In the future, the more information
 2 that can be provided by the federal government about
 3 the issues it is focusing on by the action that it
 4 is considering taking, the increased likelihood the
 5 Tribes can provide meaningful feedback.

6 The Tulalip Tribes are not opposed to
 7 permitting or environment reform form, whether on
 8 Tribal lands or beyond. However, on current federal
 9 laws such as reforms cannot proceed without
 10 meaningful Tribal input, nor can they come at an
 11 expense to our treaty reserved resources and their
 12 associated habitats. Especially those located on or
 13 within our treaty reserved areas outside the
 14 boundaries of the Reservation.

15 And thank you for giving me this
 16 opportunity to speak this morning. I will be
 17 jumping in and out when my board meeting starts.

18 Thank you. (Native language spoken).

19 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: Thank you,
 20 Chairwoman.

21 We'll come up on Chairwoman Andrews-
 22 Maltais next.

23 CHAIRWOMAN CHERYL ANDREWS-MALTAIS: Thank
 24 you again, and thank you for being here and
 25 dedicating the time that you have for these

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1 consultations.

2 As the Chairwoman noted, that these issues
 3 and these subjects are very broad, and they're very
 4 important to all of us as Tribal leadership. And
 5 with that said, it would be advantageous to us as
 6 Tribal leadership to be able to have more time and
 7 other opportunities to express our concerns and/or
 8 our acknowledgement for good ideas as well as our
 9 ideas to really help streamline these processes.

10 With regard to the workforce, as we've
 11 said, you know, the Department of the Interior over
 12 all other departments realizes the most about the
 13 trust and treaty obligation it has with Tribes, and
 14 supporting the initiatives that the United States is
 15 trying to repair our communities that were
 16 systematically dismantled. Our economies, our
 17 communities, our ways of life, and our existence as
 18 a whole.

19 As I said yesterday, the Tribes and our
 20 People have paid it forward with the lives of our
 21 ancestors, our lands, waters, and natural resources.
 22 And we are trying to rebuild our communities from
 23 the promises that the United States made to us in
 24 exchange for those items that I just mentioned.

25 When we talk about efficiencies and

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1 bureaucracy, and the streamlining of that, I don't
 2 think there's any bigger proponent for that than the
 3 Tribal leadership in Indian Country.

4 For far too long we've been working on an
 5 antiquated system with tremendous amounts of
 6 redundancy and bureaucracy that is simply not
 7 necessary. Just even beginning with how we receive
 8 our funding.

9 As a self-governance Tribe, the statute
 10 says that we're supposed to receive our money as of
 11 October 1st of every fiscal year, the entire amount
 12 for the fiscal year, and we are able to re-design
 13 our programs and services to deliver them to our
 14 people as we decide and develop them that is going
 15 to best meet or People's needs.

16 That is local control, and that is what we
 17 expect, and that is what we had basically signed up
 18 for. However, it's been a number of years, I think
 19 since the '90s, that we have not received our
 20 payments in lump sum as we're supposed to, but
 21 instead we wait on our funding through
 22 appropriations which we should not be discretionary.

23 We should be mandatory, but that's a whole
 24 different subject. But when we do receive our
 25 appropriations, it takes so long because the funding

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1 gets awarded to Indian Affairs and then the bureau,
 2 and then it gets send to the regions, and then it
 3 gets sent back to self-governance. Then it goes
 4 back and forth, and too many hands are touching it.
 5 Again, bureaucracy and redundancy that is simply
 6 unnecessary.

7 Our funding should also not be going into
 8 a delivery system or portal such as ASAP or any one
 9 of those other portals. Our funding should be
 10 coming in to us the same in wire transfers, the same
 11 way it is, we were proven or it was demonstrated to
 12 show how well this can be done and how effectively
 13 we can streamline this process.

14 That exactly was through COVID. During
 15 the COVID-19 pandemic and emergency, not only the
 16 Tribes but the federal government worked together in
 17 collaboration to figure out how best to get the
 18 resources into the Tribes' hands. And once those
 19 resources were in our hands, the federal government
 20 stepped back and allowed the Tribes to do what we do
 21 best, which is manage our programs and services for
 22 the health, safety, and well-being of our community
 23 members.

24 Tribes did an exemplary job as far as
 25 making sure that we were able to structure our

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1 delivery systems to our people, and the funds were
 2 wired directly into our accounts, which eliminated
 3 all of the bureaucracy that we currently go through
 4 in our annual funding.
 5 One of the other areas that we also know
 6 that needs to be worked on is ensuring that the
 7 employees not only in the Department of the Interior
 8 that touch Indian Country and work with us, need to
 9 be exempted from the workforce reduction.
 10 Other agencies within the federal family
 11 also need to be exempted. Every Tribe, or I should
 12 say most Tribes have more than enough work with all
 13 the other agencies from commerce to treasury to DOJ,
 14 HHS, and every single cabinet.
 15 And across the board, this funding that is
 16 set aside for Tribes, but yet we are negatively
 17 impacted by this workforce reduction because they're
 18 only looking at certain areas as opposed to
 19 understanding and applying the principle that Tribes
 20 are governments unto ourselves, working with the
 21 entire federal family of government entities.
 22 And we rely on those funds to make sure
 23 that we're doing those jobs on behalf of the United
 24 States, but yet those other agencies are not taking
 25 into account the need for people to be at the other

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1 end of the phone or be able to process the funding
 2 through the mechanisms that we have.
 3 And those mechanisms should be, the
 4 funding should be put through our existing
 5 mechanisms through our contracts and compacts for
 6 Tribal Nations in Indian Country. It's heartening
 7 to hear that there's an investment into self-
 8 governance and to a self-governance model. And
 9 basically what we need is Tribes to be able to have
 10 the options as to how they want to receive and
 11 administer their programs and services.
 12 Not all Tribes are in the same position,
 13 not all Tribes are the same in structure. It's no
 14 one size fits all, no cookie-cutter. We're all
 15 unique with the unique needs and the unique
 16 structures, but what is necessary is the options for
 17 Tribes and Tribal leadership to be able to determine
 18 what it is and how it works best.
 19 To that end, we should be, the Department
 20 of the Interior should be really leaning or
 21 utilizing the White House Council on Native American
 22 Affairs more, and with that broad base of co-
 23 partners, meeting with Tribal leadership so that we
 24 can give that input.
 25 We say there's nothing about us without

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1 us, and when you have something that is structured
 2 like the White House Council on Native American
 3 Affairs that stretches beyond the Department of the
 4 Interior but led by the Department of the Interior,
 5 would be the most advantageous way to make sure that
 6 all these other cabinets that touch Indian Country
 7 are aware of the impacts their work and their
 8 workers have on what we do for our People.
 9 Another example is having round tables
 10 with the Secretary of the Interior for leadership to
 11 meet. Now, this is beyond the Secretary STAC which
 12 is a very important and vital body, but is also the
 13 need to have secretarial input and being able to
 14 meet with Tribal leadership beyond the people that
 15 are representative in the STAC.
 16 With regard to more of the consolidations,
 17 I was really happy to hear that there was no mandate
 18 to consolidate the 12 regions down to five or six.
 19 However, when we hear consolidation, we just want to
 20 make sure that that doesn't mean elimination when we
 21 talk about consolidation, you know.
 22 It could mean or it should mean that like
 23 services get rolled into one particular area, but
 24 certainly not eliminating those services themselves,
 25 or those functions, and clearly not eliminating the

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1 people who provide them.
 2 One of the other things that I think would
 3 be very helpful is really truly embracing the
 4 principles and the intent of the Executive Order
 5 13175 which encourages and in fact directs agencies
 6 to work with Tribes to create those flexibilities
 7 that I speak about.
 8 And to accept and adopt Tribal policies
 9 where they make sense for the Tribes and where they
 10 are not in violation of any statute. Knowing full
 11 well that if you do not have the authority to change
 12 it, it's not within your authority, therefore you
 13 can't. However, wherever the secretary has that
 14 authority, it should be exercised to incorporate and
 15 respect the Tribal sovereignty, and adopt the
 16 processes, policies, and procedures that Tribes put
 17 in place.
 18 When recommendations come from Tribes,
 19 those recommendations should be taken at face value
 20 and given the weight that they should be based upon
 21 the trust and treaty responsibility of the United
 22 States as well as respecting Tribal sovereignty.
 23 And I'm going on because I haven't seen
 24 anybody's hands raised.
 25 When it comes to the section 106

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1 consultation, as I mentioned yesterday, that is
 2 patently unfair for any Tribe or Tribal Nation. Our
 3 THPO offices have been grossly underfunded as far as
 4 I can remember. Back when I was in Tribal Historic
 5 Preservation for our Tribe, we got a minimum amount.
 6 And as more and more Tribal Historic
 7 Preservation offices are established, there is not
 8 more funding that goes along with it. So all the
 9 Tribes are just getting less of a piece of that pie
 10 as opposed to increasing it with the increased
 11 demand on their times.
 12 Our shop has two people in it, and, you
 13 know, we have a couple of other contractors if we're
 14 lucky that we're able to assign, but the workload
 15 that comes in is phenomenal, and the size of the
 16 packages that they get.
 17 Somebody mentioned yesterday it was two
 18 feet tall. These environmental studies and all of
 19 the information that they have to glean through,
 20 read through, and then respond to is not possible to
 21 be done in seven days.
 22 And despite the fact that it is trying to
 23 work in previously disturbed areas, that doesn't
 24 make a difference, because before the Section 106
 25 and before the implementation of being able to have

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1 Tribal Historic Preservation officers being
 2 consulted, areas that were ceremonial, areas that
 3 were sacred to us, or areas that contain significant
 4 cultural resources and archeological resources were
 5 disturbed and disrupted prior to.
 6 So that doesn't mean just because the
 7 ground was disturbed once before that it does not
 8 still have that sacredness or hold those cultural
 9 resources.
 10 So again, Tribal Historic Preservation
 11 offices and their culture departments need ample
 12 time to be able to review what is being put in front
 13 of them for consultation.
 14 Furthermore, when they do provide those
 15 consultative comments and direction and guidance,
 16 that information and that traditional cultural
 17 knowledge is supposed to be respected.
 18 And when we talk about consultation
 19 through the National Historic Preservation Act, the
 20 first order of business or the first option is
 21 avoidance. And it is rare, if ever, that we ever
 22 see the Department of the Interior exercise
 23 avoidance before it goes into pre-determined
 24 decisions, and those projects move forward despite
 25 the objections and over the options of Tribal

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1 leadership as well as our Traditional cultural
 2 leadership with regard to those places.
 3 So we do need to be working on that. Also
 4 when the Section 106 component gets rolled in
 5 underneath the NEPA process, it provides an offramp
 6 for those project proponents so that they do not
 7 engage with Tribes early on in the process.
 8 Tribes should be engaged at the initial
 9 stages of the contemplation of projects, not after
 10 those projects have already gotten underway and have
 11 gone down the path and gotten multiple approvals
 12 already.
 13 That just sets the Tribal leadership or
 14 just sets the Tribal Historic Preservation offices
 15 up for failure. So at the end of the day, what is
 16 needed first and foremost is more funding for the
 17 Tribal Historic Preservation offices, for them to be
 18 able to adequately do their job.
 19 Additionally putting conditions on
 20 permits, so therefore if the department can't afford
 21 to pay for their time and their expertise and
 22 fulfilling their obligation, then those permits
 23 should be conditioned so that the project proponents
 24 who pay for every other expert to be on their
 25 projects, the expertise of our Tribal culture

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1 bearers should be no less valuable and no less
 2 respected than that.
 3 And in closing, when we're looking at how
 4 to continue to keep projects going and not delay
 5 them too much, we also have to make sure that we're
 6 not thinking about just today, but as we as
 7 Traditional People think of the generations to come.
 8 And you cannot and should not be
 9 exchanging our future for the current, because we
 10 don't know what we don't know, and that's why it
 11 takes us time to make those discussions. Because
 12 once we destroy something, or once we wipe it off
 13 the face of the planet, there's no getting it back.
 14 And other times it might come back, but it
 15 might take generations, and that is not good for us
 16 and that is not good for humanity and all of our
 17 brothers and sisters who live within, upon, and
 18 above our Mother Earth.
 19 Thank you for this time. And if anybody
 20 else raises their hand, I'm happy to come back.
 21 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: Thank you,
 22 Chairwoman.
 23 I do not see any other hands raised, so I
 24 just want to remind our Tribal leaders and other
 25 attendees, if you would like to provide comment,

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1 please use the raise-hand function at the bottom of
 2 your Zoom screen.
 3 And we will now turn to Laurel
 4 Yellowhorse. We'll go ahead and unmute you, and you
 5 may provide your comment.
 6 LAUREL YELLOWHORSE: Good morning,
 7 everyone. My name is Laurel Yellowhorse. I'm the
 8 Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah Tribal Chairwoman.
 9 Can you guys hear me?
 10 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: Yes, we can.
 11 LAUREL YELLOWHORSE: Okay. So I am going
 12 to read my comment. On behalf of the Paiute Indian
 13 Tribe of Utah, I submit and give oral testimony in a
 14 strong support of the Tiwahe programming and to urge
 15 the Congress and the Department of Interior to
 16 project and expand funding for the Bureau of Indian
 17 Affairs services that directly impact law and order,
 18 family well-being, and community safety.
 19 These include several social services, job
 20 placement, and training, Tribal courts, youth, and
 21 elder programming. The recent, I can't ever say
 22 that word, I apologize. The recidivism reduction
 23 initiative.
 24 As the Tiwahe demonstration site we have
 25 experienced firsthand the benefits of an integrated

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1 cultural rooted model that empowers family and
 2 strengthens community infrastructure.
 3 The Tiwahe model is a vehicle for self-
 4 governance and sovereignty, not only administrative
 5 efficiently. Why these services are foundational to
 6 law and order, one is social services. Social
 7 services addresses the conditions that give rise to
 8 crime, provide support for individuals struggling
 9 with trauma, addiction, homelessness, and poverty.
 10 De-escalates crisis before they lead to criminal
 11 activity. Strengthening family units. Preventing
 12 child neglect and domestic conflict.
 13 Two, job placement and training.
 14 Meaningful employment builds safer communities,
 15 reduces economic desperation and related criminal
 16 behavior, builds dignity, purpose, and financial
 17 stability. Fosters personal investment in the
 18 success of the community.
 19 Three, Tribal courts. Tribal courts
 20 uphold justice through a cultural competent lens,
 21 employs restorative approaches over punitive
 22 systems, resolves conflict in ways that repair harm
 23 and restore balance. Reinforce Tribal sovereignty,
 24 and reduce dependency on external courts.
 25 Recidivism reduction is number four,

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1 breaking the cycle of repeat offenses and vital for
 2 long term safety. Offers rehabilitation through
 3 cultural responsive counseling and education.
 4 Supports reintegration through mentorship, housing,
 5 and job readiness.
 6 Reduces incarceration rates. Restores
 7 family stability and enhances public trust. Five is
 8 youth and elder programming. These
 9 intergenerational services create continuity and
 10 cultural resilience. Youth programs build
 11 leadership, culture identity, and life skills,
 12 diverting at-risk youth from criminal paths.
 13 Elder services preserve knowledge,
 14 dignity, and support aging citizens with dignity
 15 while engaging them in mentoring roles. Together
 16 they reinforce cultural transmission and community
 17 -- I can't say that word right now. Both key to law
 18 and order.
 19 The Tiwahe programming securing a path
 20 forward. We urge Congress to enact the Tiwahe Act
 21 of 2025 which authorizes Tiwahe as a permanent model
 22 that consolidates and streamlines six federal
 23 funding streams; social services, equal job
 24 placement and training, Tribal courts and laws
 25 enforcement, and housing improvement.

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1 Supports Tribal flexibility and invasion,
 2 affirming that Tribal Nations are best positioned to
 3 design and deliver services to their community.
 4 Recognizes Tribal data, sovereignty, and self-
 5 governments, ensuring that decision making and
 6 elevation remain in the hands of Tribal government.
 7 Centers families and local values
 8 requiring each participating entity to place
 9 families at the heart of their services, including a
 10 strategic plan and whole of government
 11 collaboration.
 12 Includes intergenerational care under the
 13 eight Tiwahe well-being domains such as nurturing
 14 relationships and connecting families, and
 15 culturally and spiritually connected where youth and
 16 elders alike are integral.
 17 Tiwahe being fully funded as a program
 18 that is federally backed and Tribally led will guide
 19 across agencies alignment and provide support,
 20 technical assistance, and funding mechanisms for
 21 long term success.
 22 In conclusion, invest in Tribal families,
 23 protect our future. The services supported under
 24 Tiwahe model are not optional, they are essential to
 25 creating safe resilient and sovereign Tribal

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1 communities.
 2 Eliminating or reducing funding now would
 3 unravel hard earned progress and place already
 4 vulnerable populations as risk.
 5 We respectfully urge fully funding Tiwahe
 6 and FY-26. Continue and expand investment in social
 7 services, job programs, justice system, and youth
 8 and elder programs. A firm commitment to Tribal
 9 self-governance and culturally aligned service
 10 deliveries.
 11 Thank you for your leadership and
 12 partnership. We stand ready to work with Congress
 13 and the Department of Interior to see Tiwahe become
 14 not just a demonstration, but a permanent foundation
 15 of Tribal well-being and law and order.
 16 Thank you.
 17 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: Thank you,
 18 Chairwoman.
 19 If we have any other attendees who would
 20 like to provide comment, please indicate as such by
 21 using the raise-hand function at the bottom of your
 22 Zoom screen. And I'll just wait for a few moments.
 23 And if we have no one wishing to provide
 24 comment at this time, I believe we will go off
 25 camera, off audio, and any attendee at any point in

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1 time who would like to provide comment, you can
 2 raise your hand, and I see we have Chairwoman
 3 Andrews-Maltais.
 4 We will go ahead and unmute you.
 5 CHAIRWOMAN CHERYL ANDREWS-MALTAIS: Well,
 6 I guess the video won't unmute. Oh, there, we go.
 7 Thank you. And rather than going off
 8 camera, and you have all invested the time here,
 9 maybe by engaging in further conversation might
 10 encourage more comments.
 11 What I wanted to do was, you know, I guess
 12 circle back to re-envisioning the relationship that
 13 the Tribes have with the United States, and
 14 particularly with the Department of the Interior.
 15 And looking at how that can be, is
 16 utilizing the staffing that we have and that you
 17 provide for the Tribes, more technical assistance as
 18 opposed to the paternalistic overlordship that we
 19 currently have to put up with at certain points.
 20 But one of the other things that we should
 21 be doing is looking at eliminating the burdensome
 22 reporting. Because we're still using an antiquated
 23 grant system, Tribes weren't asked, you know,
 24 whether or not you are going to compete with each
 25 other to relinquish your lands, waters, and natural

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1 resources.
 2 Those were given in exchange. So
 3 therefore there should be no reason why Tribes
 4 should ever have to compete against each other for
 5 grants, specifically underneath the Department of
 6 the Interior, because every Tribe should be entitled
 7 to receiving compensation and financial support for
 8 the programs and services.
 9 And we're happy to, we stand ready to work
 10 with the department to determine or figure out the
 11 best plan of action for that, but certainly it
 12 cannot be encapsulated in a consultation or
 13 consultative environment.
 14 It is more of a discussion and an exchange
 15 of ideas to working through a pathway forward as
 16 opposed to these types of listening sessions in
 17 consultation.
 18 And what I wanted to also ask is, is there
 19 going to be a copy of the transcript available for
 20 the Tribes to be able to go through?
 21 While there's oftentimes we like to be in
 22 more than one consultation to hear whether or not
 23 we're experiencing the same challenges exclusively
 24 at our own region or within our own Tribes, or
 25 whether or not it's something that's more universal,

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1 as well as it gives the Tribes the ability to make
 2 sure that when you're hearing from us, our
 3 particular concerns or our particular ideas or
 4 recommendations, and it's being heard across Indian
 5 Country, that they really are being taken into
 6 account and given adequate and appropriate weight in
 7 formulating the decisions for creating policies or
 8 procedures for the department.
 9 And if there's nobody else, I was
 10 wondering whether or not it would be okay for you
 11 guys on the panels to, I guess, maybe elaborate a
 12 little bit more from what you currently or have in
 13 place, or have envisioned to be in place for the
 14 questions that have been put to us as per the
 15 consultation.
 16 Thank you.
 17 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: Thank you,
 18 Chairwoman.
 19 TRAVIS CLARK: Sure. I think, you know,
 20 for the Bureau of Indian Education, we are very
 21 much, you know, in support, you know, within the
 22 mechanisms that we have, you know, supporting all --
 23 all of the schools that want to be -- become
 24 Tribally controlled.
 25 Obviously that puts Tribes in the driver's

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1 seat. That said, we are also, you know, at the same
 2 time committed to the trust responsibilities. So
 3 those Tribes are not desirous of taking over and,
 4 you know, operating their own school under Public
 5 Law 297 or 638 grant.

6 We're always going to, you know, be here
 7 to, to carry out that mission. I think, you know,
 8 we just want to ensure that as we go through this
 9 exercise that we are, you know, our strategy is to
 10 focus on that front line, you know, service provider
 11 at the BIE.

12 So, you know, as we, you know, take the
 13 comments and come back, and, you know, formulate
 14 what the plan will be as far as the BIE goes, you
 15 know, that, those, that's where our priorities are.

16 It's focusing on kind of the, you know,
 17 that core mission of providing directed, you know,
 18 those direct educational services to Tribes when
 19 they so want us to directly operate them and
 20 focusing on, you know, what, how are we best
 21 equipping our front line educators and, and service
 22 providers in the most efficient manner possible.

23 But then also, you know, kind of standing
 24 at the ready, and wanting and encouraging Tribes to
 25 assume direct control of their schools if and when

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1 they choose.

2 And it's reflected in the number of, as
 3 Kelly showed in her presentation, you know. We have
 4 183 K through 12 schools, the vast majority of them
 5 are already Tribally controlled charter schools
 6 operated by Tribes as under, you know, PL 297 grants
 7 or 638 contracts.

8 And then 55 remain directly operated by
 9 us, so, you know, just philosophically that's how we
 10 are approaching this, this issue in this
 11 consultation.

12 And very much look forward to being able
 13 to, you know, like at the transcripts. Take your,
 14 take your feedback back and work with our leadership
 15 on, you know, how we -- how we respond to the
 16 executive order and ensure that we're, you know,
 17 kind of prioritizing that front line educator for
 18 the BIE.

19 KEVIN BEARQUIVER: Thank you, Chairwoman,
 20 for the question. For the Bureau of Trust Funds
 21 Administration, one of the things we focused on in
 22 the past three or four years is facilitating the way
 23 for Tribes to withdraw their money and manage their
 24 money themselves, their trust funds themselves,
 25 under the Trust Reform Act.

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1 We've taken a process and streamlined it
 2 to the last -- the most recent ones we can, example
 3 I can give you is Pechanga Tribe. We did that in
 4 less than nine months for Pechanga Tribe to withdraw
 5 their -- their trust funds, and -- and manage that
 6 -- manage the trust funds themselves.

7 Also we've been focusing for the
 8 beneficiary, more of an online access, 24-hour
 9 access via Amazon Connect and the use of an IVR.

10 So we have interactive voice response that
 11 -- that Tribal members can access their accounts
 12 24/7 now, for certain functions. They can't
 13 withdraw funding through the phone, but they can
 14 access the information on their accounts.

15 And likewise, we are in the process of, we
 16 are piloting right now online access for Tribes,
 17 three affiliated Tribes, our MHA Nation in North
 18 Dakota is the first Tribe that has been piloting
 19 this.

20 We will be rolling it out for more Tribes,
 21 and the goal is by the end of the year is to allow
 22 Tribes to have access to their information any time
 23 they want.

24 I mean, the, you know, the people that are
 25 authorized to view the accounts, obviously, can have

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1 access to their accounts. So that's, we focused on
 2 streamlining processes and then making things more
 3 open and transparent to both the beneficiary and the
 4 Tribes.

5 And that's what we have been focusing on
 6 for the past couple years, and hope to do more of
 7 that. Thank you.

8 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: Thank you,
 9 Chairwoman. And I do believe BIA intends to make
 10 transcripts available.

11 We will go ahead and move on to Reylynne
 12 Williams. We will be unmuting you, and you're
 13 welcome to turn on your video if you wish, and
 14 provide your comment.

15 REYLYNNE WILLIAMS: Good morning. My name
 16 is Reylynne Williams. I am the Tribal Historic
 17 Preservation officer for the Gila River Indian
 18 Community in Arizona.

19 I have been delegated the responsibility
 20 by my community to oversee the Section 106 process
 21 under the National Historic Preservation Act.

22 There are over 200 Tribal Historic
 23 Preservation officers across this country whom are
 24 similarly responsible to protect, preserve, and
 25 consult on projects that may impact natural and

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1 cultural resources within their aboriginal
2 territories.

3 We are challenged under every
4 administration to streamline and expedite the
5 Section 106 consultation process. Through our
6 continued efforts and working relationships with
7 federal agency personnel, we have developed formal
8 and informal processes to review and consult on
9 these energy resource projects.

10 Our office holds the federal agency
11 accountable to engage in meaningful consultations.
12 With the turnover and reduction of the federal
13 workforce, will impact the expedited review under
14 Executive Order 14156.

15 Another impact to the executive order is
16 the National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund
17 for state historic preservation office programs and
18 the Tribal Historic Preservation office programs.

19 These funds have not been released as of
20 this physical year, and next year's federal budget
21 further cuts funding for these offices to function.
22 If the Tribal communities and their respective
23 Tribal Historic Preservation offices are to meet the
24 demands under Executive Order 14156 to streamline
25 and expedite consultation for these energy efficient

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1 projects, then the Office of the Secretary of the
2 Interior should expedite the release of the FY-25
3 National Park Service Historic Preservation funds
4 and to advocate for the future of the national Park
5 Service Historic Preservation funding for Tribal
6 Historic Preservation offices and the state historic
7 preservation offices.

8 I greatly appreciate all the comments that
9 were made by all the Tribal leadership yesterday,
10 and I thank you for your time and attention to these
11 comments.

12 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: Thank you, Reylayne.
13 For our attendees online, if there is
14 anyone wishing to provide comment, no need to wait.
15 You can go ahead and use the raise-hand function at
16 the bottom of your Zoom screens and we can build up
17 a queue.

18 And if we have no one wishing to provide
19 comment at this time, we will go ahead and turn off
20 camera, off audio, and be on pause. However, we're
21 on the line so if anyone wishes to provide comment,
22 you can go ahead and raise your hand and we will
23 come back on.

24 Thank you.
25 (A break was taken.)

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1 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: We'll now call upon
2 Heston Smith. We will unmute you, and you can turn
3 on your camera if you wish, and please provide your
4 comment.

5 HESTON SMITH: Hello. Can you hear me?
6 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: Yes, we can.
7 HESTON SMITH: Thank you for the
8 opportunity to talk. Just for the leadership there,
9 just wondering what their -- how they plan to
10 continue supporting Tribes if they experience staff
11 cuts similar to what the other bureaus or agencies
12 have experienced.

13 Thank you.

14 TRAVIS CLARK: Well, I will just say from
15 the Bureau of Indian Education, again, you know,
16 regardless of what the staff number is, you know, it
17 doesn't change the mission that we have, you know,
18 and our dedication to ensure that that's carried
19 out, you know, on behalf Tribes, and maintaining
20 that trust and treaty responsibility as it -- as it
21 regards education.

22 Again, you know, we look forward to being
23 able to incorporate your thoughts and your feedback,
24 and to how we might better and more efficiently
25 carry out that mission.

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1 And, you know, sitting with our leadership
2 and developing what a potentially streamline work
3 morse might look like for the Bureau of Indian
4 Education, but you know, I will just say that, you
5 know, our commitment to, you know, carrying out our
6 mission of providing a high quality education to
7 Indian students, you know, that doesn't change
8 regardless of what the final plan might look like
9 coming on the other side of consultation and working
10 with our Indian Affairs political leadership on --
11 on the workforce efficiently plan for the Bureau of
12 Indian Education.

13 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: Thank you, Heston.
14 KEVIN BEARQUIVER: I'll try to respond as
15 best as I can, since I had to step out of the room
16 for a second.

17 And I think we spoke a little bit about
18 this for the Bureau of Trust Funds Administration.
19 We've really focused on, primarily because we're a
20 high impact service provider, and so we do journey
21 mapping every couple years to see, like, where the
22 pain points are for the beneficiary and where pain
23 points are for Tribes.

24 And we've really focused on making
25 processes and procedures for people to access their

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1 accounts, access their funds more efficient through
 2 technology.
 3 We've invested over the last couple years
 4 into new systems. Like I said and like I had
 5 mentioned previously as like Amazon Connect being
 6 one of those new systems. We also invested into a
 7 new -- into Salesforce as what we call our
 8 beneficiary service management system.
 9 And so that's -- and we're able to track
 10 interactions and account for our interactions. Also
 11 we share -- we're able to share more information
 12 between the Bureau of Indian Affairs, in particular
 13 on the social services side, so we can react and
 14 work faster and quicker with the utilization of
 15 technology.
 16 We're looking at expanding that to work
 17 with the Office of Justice Services to share
 18 information, in particular for MMIP. And so that's
 19 really where we've focused on technology and what
 20 that focus on technology and allowing beneficiaries
 21 and Tribes to have access themselves and self-
 22 service, those efficiencies we've created can be
 23 absorbed as required by the department and the
 24 executive office.
 25 Thank you.

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1 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: Thank you.
 2 As a reminder to our attendees online, if
 3 anyone wishes to provide comments, please raise your
 4 hand to indicate as such.
 5 And we will otherwise be turning off
 6 camera and audio, and we will keep the line open so
 7 if at any time anyone would like to provide comment,
 8 please raise your hand and we'll come back.
 9 (A break was taken.)
 10 KYLE VINT: Hi, Robert. I see your hand.
 11 We'll get going here in just a moment. Rebecca will
 12 call on you, and then we will restart the meeting to
 13 take your comment. Bear with us for just a moment,
 14 please.
 15 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: Calling upon Robert
 16 Martin. You will be unmuted, and you can turn on
 17 your camera if you wish, and go ahead and provide
 18 your comment.
 19 KYLE VINT: Robert, we've sent a request
 20 to unmute your microphone. If you're talking, we're
 21 not hearing you right now. So you need to go down
 22 to the bottom left corner of your screen. There you
 23 go, I see you unmuted now, and I see your video
 24 coming on. We see you too.
 25 ROBERT MARTIN: Great. Oseo, good

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1 morning. It's -- I want to thank you for this
 2 opportunity to speak before this session, this
 3 consultation session, and thank you the BIE and
 4 others from the Interior Department for this
 5 opportunity to listen.
 6 I just wanted to talk about the
 7 importance, of course, the TCUs and the Institute
 8 American Indian Arts, and I am the presidents of
 9 IAIA.
 10 And I just, you know, I know how important
 11 the TCUs are to our Tribal communities, and in terms
 12 of higher education and training, yet we've been
 13 eliminated in the president's budget.
 14 And how does that fit with the BIE
 15 reorganization, Tribal sovereignty, and the need for
 16 higher education in Indian Country? Without
 17 education, how can we lead our Tribes, create
 18 industry, work towards self-government.
 19 And the president's budget reflects his
 20 policy. If he supports funding for historically
 21 black colleges and universities, he needs to support
 22 funding for the TCUs and the Institute of American
 23 Indian Arts.
 24 Thank you very much for this opportunity
 25 to speak.

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1 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: Thank you, Robert.
 2 As a reminder, any attendees who wish to
 3 provide comment, please indicate as such by using
 4 the raise-hand function at the bottom of your Zoom
 5 screen.
 6 And we will go off camera, off audio, but
 7 be on the line if anyone else wishes to provide
 8 comment. Go ahead and raise your hand using that
 9 function at the bottom of the screen, and we'll come
 10 back on.
 11 Thank you.
 12 (A break was taken.)
 13 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: Hello, Robert. We
 14 will hear from you again. We'll go ahead and unmute
 15 you, and you're welcome to turn on your video, if
 16 you wish.
 17 ROBERT MARTIN: Wado. Thank you for
 18 allowing me to speak again. Again, I'm Robert
 19 Martin, President of Institute of American Indian
 20 Arts, and speaking on behalf of the Tribal Colleges
 21 and Universities.
 22 I am wondering if anyone could comment
 23 specifically on how eliminating funding for the TCUs
 24 and IAIA fits into your plan for reorganization.
 25 The administration's plan to cut our

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1 funding does not seem to fit with your comments
 2 earlier about supporting Tribal colleges and TCUs,
 3 and of course the BIE's postsecondary institutions,
 4 Haskell and SIPI, we're very concerned about them
 5 and what happened earlier in this semester in terms
 6 of losing faculty and staff.
 7 Many of those were able to return, but it
 8 was very disruptive. And so we're very much
 9 concerned about what the BIE can do to support the
 10 TCUs, especially Haskell, SIPI, and IAIA.
 11 Thank you.
 12 TRAVIS CLARK: Certainly. So how that
 13 would, you know, obviously the -- the president's
 14 proposed budget will certainly be part of the
 15 considerations when we work with our leadership
 16 following this consultation around workforce
 17 efficiency.
 18 And we will have to, you know, consider
 19 how that is going to impact any -- any final
 20 proposed workforce efficiency strategies that we
 21 work with the Indian Affairs leadership in
 22 establishing.
 23 So I would just say, of course the
 24 president's proposed budget will be a consideration,
 25 will -- will necessarily be a consideration as we

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1 work with the leadership around workforce efficiency
 2 strategies for the Bureau of Indian Education.
 3 Of course, it is a proposed budget so we
 4 will ultimately need to know what the financial
 5 appropriation will or will not be.
 6 So all that to say, you know, obviously
 7 we're aware of the considerations that it would have
 8 on the BIE's workforce around TCUs. So it would
 9 certainly be a consideration that we are, you know,
 10 working with as we sit down with our leadership
 11 following consultation, incorporating yours and
 12 comments from other Tribal leaders around these
 13 issues.
 14 And then establishing a workforce
 15 efficiency strategy for the Bureau of Indian
 16 Education.
 17 ROBERT MARTIN: Wado. Thank you for that.
 18 Yeah, and I know that many of you are very familiar
 19 with the roles that TCUs play and Haskell and SIPI
 20 and the Institute of American Indian Arts, and the
 21 impact that we've had on Indian communities, not
 22 only here in this country but in the world,
 23 internationally.
 24 So I hope that in your review and taking a
 25 look at what Congress does in terms of formulating

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1 their budget, and as we know the president's budget
 2 is just a proposal, and we didn't get any
 3 notification. There was no consultation.
 4 There was no advance warning that this was
 5 being considered. And so it's really, you know, our
 6 students and faculty and staff are very much
 7 concerned. They are, you know, already with what
 8 was occurring during this semester from these White
 9 House executive orders, created a lot of stress and
 10 anxiety and fear.
 11 And of course, we think that's what the
 12 administration wants currently, and that's
 13 unfortunate. But to go through this now, and it's
 14 going to impact our retention of not only our
 15 faculty and staff, but especially our students.
 16 And what I've advised my faculty and staff
 17 to do is focus on our mission and our students, and
 18 student success. And I think things will be all
 19 right.
 20 So we hope to have your support going
 21 forward, and we know that Congress, in the past
 22 we've had bipartisan support, and we think that, we
 23 hope that will continue. We're asking that that
 24 continue, and we're hoping that we have the support
 25 of the BIE and the Department of Interior as we go

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1 forward.
 2 Wado. Thank you very much.
 3 KYLE VINT: And this is Kyle Vint, one of
 4 the virtual facilitators. We did see a request in
 5 chat to include the questions, the guiding questions
 6 that were available on the slides earlier.
 7 My colleague Jacob just put those into
 8 chat, so if you were looking for the questions that
 9 we asked earlier in the meeting to help frame or
 10 shape some of the comments that we're seeking, those
 11 questions are now available in chat.
 12 Thank you.
 13 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: Without further
 14 comments at this time, we will go ahead and remain
 15 on the line, but off audio, off camera. And if we
 16 see a raised hand, we will come back on.
 17 Thank you.
 18 (A break was taken.)
 19 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: Michael Peters. We
 20 will take you off mute, and you can turn on your
 21 camera if you wish, and provide your comment.
 22 MICHAEL PETERS: It is too early in Alaska
 23 for me. I was having a hard time with that.
 24 So I've got just a couple comments. And I
 25 was invited off of a Dear-Tribal-Letter up here in

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1 Alaska, to this event.
 2 And my first comment is under the National
 3 Environmental Policy Act. Shortening these so
 4 drastically are going to affect us up here. I know
 5 my Council is opposed specifically to shortening
 6 these so drastically.
 7 Then my second comment that I am to
 8 address from my Council is on the workforce
 9 efficiency, mainly on the BIA side.
 10 We are entering into 18 months of working
 11 our 105(1), among many other BIA items that seem to
 12 drag on either due to changes in personnel or lack
 13 of personnel, that I encourage BIA to keep your
 14 guys' offices in Alaska, both of them, open, and to
 15 fill them as best possible.
 16 As a rural Alaska, it's pretty important
 17 to us to have access to answer some of the
 18 questions. I'm nine months into my job, never been
 19 in Tribal government, and my point of contacts have
 20 been priceless to me, and I appreciate that more
 21 than anything.
 22 That's really all the comments I have from
 23 Naknek and our Council, and I thank you guys for the
 24 opportunity.
 25 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: Thank you, Michael.

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1 And can you repeat your role and
 2 affiliation? I did not catch that.
 3 MICHAEL PETERS: Michael Peters. I'm the
 4 Tribal Administrator for the Naknek Native Village
 5 Council.
 6 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: Thank you.
 7 KYLE VINT: This is Kyle Vint, the virtual
 8 facilitator. I, very briefly, saw a hand raised
 9 from Secretary Nefertiti Jett.
 10 If you would like to raise your hand,
 11 please go ahead and re-raise it so that we can call
 12 on you and get you integrated into the participation
 13 period.
 14 If it was unintentional, don't worry about
 15 it.
 16 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: And let's call upon
 17 Chairwoman Andrews-Maltais. Go ahead and unmute,
 18 and you're welcome to come on camera if you wish.
 19 Chairwoman, are you with us?
 20 KYLE VINT: I've sent a request to unmute.
 21 You can chat me if that's not working.
 22 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: As a reminder for any
 23 attendees, if you wish to provide comment, please
 24 use the raise-hand function at the bottom of your
 25 Zoom screen.

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1 And I think we have Chairwoman Andrews-
 2 Maltais with us now.
 3 BETTINA WASHINGTON: Good morning,
 4 everyone. This is actually Tribal Historic
 5 Preservation Officer Bettina Washington for the
 6 Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah. I was trying
 7 to find myself to re-name, but I can't do that.
 8 So as I said, I'm the THPO for the
 9 Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah. We are aware
 10 of, when I say we, as most of you are probably
 11 aware, our Tribe has been dealing with the
 12 production of wind farms off the South Coast
 13 (inaudible) off our Tribal lands.
 14 And I don't actually know how to put it so
 15 people -- so officials and the general public can
 16 really understand the amount of work that was placed
 17 upon our department.
 18 And these were under normal, what I call
 19 normal procedures. Our THPO cultural department is
 20 two people and a contractor. That's what most of
 21 our THPO departments consist of. We're very small
 22 departments in our area.
 23 And the fact that we have looking down,
 24 what to us is a shotgun barrel of seven days from an
 25 expedited emergency, which still has not really been

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1 defined. If it's issued on a Thursday, that means
 2 we have until -- one, two, three, four, five --
 3 Wednesday maybe.
 4 Because it's not business days, it's
 5 calendar days. This puts a burden on already
 6 understaffed, underfunded offices. And to -- I just
 7 cannot fathom how we are to answer other than -- we
 8 can put out comments and they're going to be
 9 comments that can come on a, I don't want to a
 10 superficial because that implies that they don't --
 11 these are very basic things.
 12 First of all, our comments, while they are
 13 not basic, it depends on the project what the
 14 comments are, obviously. So for, let's take for
 15 instance for the wind farms. It's going to be, you
 16 know, first and foremost one of our most is our
 17 whales and the mammals that are in the ocean that
 18 we're concerned about fishing areas, breeding areas
 19 for our fish.
 20 Then we're concerned about ancient similar
 21 land farms. So we can put all these things out
 22 very, almost like an informational sheet, but that's
 23 not what true consultation is.
 24 This is, consultation is building a
 25 relationship. That's what is working on a project.

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1 When we're consulting, we want to get down past the
 2 introduction. I do not understand getting comments
 3 within seven days.
 4 If we're going to the moon, if we're going
 5 to Mars, do you think that's seven days worth of
 6 contact, seven days is enough time? It's not enough
 7 time for anything.
 8 When we talk about consultation, we also
 9 talk about the spirit of consultation, and I do not
 10 believe this is in the spirit of consultation. It's
 11 more of a check box, which in fact, we have fought
 12 against for a number of years.
 13 We asked you, your comments. We fulfilled
 14 our duty. Instead of what I, and this is me
 15 speaking as my individual THPO, okay. I don't want
 16 to imply that this is the thought process or
 17 consensus of anybody else, okay.
 18 I was hoping that we were headed, to me,
 19 as I viewed it, we were heading in a good way. We
 20 were heading into the acceptance of TEK, of really
 21 listening to Native People, our Indigenous Peoples,
 22 and how we understood our lands, our waters.
 23 Our landscapes, the relationship between
 24 earth and sky. I really thought we were moving in
 25 that direction, and there's no way I believe that

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1 this will help this in the direction that I had
 2 hoped we were going.
 3 And I just have to say that we will still
 4 attempt to the best of our ability, to fulfill our
 5 role, but I would encourage any and all to
 6 understand the burden you are placing on -- and
 7 again, it's not just THPOs.
 8 Every Tribe does not have a Tribal
 9 Historic Preservation Officer, but every Tribe has a
 10 culture, and every Tribe usually has individuals who
 11 hold that knowledge, and every Tribe deserves to
 12 have enough time to voice those concerns.
 13 I thank you for the opportunity to speak
 14 with you all, and I hope what I've said has made
 15 sense to you.
 16 If you have any questions about anything
 17 I've said, you can go to our website and contact me
 18 by email. You can, and my phone number is there,
 19 but I appreciate everyone's time and effort, and I
 20 wish you all a really good day.
 21 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: Thank you, Bettina.
 22 We will move to Nicole Grigg. We will be
 23 unmuting you, and there you are on camera. Please
 24 go ahead and provide your comment.
 25 NICOLE GRIGG: Good morning, good

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1 afternoon. My name is Nicole Grigg. I am outside
 2 counsel for the Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake from
 3 Upper Lake, California. I'm a member of the Tribe,
 4 and I've been authorized by our Chairwoman to
 5 provide comments on behalf of the Tribe.
 6 Thank you for this opportunity to speak.
 7 Our Tribe descends from the Pomo Peoples
 8 whose ancestral lands spanned a vast area of North
 9 Central California from the Pacific Coast to the
 10 Clear Lake region.
 11 Like many Tribes, we have survived
 12 centuries of hardship and adversity including
 13 displacement, genocide, and unjust federal policies
 14 such as the 1850 Bloody Island Massacre and the loss
 15 of our land base following attempted federal
 16 termination.
 17 Today we are a federally recognized Tribal
 18 government headquartered near our ancestral
 19 territory which is located on the northern portion
 20 of Clear Lake, the largest natural freshwater lake
 21 in California.
 22 Continuing to rebuild our land base and
 23 government's capacity despite historic and ongoing
 24 barriers. We will be submitting comprehensive
 25 written comments that detail our recommendations

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1 supported by examples and contextual background.
 2 For today's session, however, I will offer
 3 a high level overview of our comments in response to
 4 the request for input.
 5 As to question one regarding improve
 6 efficiency at the Indian Affairs. In response to
 7 the request for recommendations to improve
 8 efficiency through staffing changes, resource
 9 sharing, process improvements, and potential
 10 consolidation of programs and offices, I will begin
 11 by stating that any effort to improve efficiency
 12 within Indian Affairs must begin by centralizing
 13 Tribal sovereignty, not administrative convenience.
 14 Tribes are not just federal program
 15 recipients. They are sovereign governments with
 16 diverse capacities and needs. We recommend a
 17 skilled workforce with cross-functional training
 18 including a digital infrastructure, broadband, cyber
 19 security, and Tribal data governance.
 20 We recommend the expansion of programs
 21 like the Indigenous connectivity and technology
 22 division to provide dedicated funding opportunities,
 23 facilitate collaborative engagement sessions, and
 24 establish clear guidelines to ensure that federal
 25 policies uphold and respect Tribal digital

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1 sovereignty.

2 We recommended the creation of new

3 positions such as Tribal digital liaisons to support

4 Tribes in integrating federal resources with local

5 strategies.

6 Efficiency must be measured not just in

7 metrics, about you in the quality of engagement

8 through prioritizing culturally competent field-

9 based staff who build long lasting relationships

10 with the Tribes that they serve.

11 In response to the question two regarding

12 improving access to federal programs and funding, it

13 must be understood that for many Tribes,

14 particularly for smaller rural or land limited

15 governments like ours, access to federal programs is

16 hindered less by eligibility criteria than by

17 structural and administrative barriers.

18 Current systems are fragmented and overly

19 complex with duplicative application processes,

20 inconsistent reporting requirements, prolonged

21 disbursement timelines, and excessive compliance

22 burdens.

23 We recommend a unified digital platform

24 for Tribal grant access and management. We request

25 investment in real world technical assistance

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1 including help with grant compliance, digital

2 planning, and long term fiscal strategy.

3 Federal communications must improve to

4 provide timely, tailored, and actionable updates

5 rather than lengthy reports or generic webinars.

6 Additionally Indian Affairs must adopt and

7 promote clear policies around Tribal data

8 sovereignty, ensuring that federal data systems,

9 funding conditions, and reporting mechanisms respect

10 Tribal ownership and control over sensitive data,

11 particularly as more programs shift towards digital

12 government.

13 In sum, improving access means removing

14 friction, affirming sovereignty, and recognizing the

15 administrative realities that many Tribal

16 governments face.

17 Regarding the question three about

18 enhancing flexibility for Tribal economic growth and

19 self-governance. So address the feedback on how

20 Indian Affairs can optimize its functionality and

21 effectiveness to provide Tribes with improved

22 flexibility to foster economic growth, address the

23 specific local needs of their communities, and

24 increase pathways to self-determination and self-

25 governance, optimizing Indian Affairs functional in

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1 support of Tribal self-determination requires a

2 fundamental shift from managing programs to enables

3 governance.

4 Tribes are already leading in broadband,

5 clean energy, digital commerce, and more. What they

6 need from Indian Affairs is not prescriptive

7 oversight, but responsive partnership.

8 Flexibility means recognizing that Tribes

9 must be able to integrate funding streams, pilot new

10 governance models, and build institutions that

11 reflect their community strength and aspirations.

12 Support this invasion through compacting,

13 tailored implementation, and regulatory waivers when

14 needed. Critically, the agency must take an active

15 role in supporting and defending Tribal jurisdiction

16 and digital spaces, including over e-commerce, data

17 governance, online consumer protection, and digital

18 infrastructure located on Tribal lands.

19 The future of Tribal self-governance will

20 be as much virtual as it is territorial. That

21 future depends on recognizing that Tribal Nations,

22 like other sovereigns, have the right to define how

23 their citizens engage in digital commerce, how their

24 data is managed, and how infrastructure is

25 regulated.

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1 Indian Affairs can also help foster long

2 term growth by investing in Tribal capacity and

3 supporting Tribal legal systems, administrative

4 frameworks, and cross-sector strategies.

5 And, we call on you to invest in legal,

6 administrative, and regulatory capacity building for

7 Tribes. Success should be measured by whether the

8 department removes structural barriers to Tribal

9 self-determination.

10 As to question four regarding Tribal role

11 in federal environmental permitting and energy

12 development. I would also like to provide comments

13 on the declaration of a national energy emergency

14 and the use of emergency authorities for accelerated

15 processes under NEPA, ESA, and NHPA.

16 First, nothing in the National Emergency's

17 Act or other emergency procedures negates the

18 obligations the federal government owes to Tribal

19 Nations as a self-appointed trustee of our

20 resources.

21 Therefore, all an extremely truncated

22 environmental review process does is invite more

23 challenges and unpredictability to an incomplete

24 federal process.

25 So the question should not be how much can

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1 you minimize the Tribal role in permitting, but how
 2 can you support and make Tribal involvement more
 3 efficient?
 4 The most quick and cost effective federal
 5 permitting that has occurred over the past 10 years
 6 has included increased Tribal participation. This
 7 increase has been borne in both federal consultation
 8 activities and private party coordination efforts.
 9 It is identified that Tribes are not
 10 always in opposition, but can be a willing and ready
 11 partner in development, and that as a partner,
 12 Tribal Nations can increase permitting efficiency.
 13 Habematolel's written comments will
 14 reflect the participant steps we believe the federal
 15 government should take to ensure Tribal partnership
 16 in permitting, including funding Tribal
 17 participation and cultural review.
 18 Tribal interests must be identified early,
 19 during pre-application and scoping stages, not in
 20 rushed timeliness of seven or 14 days.
 21 We call on you to provide funding for
 22 meaningful Tribal participation and environmental
 23 reviews, to increase opportunities for Tribes to
 24 serve as cooperating agencies under NEPA, and to
 25 establish a Tribal energy growth working group to

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1 identify and resolve regulatory barriers.
 2 Overall I would like to highlight for
 3 officials here that federal lands used to be Tribal
 4 land, and energy resources are abundant in Indian
 5 Country, so if you really want to unlock American
 6 energy, you need us.
 7 Tribes like ours are ready partners in
 8 energy development and national energy security, if
 9 the federal government makes space for that
 10 partnership.
 11 In closing, this moment presents an
 12 opportunity for Indian Affairs to realign its
 13 mission with the lived realities of Tribal
 14 governance. Tribes like the Habematolel Pomo of
 15 Upper Lake have had to adapt and modernize outside
 16 of necessity, whether due to geographic isolation,
 17 economic constraints, or other challenges.
 18 And we are stronger as a result. In the
 19 same spirit, Indian Affairs must evolve to address
 20 the pressing issues of modern Tribal sovereignty,
 21 while remaining accountable to the commitments and
 22 responsibilities it carries from the past.
 23 Sovereignty must be the foundation of
 24 every federal reform effort. Digital self-
 25 determination, economic growth, and Tribal led

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1 solutions are already happening. What Tribes need
 2 is for Indian Affairs to support, not hinder those
 3 efforts.
 4 In sum, we urge the department to act with
 5 urgency, humility, and deep respect for the
 6 sovereign governments it serves.
 7 Thank you.
 8 REBECCA BEAUREGARD: Thank you, Nicole.
 9 If we have any attendees who would like to
 10 provide comment, please indicate as such now by
 11 using the raise-hand function at the bottom of your
 12 Zoom screen.
 13 If we have no attendee wishing to provide
 14 comment, we will move to closing, so I'll just give
 15 one more moment. Okay.
 16 Thank you, everyone, and I will hand this
 17 over to Director Bryan Mercier.
 18 BRYAN MERCIER: Thank you, Rebecca, and
 19 thank you everyone for joining our virtual session
 20 today.
 21 I want to thank everyone for taking the
 22 time to provide thoughtful comment. As I've said in
 23 the past, these sessions really help me and other
 24 BIA and Indian Affairs officials prepare for the
 25 upcoming conversations with the departmental

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1 leadership on the workforce efficiency and the NEPA
 2 streamlining that we're consulting on.
 3 I also want to apologize. Yesterday I
 4 said -- I misspoke and said that next week's
 5 Bismarck, North Dakota, consultation would be a
 6 hybrid.
 7 It, in fact, will not. It will be in
 8 person only, and that will be our final consultation
 9 of this series regarding workforce efficiency and
 10 the NEPA regulations. So unfortunately, this will
 11 be our last opportunity for virtual participation.
 12 So thank you everybody for joining us over
 13 the last seven consultations that we've had and
 14 appreciate the engagement.
 15 Ken, I see you came on camera. If you
 16 want to close out anything from the AS-IA hallway.
 17 Thank you all for joining.
 18 KENNIS BELLMARD: Yes. We appreciate your
 19 virtual attendance. We will now take these
 20 comments. We will certainly go through them very
 21 carefully and respond as -- as required.
 22 We do take these consultations very
 23 seriously, and I hope you all do understand that.
 24 And once again, as -- as Bryan mentioned, we
 25 appreciate you hanging in there with -- on this

1 virtual call. I know they're never the easiest to
2 do, but we thank you very much for your attendance.

3 BRYAN MERCIER: Thank you, Rebecca and
4 team for a great series of virtual sessions, and
5 hopefully see some of you all in Bismarck, North
6 Dakota.

7 Thanks, all.

8 (WHEREUPON, the virtual meeting was
9 concluded at 12:15 p.m.)

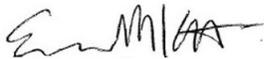
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1 CERTIFICATE

2
3 I, Errin Kent, do hereby certify that I
4 reported all proceedings adduced in the foregoing
5 matter and that the foregoing transcript pages
6 constitutes a full, true and accurate record of said
7 proceedings to the best of my ability.

8
9 I further certify that I am neither related to
10 counsel or any party to the proceedings nor have any
11 interest in the outcome of the proceedings.

12
13 IN WITNESS HEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand
14 this 13th day of June, 2025.

15
16
17 

18
19 Errin Kent, #2704

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21
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23
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25

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