



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Washington, DC 20240

Dear Alaska Native Corporation Leaders:

The Department of the Interior (Department) seeks your input on the development of a policy to respect, and equitably promote the inclusion of, Indigenous Knowledge in the Department's decision making, program implementation, and other activities. This policy will guide the Department's Bureaus and Offices.

At the White House Tribal Nations Summit in November 2021, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) issued a memorandum recognizing the importance of Indigenous Knowledge and committing to elevating its role in federal scientific and policy processes and creating an interagency working group to develop government-wide guidance.¹

In 2022, OSTP, CEQ, and the White House Domestic Policy Council conducted several Tribal consultations and listening sessions,² received written comments, and held individual meetings to gather input for the development of government-wide guidance, which was issued on November 30, 2022.³ The Department reviewed the feedback received by OSTP and CEQ and incorporated it into the attached draft Indigenous Knowledge policy. If you have already commented during the OSTP and CEQ process, you do not need to provide duplicate comments for this consultation.

We are seeking input on the following:

1. How would you like to work with the Department to ensure that Indigenous Knowledge properly informs Departmental policies, programs, research, and decision making? What challenges do you foresee? How can we structure our actions to address your concerns and interests?
2. How can the Department work with you to identify appropriate knowledge holders and to obtain appropriate consent for the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge?
3. How can the Department work with you to value and protect this knowledge? What ethical considerations should guide the Department's efforts?

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/111521-OSTP-CEO-ITEK-Memo.pdf>

² <https://www.whitehouse.gov/ostp/news-updates/2022/06/27/readout-ostp-and-ceq-initial-engagement-on-white-house-indigenous-knowledge-effort/>

³ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/OSTP-CEO-IK-Guidance.pdf>

4. For which specific federal laws, regulations, policies, or research/scientific processes can Indigenous Knowledge inform the Department's decision making? How should Indigenous Knowledge be included in these authorities and processes?

The Department will conduct three virtual consultation sessions and will accept oral and written comments. Please register in advance for any consultation session you plan on attending. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. Please note that these Tribal consultations will be closed to the press and the public to protect confidential information that may be discussed during the sessions. Each session has a different focus, as noted below. You may register and attend one or more of the following sessions:

February 25, 2023

Focus: The Native Hawaiian Community

2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time/ 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Hawaii Time

Please register in advance at:

<https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJlSd--vpigjEpEVhf93pbb4mfhOw66S1pw>

February 27, 2023

Focus: Federally Recognized Tribes

2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time/ 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Alaska Time

Please register in advance at:

<https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJlSf-CsgD4sGG17vHy8P-603jxGDcSMc3g>

February 28, 2023

Focus: Alaska Native Corporations

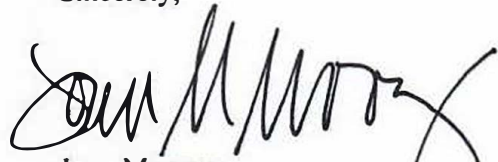
2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time/ 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Alaska Time

Please register in advance at:

<https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJlSd-qvrzWuGGmWEUqIC9HWV4g3sSegZ3I>

You may provide written comments to consultation@bia.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on March 26, 2023. If you have questions regarding this effort, please contact Jacob Malcom at 202-657-2877 or jacob_malcom@ios.doi.gov.

Sincerely,



Joan Mooney
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Policy Management and Budget