



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

FEB 17 2016

Dear Tribal Leader:

The Department of the Interior (Department) invites you to participate in several upcoming listening sessions during the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) 2016 Executive Council Winter Session (ECWS) in Washington, DC.

The Department welcomes the opportunity to engage with tribal leaders in order to obtain their input and feedback on the issues that are important to Indian Country. For this reason, we have scheduled the following listening sessions during NCAI's 2016 ECWS, to be held at the Capital Hilton, 1001 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Washington DC:

## WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2016

Fee to-Trust & Rights-of-Way Listening Session  
Room: Senate Room

1:00 PM-4:00 PM

The Department has a goal of taking 500,000 acres of land into trust during the Obama Administration. Department officials are seeking input from tribal leaders on how they can improve the fee-to-trust process and expedite any problems that may delay land from being taken into trust. The listening session will also cover the Final Rule that will update 25 CFR 169, Rights-of-Way on Indian Land. This Rule will streamline the process for obtaining approval of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), ensure consistency with recently updated leasing regulations, increase the flexibility in compensation and valuations, and support landowner decisions regarding the use of their land.

Climate Change Listening Session  
Room: Federal B

2:00 PM-4:00 PM

The threat and effects of climate change are a high priority for the Administration and for the Department of the Interior, particularly as climate change brings new challenges to Indian Country and Alaska Native Villages. The Department is committed to mainstreaming climate change considerations into all BIA activities and supporting federally-recognized tribes to do the same. In this listening session, Department officials are interested hearing in how climate change is affecting native communities and what the BIA can do to support tribal climate resilience.

## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2016

BIA Contract Support Cost Policy Listening Session  
Room: Federal A

10:00 AM-NOON

The BIA Contract Support Cost (CSC) Workgroup is in the process of developing an updated BIA CSC Policy to be included in the Indian Affairs Manual. The purpose of the updated

policy is to provide guidance for the full payment of CSC and to ensure that the payment of CSC is accurate, timely, and meets 100 percent of a tribe's CSC need as calculated under the policy. The Policy also simplifies and streamlines CSC calculation to expedite payment. Department officials would like to receive feedback on the current discussion draft of the proposed CSC Policy.

Listening Session on Homelessness among American Indians and Alaska Natives 1:00 PM-3:00 PM  
Room: Federal B

The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness and the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, Labor, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Education, and Veterans Affairs recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding interagency coordination and collaboration for setting a path to end homelessness among American Indians and Alaska Natives. We invite you to participate in a listening session to help guide this ongoing work.

Sacred Sites Listening Session 1:00PM-3:00 PM  
Room: Federal A

Tribal governments and the Administration have placed a high priority on identifying, protecting, and preserving sacred sites. The Department would like to provide an update regarding the Interagency Memorandum of Understanding for the Protection of Indian Sacred Sites and a proposed training session on sacred sites. Department leadership would also like to hear ideas from tribal leaders on how the Department and other Federal agencies can improve protection and preservation of sacred sites.

You can view a copy of the discussion draft of the BIA CSC Policy on the Department's website at <http://www.bia.gov/WhoWeAre/AS-IA/Consultation/index.htm>. Additional materials, if needed, will also be posted at the same website.

As you know, regular and meaningful input from tribal leaders are an important part of this Administration's commitment to informed decision making and to honoring the United States' trust relationship with tribal nations.

Thank you for your leadership and remind you of my open door policy. Please visit <http://www.bia.gov/ContactUs/> in order to request a meeting at any time. If you have further questions, please contact my office at (202) 208-7163.

Sincerely,



Lawrence S. Roberts  
Acting Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs