



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Washington, DC 20240

July 8, 2024

Dear Tribal Leader:

I invite you to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Tribal Listening Session on July 23 and 25, 2024. The Listening Sessions will encompass BIA Data Governance, BIA Open Data, and the BIA Tract Viewer. The BIA Data Governance Team is working to inform policy making, resource distributions, and effective program management in advancing the support of Indian Country data needs. Recently, the BIA developed the BIA Open Data page that contains public Geographic Information System (GIS), GIS data applications, and provides Tribal Open Data in support of the Evidence Act/Open Data Act. The BIA OPEN DATA web page is the primary collaborative data resource offering a level of transparency into the BIA's data initiatives. The BIA Tract Viewer will provide a publicly accessible view of the most requested data.

## BIA Division of Resource Integration & Services (DRIS)

The Division of Resource Integration & Services (DRIS) dedicated to providing quality data is available to inform federal and tribal policy making, resource distributions and effective program management is critical to advancing the well-being of Indian Country. To ensure the need for improved data concerning Indian land and Indian country are met the DRIS along with the Branch of Geodata Evaluation & Validation (BGEV) and the Branch of Geospatial Support (BOGS) wish to publish an OPEN DATA page containing information on fund distribution, project summaries, tribal contact information, and land extents.

The sharing of this data will allow federal, state, and local agencies, tribes, and tribal members to view data necessary to manage resources at all levels to provide a more transparent view of the bureau's activities in priority initiatives and projects. The OPEN DATA page will decrease the man hours being dedicated to answering data calls for some of the most sought-after data in Indian Country.

OPEN DATA PAGE - <https://opendata-1-bia-geospatial.hub.arcgis.com/>

Our OPEN DATA site facilitates simplify data sharing, discoverability, availability, and transparency reducing the number out-of-date datasets. The OPEN DATA site is available to the public with no log-in or accounts needed.

Users can search for dataset, keyword, or category, allowing quick assets to requested data. The customizable web page creates a central location for all BIA publicly available geospatial tools and resources as well. This site contains a 'Featured Content' section with publicly available dashboards, applications, and web maps.

## BIA TRACT VIEWER

The BIA's Tract Viewer allows the sharing of Land Tract data spatially. In addition, Parcels, which are the administrative geospatial components of Tracts, are shared as a product of the BIA's parcel mapping project, which in turn is guided by the Geospatial Data Act of 2018. Land Tracts are generated from the component parcels which feeds dynamic, scale dependent geospatial data and other relevant trust land information to the Viewer. This Viewer supports and assists research, planning, and reporting. The BIA Tract Viewer compiles Tracts and Parcels using the Trust Asset and Accounting Management System (TAAMS) as a system of record (SOR) and a source of land descriptions. The production of Tracts and Parcels follow established methodologies and business rules assuring a commonly universal and systematic product. The

BIA's parcel mapping project represents a multi-year effort to capture all trust records found in TAAMS, while also striving to be up to date. The Tract and Parcel geodatabases will ultimately be a current, yet dynamic representation of lands held in trust by the BIA.

Land Area Representation (LAR)

The LAR is a summary representation of Indian lands in two concepts. It includes reservations represented by continuous polygons within the reservation extent, as well as trust lands. Within each feature area there are reservations lands, trust lands, or a combination of both. The reservation and trust lands within each area are dissolved to a single polygon feature and given a name that either describes a tribe or describes the area. These units were created for the purpose of satisfying a Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) with the Census Bureau and the project was conducted from 2015 - 2019. The goal of this project was to represent Indian lands for the purpose of collecting statistical data and to provide a large-scale visual representation of tribal lands. The spatial definition of each LAR feature appears as it was last published in 2019. The LAR provides for representation of lands that aren't achieved by any other dataset. As the only national dataset which includes a representation of reservations, the LAR provides a representation of the land base of tribes that don't appear in any other dataset. The difference in representation of tribes that are only represented by the LAR is especially evident in the eastern half of the country where it is most evident that the conversion of records in the Trust Asset and Accounting Management System (TAAMS) is incomplete, and there are more records that are awaiting conversion in the Eastern Region.

The LAR is the most complete resource available to be shared to represent many tribes and serves as an outlet for those tribes and their lands being counted as eligible for resources. Several Federal projects have used the LAR to determine eligibility and resource allocation, such as the dissemination of broadband infrastructure resources by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). The LAR continues to be an integral ingredient in assuring the widest counting and provisioning for tribes based on their lands.

BIA Listening Sessions

Date	Time	Location
Tuesday, 23 July 2024	4:00 p.m. EDT	<a href="https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJItde6qpj8jHG Y6-qxuaRF8RqTytYFihoA#/registration">https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJItde6qpj8jHG Y6-qxuaRF8RqTytYFihoA#/registration</a>
Thursday, 25 July 2024	2:00 p.m. EDT	<a href="https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJIsdu2orzguGD urpVT2KwVv2rw77xh-GDc#/registration">https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJIsdu2orzguGD urpVT2KwVv2rw77xh-GDc#/registration</a>

If you have any written input you would like to provide, please send to [consultation@bia.gov](mailto:consultation@bia.gov) by 11:59 p.m. EDT, July 30, 2024, to ensure timely consideration.

The BIA looks forward to your support to improve data quality and availability needed to advance Indian County.

Sincerely,



Bryan Newland  
Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs