



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
**U.S. Department
of the Interior**

www.doi.gov

News Release

Date: March 25, 2010
Contact: Frank Quimby (DOI), 202-208-7291
Nedra Darling (IA), 202-219-4152

Secretary Salazar Announces Next Stage in Developing Department-wide Tribal Consultation Policy *Nominations Sought for Tribal Representatives to DOI Tribal Consultation Team*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Secretary Ken Salazar today announced that the Department of the Interior has moved to the next stage in its plan of actions to develop a department-wide tribal nations consultation policy by constituting a Tribal Consultation Team. The Team will consist of 12 tribal officials and alternates representing federally recognized tribes in each Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) region along with representatives from each DOI Bureau or Office. Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Larry Echo Hawk notified tribal leaders by letter on March 23 and requested nominations.

“I am pleased to announce that we have reached the next stage in the Interior Department’s plan of actions to establish a comprehensive, department-wide policy on tribal consultation,” Salazar said. “Now that the Department is ready to establish the Consultation Team that will draft the new policy, I want to underscore the importance and urgency of responding to the call for tribal nominations so that we can move forward expeditiously.”

The tribes in each BIA Region are asked to nominate three tribal officials or delegates from their BIA region to serve on the Tribal Consultation Team and submit their nominees to the BIA Regional Director by April 30, 2010. Regional Directors will work with the tribes to select the nominees and provide any technical assistance, if needed. Regional Directors will forward nominations to the Secretary by May 5. The Secretary will appoint one tribal member and one alternative from each BIA region to the Team, as well as one federal member and one alternative from each Interior Bureau/Office by May 14.

Team members will have several months to draft the consultation policy, which will involve the review and evaluation of existing functions, policies, procedures and practices that have tribal implications and require on-going review and comments from the tribes and general public on the draft policy. Once the first draft of the policy is developed the Consultation Team will submit the draft policy to the tribes and publish it in the Federal Register for public comment.

The Interior Department's plan of actions was developed as directed by President Obama in his memorandum, to implement Executive Order 13175 dated November 6, 2000, *Consultation and Coordination With Indian Tribal Governments*. The Executive Order directs Executive Branch departments and agencies to develop policies on tribal consultation and cooperation. The President signed the memorandum at the White House Tribal Nations Summit held at the Interior Department's headquarters in Washington, D.C., on November 5, 2009.

On November 23, 2009, the Department invited tribal leaders to participate in a series of tribal consultation meetings to discuss their experiences with federal consultation efforts, provide suggestions on a departmental plan, and make recommendations on improving its consultation practices. Meetings were held in seven cities from December 2009 through January 2010. Approximately 300 tribal representatives and over 250 officials from and other federal agencies attended the meetings to hear the tribes' ideas and concerns.

On February 22, 2010, Secretary Salazar announced the Interior Department's plan to establish a comprehensive, department-wide policy for meaningful consultation with the nation's 564 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes in accordance with its legal obligations and in fulfillment of its trust responsibilities.

After the draft consultation policy has been circulated to tribes and tribal organizations for review and comment, the Department will publish the revised draft in the Federal Register with a 60-day comment period. Following the Department's publishing of the final consultation policy within 90 days of the close of the comment period, the Secretary will issue a Secretarial Order directing all Interior bureaus and offices to comply with the department-wide policy and its guiding principles.

The letter to tribal leaders dated March 22, 2010, along with a copy of the Interior Department plan and the Tribal Consultation Team nomination form may be viewed via the DOI website at http://www.doi.gov/news/pressreleases/upload/Mar_22_2010-Tribal_Leader_letter.pdf.

###