United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

JUL 09 2014

Dear Tribal Leader:

Oil and gas resources are important trust assets for our Nation and Indian country. Secretary Jewell is committed to ensuring that there is timely, accountable, and responsive development of Indian trust resources. The Indian Energy and Minerals Steering Committee (IEMSC), under the direction of the Secretary, drafted a proposal to address these concerns. We seek tribal comment and input on the draft proposal to ensure that any new efforts are successful.

Oil and gas development in Indian country has increased over the past few years. An interagency team from Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Natural Resources Revenue, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians has developed a proposal for establishing an oil and gas Service Center to promote effective implementation of Departmental actions and functions. The role of the Service Center would be to maintain a responsive, administrative, and technical capacity that can support local or regional staff on an as needed basis.

The proposal builds on recent innovations such as the Division of Indian Energy and Economic Development mobile support team's detailing of critical personnel to Fort Berthold, the rapid contracting of services by the Federal Indian Minerals Office at Navajo, and the BLM's "Tiger Team" formed to address Applications for Permits to Drill at Fort Berthold. By adopting some of these short-term innovations, improving protocols, and building up a technical specialist corps, we can efficiently institutionalize these types of rapid response efforts to ensure sustainable, scalable, and timely delivery of service, both to Indian country and the Nation.

The Service Center, as proposed, would be a user based organization performing technical and administrative functions that require minimal field presence. By fulfilling a support role for field offices through regional/state offices, the field personnel would be able to focus on the local issues and challenges that so often accompany rapid expansion. The proposal will be available at http://www.indianaffairs.gov/WhoWeAre/AS-IA/Consultation/index.htm prior to the listening session.

This effort is a high priority for Secretary Jewell and this listening session will be an opportunity for significant input before the partners start putting the pieces in place.

We look forward to your input on July 17, 2014, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Division of Energy and Mineral Development Office, 13922 Denver West Parkway, Building 54, Suite 200, Lakewood, Colorado 80401. You may contact the office by telephone at (303) 969-5270.

Should you have any question regarding the process, please contact Ms. Helen Riggs, Acting Deputy Bureau Director, Trust Services, at helen.riggs@bia.gov or (202) 208-5831.

Sincerely,

Kevin K. Washburn
Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs

Enclosure