



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

JUN - 4 2010

Office of
International and
Tribal Affairs

Dear Honorable Leaders:

I am pleased to send this letter and the proposed *EPA Policy on Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribes*. The creation of a comprehensive Consultation Policy is a priority for me and a priority for this Administration. I want to personally thank you for the initial comments you submitted earlier this year. We have worked hard to address and incorporate the many constructive suggestions we have received, and I hope you see that reflected in this version of the proposed Policy.

As I am sure you are aware, on November 5, 2009, President Obama directed all federal agencies to develop plans to assure regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with tribal officials consistent with Executive Order 13175. On his order, starting in January of this year, EPA began soliciting input from tribes in the process of developing a new and improved consultation policy, and we will continue to seek comments through the summer.

With this policy, we seek to accomplish several important objectives: 1) establishing clear Agency standards for the consultation process, including defining the “what, when, and how” of consultation; 2) designating individuals across the Agency responsible for serving as consultation points of contact, for both tribes and for EPA internally, to promote consistency and coordination of the consultation process; and 3) establishing a management oversight and reporting structure that will help ensure accountability and transparency. In the document, we also detail the mechanisms we plan on using to identify matters which are appropriate for consultation, including a priority placed on issues proposed by tribal governments.

Attached to this letter is a copy of the proposed Consultation Policy, I hope that you will read it and provide feedback. Your comments on the proposed Consultation Policy are very important to me, so I look forward to receiving your thoughts.

I also request your high-level participation in the following national consultation conference calls which are being held to answer any questions and to seek your input.

Thursday, July 8, 2010, 3:00 – 4:30 EDT
Call in number 866-379-5082 / Conference ID# 75500839

Monday, July 19, 2010, 3:00 – 4:30 EDT
Call in number 866-379-5082 / Conference ID# 77274061

If you plan to submit any written comments on the proposed policy, please provide your comments by Friday, July 16, 2010. Comments should be sent to:

David Guest, Senior Policy Advisor
American Indian Environmental Office, MC 2690M
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460.

You may also send comments via email at guest.david@epa.gov, or through EPA's Tribal Portal at <http://www.epa.gov/indian>.

We plan to submit a final proposed policy to the Office of Management and Budget by August 2, 2010.

We want to ensure that we work with you to craft a policy which respects tribal sovereignty and self-governance and maximizes tribal input and coordination. I look forward to receiving your input.

If you have any questions, please contact Sadie Hoskie, Acting Director of the American Indian Environmental Office at (202) 564-1310 or David Guest, Senior Policy Advisor of the American Indian Environmental Office at (202) 566-2872.

Warm Regards,



Michelle J. DePass
Assistant Administrator

Encl.