



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

SEP 05 2019

The Honorable Raúl M. Grijalva
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your letter dated July 23, 2019, to Secretary Bernhardt regarding the United States Department of the Interior's (Department) tribal consultation efforts on the Department's reorganization. Secretary Bernhardt asked that I respond to you on his behalf.

President Trump's Executive Order (EO) 13781, Comprehensive Plan for Reorganizing the Executive Branch, challenged all Departments and Agencies to reorganize to better meet the needs of the American people. EO 13175, Consultation and Coordination With Indian Tribal Governments, directed each agency to have "an accountable process to ensure meaningful and timely input by tribal officials in the development of regulatory policies that have tribal implications."

In order to comply with EO 13781 and EO 13175, the Department conducted extensive tribal consultation on the reorganization of the Department, which includes the Bureau of Land Management. These conversations included 11 formal consultation sessions and an additional 7 listening sessions at offices and facilities, large gatherings, and other venues. We posted transcripts of all 18 sessions we conducted at <https://www.bia.gov/as-ia/raca/doi-reorganization>. Additionally, in 2018, the Secretary held two Tribal leader roundtables specifically on the Department's reorganization efforts. The Department also received comments from 32 individuals or groups that submitted comments in response to the tribal listening sessions.

The feedback gathered from the tribal consultations revealed a preference for the bureaus serving Indian country to retain their current structure rather than becoming part of the unified regions. We respected that feedback, and as a result, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Indian Education, and the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians have not realigned their regional field structure to the new unified regions.

Additionally, the Department's reorganization effort has been consistent with and responsive to the feedback received from a broad range of partners and stakeholders, including Members of Congress.

Thank you for your shared interest in this important topic. I look forward to working with you and the other House Natural Resources Committee members and will plan to share additional details when available as the Department continues its planning efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tara Sweeney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a period at the end.

Tara Sweeney
Assistant Secretary–Indian Affairs