



Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate

LAKE TRAVERSE RESERVATION
P.O. Box 509
100 Veterans Memorial Drive
Agency Village, South Dakota 57262-0509
Phone: (605) 698-3911

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Ms. Mary Milam
1849 C Street NW
MS 4141 – MIB
Washington, D.C. 20240

SUBJECT: Tribal Consultation Policy

Enclosed you will find comments to the U.S. Department of the Interior policy for consultation with Indian Tribes.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide feedback to your efforts.

Winfield S. Rondell
Winfield S. Rondell, Tribal Secretary of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate

Tribal Consultation Policy

The Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Tribal Secretary's office hereby acknowledges the opportunity to provide input into the Tribal Consultation Policy.

I. Preamble

No comment

II. Guiding Principles

Many tribal leaders have not been trained in tribal government. Tribal officials may be newly elected or have not had lengthy term in office to know the terminology applicable to Federal government issues. Many tribal officials do not know the treaties or federal policies that impact their tribe.

Training is needed for tribes to learn the official language regarding policies and how this may impact their tribe. Either annual or biannual training needs to be held to educate tribal officials regarding the terms used. Following are terms that may not be familiar to elected officials. "Government to government basis based on the Constitution, treaties, statutes, executive orders and policies," consultation, commitment, decision making authority, tribal sovereignty, and principles.

Commitment from Department officials to provide tribal participation and continuity had not always been felt at the tribal level. More effort in this area needs to be offered.

III. Definitions

Add treaty obligations as a definition as most tribal leaders enter negotiations from this point of view. There are many treaties and officials should be knowledgeable when it applies to specific tribes.

IV. Training

Utilize tribal experts on issues concerning consultation with tribes. Hold regional training, not nation wide.

V. Communication

The use of modern technology must be utilized as most tribes are sophisticated in this area.

Communication may be with only one tribal executive and many times information does not filter to the other executive members. Communications should be sent to all tribal executives. There must ongoing communication and a method to inform tribal executives especially when certain business is of utmost importance.

VI. Accountability & Reporting

Having an awareness of annual performance reports and costs is beneficial to tribes and will promote more cooperation and awareness of budget constraints.

VII. Innovations in Consultation Practices

Tribal evaluation of consultation practices is a positive contribution on the part of tribes and this would improve consultation practices.

Communication outside of consultation by tribes should be encouraged so that last minute efforts could be part of the process.

VIII. Consultation Guidelines

Consultation initiated by tribes is positive as it communicates that tribes are very aware of their own needs and priorities.

If tribes are unable to provide consultation or do not give a response within a certain time period, the time line should be extended.

IX. Supplemental Policies

Review of existing policies that only affect certain tribes should involve those tribes specifically.

X. Disclaimer

No comment.