UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

LISTENING SESSION

2016 LAND BUY-BACK PROGRAM FOR TRIBAL NATIONS

1:13 p.m.
Thursday, March 3, 2016

Albuquerque Convention Center
401 Second Street, N.W.
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102
PARTICIPANTS

DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR:

MICHAEL CONNOR, Deputy Secretary, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.


LAWRENCE ROBERTS, Acting Assistant Secretary, Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

JOHN MCCLANAHAN, Program Director, Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

KATHERIN GROUNDS, Senior Advisor, Tribal Relations, Land Buy-Back Program, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

SANTEE LEWIS, Senior Advisor, Tribal Relations, Land Buy-Back Program, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

LORNA BABBY, Senior Advisor, Tribal Relations, Land Buy-Back Program, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.
PARTICIPANTS (continued)

DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR (continued):

ALBERTO UGÁS, Supervisory Appraiser, Office of Appraisal Services, U.S. Department of the Interior

TRIBAL MEMBERS/SPEAKERS:

LEONARD TSOSIE, Councilman, Navajo Nation Council, Window Rock, Arizona

ERNIE STENSGAR, Vice Chairman, Coeur d'Alene Tribal Council, Plummer, Idaho

GEOFFREY STANDING BEAR, Principal Chief, Osage Nation, Pawhuska, Oklahoma

EDDIE HAMILTON, Governor, Cheyenne & Arapaho Tribes, Concho, Oklahoma

GARY BURKE, BOT Chairman, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Pendleton, Oregon

ROBERT SMITH, Tribal Chairman, Pala Band of Mission Indians, Pala, California

JESSE ALLEN, Oil and Gas Manager, Muscogee Creek Nation, Tulsa, Oklahoma

NORMA "JEANIE" LOUIE, Social Services Director, Coeur d'Alene Tribe, Plummer, Idaho
PARTICIPANTS (continued)

TRIBAL MEMBERS/SPEAKERS (continued):

FRANK ADAKI, Navajo Dine' Tribe, Arizona

JOSEPH SMITH, Director of Land Management, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Fort Yates, North Dakota

DENNIS CLAW, Many Farms Chapter, Navajo Nation, Many Farms, Arizona

BILL TOVEY, Director of Economic Development, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Pendleton, Oregon

RANDOLPH SCOTT, Land Services Administrator, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Warm Springs, Oregon

RUSSELL BEGAYE, President, Navajo Nation, Window Rock, Arizona

LIZ ARAGON, Pueblo of Laguna, Laguna, New Mexico

MARTHA GARCIA, Navajo Language Interpreter
MR. MCCLANAHAN: Ya'at eeh. Good afternoon. My name is John McClanahan. I'm the program manager for the Land Buy-Back Program. We're going to go ahead and get started. I would encourage folks that are in the back to come on up closer if you'd like. It looks like we've got plenty of room. So please feel free to come forward.

At this time, I'm going to invite Councilman Leonard Tsosie up to the mic here to make some opening remarks and invocation for us. Mr. Councilman?

MR. TSOSIE: (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN.) I don't know if the sign language person can pronounce Navajo or do the sign in Navajo. (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN.) Leonard Tsosie (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN.) I guess he could.

(Laughter.)

MR. TSOSIE: (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN.) John McClanahan. (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN.)

(Laughter.)

MR. TSOSIE: I told them that you're okay.
MR. TSOSIE: (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN.) There was a good turnout this morning, and many valuable, good questions were asked I understand. The only thing that I think I heard that people were concerned about is the lack of Navajo interpretation, and so maybe next time we could do better with that. I don't know how we're going to do it today, but I don't mind interpreting here and there every once in a while because I noticed we have some elders.

(NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN.) Let's open up with a prayer. (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN.) Amen. Thank you.

MR. MCCLANAHAN: Thank you, Mr. Councilman. I appreciate your words. Thank you, everyone, for coming. Again, my name is John McClanahan. I'm the program manager for the Land Buy-Back Program. We're here today to hear from you. We want to listen to you. We want to hear your insights and perspectives on the Program, so please share your thoughts and ideas. It's very important that we listen to Indian Country to find out how we're doing, find out how we can do better.

We have a court reporter here that's able to take
down your comments. And like we've done in the past, we will take that information and respond in our Status Reports and in our frequently asked questions. So it's been a useful part of the Program in the past to have these sessions. So rather than responding to your feedback today, we will, again, respond in those reports that we issue. That way we'll be able to allow as many people as possible to let their voices be heard.

To get us started, I just wanted to say a few things about the scope of the Buy-Back Program, some of the key principles that are involved, and then I want to recognize a number of folks that are involved in the success of the Program.

First of all, fractionation has got a massive impact on Indian Country. There are about 150 locations nationwide that are feeling the effects of the allotment policy. About 235,000 landowners across Indian Country that have fractional interests, and in the Program we've identified 42 of those 150 locations where we will be making offers through about 2017. Those 42 locations represent about 83 percent of all
fractional interests across Indian Country, so many of
the highly fractionated locations are on our schedule,
and we've been to many of those already.

Second, I wanted to make sure everybody
understands that this Program is voluntary. What that
means is that if a landowner gets an offer from the
Buy-Back Program, it's their choice as to whether they
want to participate or not. If they want to sell some
of the fractional interests -- again, that will go to
the Tribe -- they're able to do that. If they don't
want to sell any fractional interests, that's okay,
too. So it's really important that we work with Tribal
leaders to educate the landowners about the Program and
make sure that they know that it's their choice.

Informed decision making is a key principle for
the Program. Our main focus is to, again, educate
landowners, answer their questions, and make sure they
understand their land and the options before they
participate.

Examples of outreach are the kinds of events we
had this morning. I hope that many of you were able to
attend this morning's session. I hope also you were
able to go to the resource tables that we have outside
the room where you can learn more about appraisals,
look at a map of your land, learn more about how we
look at the minerals. So, many of our staff are here,
and if you haven't been to those tables, I encourage
you to do that. There are a lot of good resources
there that you can obtain today. I also appreciate the
Navajo Nation. They have a table as well for Navajo
landowners that want to engage with their staff that
are helping us with the Program.

And finally I want to recognize all the teamwork
and cooperation that's involved in this Program.
You're going to hear a number of updates today, but one
of the most amazing ones I think is that in just a
short amount of time we've given 67,000 of those
230,000 landowners a chance to participate in the
Program. And we did that by sending out $1.7 billion
in offers to landowners, and so that's really a huge
impact in a short amount of time.

Even beyond those numbers, though, are the
conversations that we've been able to have with Indian
Country. I know many of you heard me talk before about
the Cobell litigation, and that was an important piece of litigation. But one of the issues with that is that we were unable to communicate with landowners for many, many years except through legal counsel. And so, through this Program, we're able to talk with Tribes and landowners like I think we've never been able to do before. And landowners now are much more aware of their land, and I think we're creating a lot of goodwill in Indian Country.

So that opportunity we've provided and those conversations wouldn't have been possible without the involvement of the Tribal leaders, many of whom are here today. And so, I want to recognize the 20 locations that we've been to so far. Your involvement and support has been instrumental to the success.

We've been saying from the very beginning that we would not be able to achieve success without your involvement, and you've shown us that's definitely the case. From any point in time we usually have 40 to 60 Tribal staff that are helping us implement this Program at the local or the grassroots level. So thank you, Tribal leaders, and your staff that have helped us get
I also want to recognize and thank the many other locations that we haven't been to yet. I recognize that you're anxious to be involved in the Program, and I appreciate your patience. We've got a Planning Initiative happening right now where we're seeking to learn from the remaining locations, about 100, if you're interested in the Program. So, again, I look forward to working with you. Please express your interest in the Program by March 11. So, again, thank you for your patience there.

I also want to recognize the many staff from the Department of the Interior that have been helping with the Program. Just about every single office is involved from BIA, to the Office of Special Trustee, to the Bureau of Land Management, Office of Evaluation Services. We're all coming together as a team with the common purpose of serving Indian Country, and I really hope that you've seen our collaboration and working with you as being effective. And so, many of them are here today. A number of folks are local here. I encourage you to get to know them and ask them
Finally, outreach, like I said, is a key part of the Program. Those 230,000 landowners are located all over the country, some in foreign countries, so we always have the challenge of how to reach them. One of the things that we've done and Tribes have also done is create videos to help explain the Program. So the Buy-Back Program has recently completed a video that we're going to show here today. It's somewhat of a premiere. You're the first ones to see it, so we're going to play that now. It's about 10 minutes. We're going to make this available so all the Tribes have access to this and can help us get the word out. So why don't we go ahead and play that video now? Thank you.

MR. MCCLANAHAN: Okay. I hope you found that informative. Like I said, we'll have that available on our website. I also wanted to just note that back in the corner over there we do have some Navajo translators, so if there's anyone who is interested in having the information shared in Navajo, there is a group of folks back there in the corner.
Now I'd like to introduce the Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Interior, Michael Connor. The Deputy Secretary oversees the Buy-Back Program and is responsible for chairing the leadership at the Department that are also helping ensure that the Program succeeds.

DEPUTY SECRETARY CONNOR: Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you, John, for that introduction, but not only for the introduction. I want to thank you for your personal commitment and your leadership of the Land Buy-Back Program. And I'm going to go through some statistics here and only talk briefly, but I do think it's astounding how far we've come during the course in which the Program has been in place.

I want to thank all of you for taking the time today to join us here. I'm particularly happy to be here as a New Mexican. It's always a good opportunity for me to get back home, even if it's only going to be for a few hours, so I apologize in advance. Sometime between 4:15 and 4:30, I'm going to have to get out of here to catch a plane back to Washington, D.C. But I will look forward to the dialogue because we believe in
ongoing collaboration, transparency, and implementation
of the lessons learned throughout each year of this
Program.

And today, I think, as you've seen from this
morning's activity and during this Listening Session
this afternoon, it will be no exception.

As John mentioned, I chair a board of departmental
leadership that oversee the Buy-Back Program. I
continue to be amazed by the speed at which the
Program, working in partnership with the sovereign
Tribal nations, has already achieved major milestones.

And I got an opportunity to discuss this
yesterday. I was in a hearing in the House of
Representatives, the House Interior Appropriations
Subcommittee. Tom Cole is a member of that committee,
Congressman Cole from Oklahoma, a member of the
Chickasaw Nation, who helped move the Cobell settlement
and the Land Buy-Back Program authorization through
Congress. We had a very good discussion. He continues
to be very supportive of the progress, and it's great
to have bipartisan leadership in support of moving this
Program forward.
As you know, the Buy-Back Program is time limited, and it's been authorized by Congress to have that implementation occur through the year 2022. So as of today we're about one-third through the 10-year settlement timeframe.

Since the Program began making offers in December of 2013 -- it took a little while to stand up the Program -- the Buy-Back Program has paid more than $735 million dollars to individual landowners, and restored the equivalent of approximately 1.5 million acres of land to Tribal governments. That's nearly half of all the funds -- 47 percent to be exact -- that are available for purchasing fractional interests.

At the same time, the Program has been efficient in carrying out the operation here using approximately only $42 million of the authorized $285 million that was available for administration implementation costs. We're very proud of that. That's only six percent of the costs that have been overall reflected paid to individual landowners. And we're proud of that because this is not a Program to create a large Federal bureaucracy. It's a 10-year Program that we want to
implement efficiently within — well within the costs that are allocated for administering the Program, and invest more into benefits for both individual landowners and Tribal governments.

We have repeatedly said that the participation and engagement of Tribal nations is critical to the success of the Buy-Back Program, and these significant results stem directly from our partnerships with Tribal leaders across Indian Country. The Department has now entered into agreements with 28 sovereign Tribal nations to cooperatively implement the Buy-Back Program, and each agreement is unique in time, scope, and responsibilities based on the expressed interest of the particular Tribe.

The bottom line is that the Program continues to solidify the priorities set by President Obama, who has made it a priority across the board to rebuild effective partnerships with American Indian communities. We're very proud of the President's personal interest in strengthening Tribal nations, and the Land Buy-Back Program as part of that effort.

Even with the progress that has been made, a
staple of this Program has been building on the lessons learned through Tribal input. We have learned from our work at every location even while tailoring implementation to the unique circumstances of each location in collaboration with the appropriate Tribal government. If you have not yet had the chance to review the Program's 2015 Status Report, I highly recommend you do as you can see that progress has been made, and the lessons we have learned as we have implemented the Program. So we have been listening.

For example, you'll note that financial education opportunities, processes for information sharing, and training for Tribal staff have been augmented based on the feedback that we've received. In addition, we've also been able to make offers on tracts with improvements on them. That's a change in the Program that we've made within the last year.

The Program continues to expand, and I urge you to take note of the Planning Initiative as John mentioned in his opening comments. This two-pronged effort seeks input from Tribal governments and landowners who are interested in participating in the Program. This
interest is a major factor among others the Program will consider as it develops the next implementation schedule for 2018 and beyond. We've already selected the locations that we're moving to through 2017.

We know that there are already some Tribal governments that would like us to return or to extend Program implementation at their locations. Know that we do hear you, and we certainly appreciate your enthusiasm and your partnership. Our current focus is to ensure that we evaluate possible implementation for remaining locations with the remaining funds and the time we have.

The findings from our current Planning Initiatives will help our allocation of the remaining resources for the Program. After those determinations have been made through the input from the Planning Initiative, we will have the opportunity to analyze if additional resources exist, and where they might be utilized at locations where purchase offers have already been sent.

This may be the final opportunity for unscheduled Tribes at this point in time to register their interest in participating in the Program, so please respond no
later than March 11th, 2016. I believe that's next week, and you'll hear more on the Planning Initiative a little later.

In conclusion, we at the Department strongly believe that the success of this Program is vitally important for the future of Indian Country as a whole. We are focused on ensuring that landowners are aware of the Program and are given every opportunity to make informed decisions about the potential sale of their land at fair market value. As John stated and I'll reiterate, and we'll probably keep reiterating, this is a voluntary Program. I was just looking at some of the statistics. We range anywhere from some locations of about 22 percent of accepted offers to about 79 percent of accepted offers at other locations. It's up to the individual landowners.

So that is why we're here today and why we're committed to hearing from you, and doing what we can to both strengthen Tribal sovereignty and help Tribal communities realize and effectively implement their priorities.

And now, I'd like to invite our special trustee
for American Indians, Vince Logan, to say a few words
to you also. Thank you very much for being here today.
I appreciate it.

(Applause.)

MR. LOGAN: Good afternoon. Thank you, Mike, for
the introduction. It's wonderful to be here, and it's
an honor to participate today on behalf of the Office
of the Special Trustee for American Indians. A lot of
our staff is in the audience because we have a -- one
of our large facilities out here up at Masthead.

And thank you, John, for inviting me, too, and
it's a wonderful film. And I greatly appreciate the
mentions of the OST in the film, and we are happy to
participate as a partner with the Land Buy-Back Program
and getting information out to landowners.

So as you heard, the Buy-Back Program strengthens
Tribal sovereignty. Every interest sold reduces
fractionation and promotes land consolidation, which
allows Tribes to manage and use reservation lands for
the benefit of the Tribal community as a whole.

But it can be a life-changing event for individual
landowners. In just the past year, we have seen
purchase offers that have ranged from a few hundred
dollars to hundreds of thousands of dollars. While we
are all working diligently to make sure that landowners
have the information they need to make informed
decisions about their land, we also know that it's now
critical, and I mean critical, to provide financial
training, including budgeting, investing, and planning
for the future. The bottom line is we want to help
empower beneficiaries to grow and sustain personal
wealth.

For those landowners who choose to sell their
land, it's important to think strategically about how
you're going to use the funds you receive from the
sale, and we refer to that as a liquidity event. So
for many of you there's a large liquidity event
forthcoming. It may be the only -- the single -- the
only time an individual receives such amount during
their lifetime. The proceeds of a land sale represent
the land's legacy, and the funds from the sale can
offer both long-term and short-term benefits.

At the OST, we have dedicated staff -- many of
them in this room -- to provide beneficiaries with
additional information regarding land interests and what options may be available to them with respect to the proceeds of the sale, the liquidity event. We have a table set up outside. I believe it's that way. So please come by and speak with us or pick up information about how to contact the Trust Beneficiary Call Center. The number was in the film, and, of course, we have information outside, or to visit our financial empowerment website.

Now then, if a landowner chooses not to sell their land, it is equally important to consider how to best utilize the property during his or her lifetime, and how to most efficiently pass it to his or her intended beneficiaries. There are certain Federal rules and Tribal codes, and it's very complex, that govern estate planning options that may be available. And these decisions are not only important, but many of them cannot be rescinded or changed after they're made.

Thus, it is critically important to get as much information as you possibly can to make careful and informed decisions about land interest and estate planning options. And we at the OST are very happy to
help you with those decisions and getting that information.

Now, we have partnered with the BIA and a number of other Tribal organizations in legal aid services and law schools to help provide Indian trust beneficiaries with resources to assist in estate planning. And the biggest priority for our team collectively is to provide landowners the answers they need to make these decisions about their land and the liquidity event.

But it's up to all of us in the room and Tribal leaders, many of them in this room, all of us to engage in this effort. We cannot reach the number of landowners that are out there prospectively if the Tribal leaders and our community workers, you know, without their help. So we ask to work with you in this regard.

Even if your location has not yet been scheduled for implementation, there are a number of steps that Tribes can take right now in terms of readiness and to prepare for involvement within the Land Buy-Back Program. With only 45 days for a landowner to accept a purchase offer after it's received, it's important to
start now.

So the OST and the Buy-Back Program are undertaking this monumental effort, along with our other Federal partners, and what we're doing is we are helping in advertisements and media relations, postcards, phone calls, posters, and public service announcements at regional events and at sessions such as these. We ask that -- for Tribal help in disseminating this information, and with community participation and engagement. You will help us all make sure that this Program succeeds. You can also help owners making informed -- these informed decisions by hosting informational events, and encouraging willing sellers to call the OST Beneficiary Call Center, particularly during the Planning Initiative.

All right.

So I hope that everyone here will join us in assisting the outreach efforts throughout the lifetime of this Program. The proceeds from sales from this effort can truly make a difference throughout Indian Country for individuals and for the communities they call home.
And now, I would like to turn the microphone over to Larry Roberts, our new Acting Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. Larry?

(Applause.)

MR. ROBERTS: Good afternoon, everyone. It's really great to see everyone here this afternoon when it's a beautiful day outside. We're obviously talking about a very important topic here. I am a member of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, so it's also really great to see Packer fans here. I see a gentleman with a Green Bay Packer hat over there, so we're everywhere.

I also want to -- we forgot to mention one of the ground rules that we're going to be -- we forgot one of the grounds rules we're going to cover today, which is obviously this is a Listening Session. We want questions from all of you. There is one person in this room that we will not be taking questions from. He will not be allowed to ask questions, and that is -- Assistant Secretary Kevin Washburn is with us here this afternoon. So, Kevin, thank you for joining us.

(Applause.)

MR. ROBERTS: So I just want to very briefly
reiterate the historic opportunity the Program provides. As most of you in the room know, when Congress went down the allotment policy path and Tribal lands were lost, we're still -- we're still struggling with the history of that allotment policy. And the Program offers an opportunity to correct some of that and to restore it not to the Federal government, but to restore it to Tribal ownership.

And so, it's a key opportunity. It's a voluntary opportunity. And it's really exciting what some of the Tribes have been doing throughout Indian Country when they've implemented the Program there. And so, for example, the Land Buy-Back Program is going to work closely with not only individuals, but Tribal leadership to figure out what are -- how do we prioritize certain areas. How do we implement the Program most effectively for those Tribes?

And so, as you probably saw in the video, former President Brewer from Oglala Sioux Tribe, when they implemented it on their reservation, they looked at it and they were able to acquire parcels for homeownership for homes. And so, by working with the leadership and
with the Tribal community, they were able to utilize the Program to open up these lands to make them useful for homeownership purposes.

At Gila River Indian Community where we’ve also implemented the Program, the Tribe has been able to consolidate lands for a transmission corridor that was very important for the entire community. At Squaxin Island, some of the Tribal members who decided to sell their interests, they wanted to do because they wanted to make sure that the Tribe was able to better protect some of the world-class oyster beds at Squaxin Island.

And at Crow where the implementation, as Deputy Secretary Connor mentioned, the response rate was through the roof in terms of those that had decided to sell their interests. Some of those folks decided to sell their interests because the Tribe wanted to establish a community water plant at Crow. And so, the Program helped provide the resources to make all of that -- all that happen.

For the Tribal leaders in the room, and I know that there a lot of them, and I know that there are Tribal leaders here who have traveled from near and
far, as far as Idaho and other places, your commitment to the Program and your leadership to the Program is obviously critical. Everything that we do at the Department and within Indian Affairs' Assistant Secretary's Office, we're only as successful as Tribal leadership is. I mean, we take our cues from Tribal leadership, and that has borne out with this Program as well. It has reaffirmed that reality.

So at Crow, 65 percent of the owners that were contacted with an offer, they decided to sell their interests. That was more than $100 million paid to individual owners within Crow. At Swinomish, 80 percent of the folks decided, yeah, this is the right thing to do, we want to have the Tribe own these interests to better protect these lands.

But as every speaker has said here, and we can't say it enough, it is a voluntary Program. I've been with the Department for over three years, so I was at the Department as this Buy-Back Program was getting implemented and up on its -- up on its feet. It had some tough congressional hearings where there was skepticism about how the Program was going to move
forward. But I also participated in a lot of the
Listening Sessions that we were doing early on.
And, you know, it really rang true to my heart
some of the folks that said, you know what? I'm never
going to sell this interest because this is the -- this
is the interest of land that my father or my
grandfather gave me, and I don’t want to sell. And
that's completely legitimate, right? I mean, that is
-- that is completely fine. It is a choice for you
all. This is an opportunity. It's an option. And if
you decide not to sell for whatever reason because it's
very personal for everyone, that is 100 percent fine.
But we want to make sure that everyone has accurate
information in terms of the Program and how it's being
implemented.

So with that, I want to welcome up to the stage
Vice Chairman Stensgar from the Coeur d'Alene Tribe,
and he is going to share with you some of the great
work Coeur d'Alene has done to implement and share with
you some of his observations. So thank you.

(Appause.)

MR. STENSGAR: (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN.) Hello,
my friends. It's good to be here. Actually it's an
honor to be here in this land. I had a friend from the
Phoenix area who every time I'd see her, I'd tell her,
how's the desert people. And she'd look at me and she
said, we're good. We're fine. How's the mountain
people. And I said, we're still there. It's kind of
cold up there. She'd say, well, it's hot down here,
and we'd get together and visit. But we'd all start
our conversation like that, and it was a blessing to be
there.

I've been around in Indian leadership for a long
time, 35 years on my Tribal council. And during those
35 years I was able to cross the Nation and visit
different nations as well as go to D.C. and fight for
sovereignty, and make sure that the government lives up
to the trust responsibility that they have to us. So I
have a lot of scars. I wear them proudly.

I served this country as a marine. I joined in
1966, and one of my friends was -- as I joined in my
platoon, there was only one Indian guy in there besides
myself. And when we got together, we recognized our
blood, and we got together and we became brothers. He
was a Navajo. He was from Chinle. His name was Larry Billy. And unfortunately not too long after we landed in Vietnam, he was killed in action. To this day every time I go back to D.C. and I visit the monument, I say a prayer for Larry because he was a good friend. I remember him.

My (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN) is here with Navajo, so thank you for giving that friend. I'll always remember him.

(Applause.)

MR. STENSGAR: I actually don't know why I was called up to speak with acting secretary here, and John I think was to tell you about the experiences that I have personally with the Buy-Back Program. And I speak from a allottee owner as well as a Tribal leader. I inherited my property from my -- from my mother. My father was cava on a cava reservation, and that land went to the siblings over there.

But after I heard about the Buy-Back Program, I looked at it very, very carefully, and I decided that maybe this Program wasn't for me. I had a good chunk of land that I -- that I utilized, and it was very,
very important to me and I thought to my -- to my
children.

My children inherited the land from their -- from
their mother and from their grandparents, and it was
highly fractionated. They say it's fractionated, but
so much so that they couldn't do anything with it. And
I remember my daughter talking to me and asking me if
she should sell or not, and I told her I can't tell you
-- I can't tell you to sell. That's your choice. I
said, this land is our heart, I said -- I said, you
make up your mind.

And she said, Dad, I need a home, she said, and I
have bills to pay. And I understood that because she's
always got her hand out to me.

(Laughter.)

MR. STENSGAR: So she did. She decided to sell,
and I told her as I advised her, I told her, you know,
I said, you're going to sell that property, and I said,
you're going to get money, and it's going to enhance
your life. I said, but, I said, you're not going to
lose that land. I said, that land is going to come
back to the Tribe. And I said, and you're still going
to own it. As a member of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, that's going to be yours.

And she did that, and today we have that property and it's Indian. It's (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN).

That's how we say it in Indian, our language, so I thought that she did well.

So I thought that she did well, but I think what I want to impress is that it's our choice. It's our land. No one can tell us what we have to do with that -- with that property. If we want to sell we can. If we don't, we don't have to. Nobody is pressuring us.

I think the Program is good because on my reservation anyway, we have a lot of agriculture, and we grow a lot of wheat. We get like 80, 90 bushels to an acre of wheat, so the ground is very important to us. We have timber up there, and timber goes for $250 a thousand, so timber is very, very important to us. But if we -- if we just have a small portion, that check that we get from Interior from our IIM account, maybe only a dollar and a half in some cases it's so fractionated. And those people I would encourage to sell because that land isn't doing them any good.
As a Tribal leader, I don't want any land to go off my reservation, to go out of trust. I want it to stay in Indian ownership. There's local governments that are around that are bordering our town and within our towns that want us to go away. They say, hey, your reservation isn't there anymore, it's diminished, and you can't call yourself a nation. You don't have sovereignty. How can you when you don't have that, when you don't have as much as the State does or the economy does.

And I tell them, hey, Mister, I said, we have a boundary. My people died for this -- for this property, this little bit that we have left, and it's ours, and it will always be ours. And we're not going to go away.

So as long as I've been here for this 35 years that I've been out in Council, I've been fighting for this property, for our land, for the heart of my people because it's sacred to us. It's sacred how we harvest, how we harvest the elk, the deer, the bear. We gather the huckleberries. We go dig the camas. We gather the water potatoes, all those important food that are
important to us.

When I go sweat, and I go down to the lake, and I jump into the pure waters, or I go up to the mountain and recognize the (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN), our Father. That's ours. And now it'll never go away because I'm going to be here forever. My grandchildren are going to be forever. (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN) people that stole my voice. (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN.)

(Applause.)

MR. MCCLANAHAN: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Vice Chair. Those were wonderful words. Thank you. That was really great.

Now, I want to introduce Santee Lewis. Santee is a Tribal advisor in the Buy-Back Program. Santee is going to give a brief presentation on the Program, and then next we'll get to input from Tribal leaders and landowners.

MS. LEWIS: Thank you, John. (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN.) Hello, my people, my family. At this time I'll be delivering an update on the -- on our Program.

The Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations was established in the Cobell settlement agreement and the
Claims Resolution Act of 2010, which provided for a $1.9 billion fund to purchase fractional interests, meaning there has to be more than two owners in one tract of land; in trust or restricted status, meaning there -- well, in other words, there are -- no fee land purchases are permitted from willing sellers.

Participation in the Program is purely voluntary; at fair market value with -- and with any 10-year period.

The Program will end in 2022.

The principle goal of the Land Buy-Back Program is to reduce the number of fractional land interests through voluntary sales that place purchased interests into trusts for Tribes. These transfers consolidate trust land basis for conservation, stewardship, economic development, or other uses deemed beneficial by sovereign nations.

The Program has two main priorities. For individuals, the Program strives to promote awareness and education to facilitate informed decision making and maximize opportunities to participate. For Tribes, we want to strengthen our partnerships not only by respect and upholding Tribal sovereignty, but also by
tailoring efforts at each location based on Tribal involvement and priorities. In keeping with these priorities, the Program has held past Listening Sessions, such as this current Listening Session, to hear from these priority groups.

There are four phases of the Program: outreach, land research, valuation, and acquisition. Outreach refers to the continuous process of communicating with landowners regarding the potential opportunity to sell their fractional interests. This phase involves addressing questions and concerns landowners may have regarding this sale or regarding issues that might arise as a consequence of the sale. Outreach also includes planning, sharing information, and consulting with Tribal leaders.

Land research includes the development of data related to mapping and land use as well as any other data necessary to establish the fair market value. Valuation is the process of appraising fractionated lands to determine their fair market value. And acquisition is the process of making offers to landowners in an effort to acquire interest from those
interested in selling.

As of February 19th, 2006, the Program has spent more than $736 million to acquire nearly 1.5 million equivalent acres of fractionated land. This represents 399,500 purchased interests on over 26,500 tracts. Furthermore, over 10,100 tracts have reached at least 50 percent Tribal ownership, which will help Tribes achieve important economic benefits and community goals.

Here is a graph that depicts total payments to individuals. As previously mentioned, the Program initiated purchases in late 2013, and as of February 2016, more than $736 million has been paid to industrial landowners. Any amounts remaining in the fund in November 2022 must be returned to the U.S. Treasury.

The Department has identified 42 locations where land consolidation activities, such as planning, outreach, mapping, mineral evaluations, appraisals, or acquisitions are expected to take place through the middle of 2017. These communities represented 83 percent of all outstanding fractional interests across
Indian Country.

The Program recently launched a two-pronged Planning Initiative to help determine its implementation schedule for 2017 and beyond. Tribal governments not already scheduled for implementation and all landowners with fractional interests are invited to formally indicate their interest in participating in the Program by March 11th, 2016.

An important factor will be the number of willing sellers at each location. Landowners can indicate their interest by calling the Trust Beneficiary Call Center to register as a willing seller. Registration in no way commits a landowner to sell, nor does it guarantee that a landowner will receive an offer. It is simply the best way to ensure the Program is aware of their desire to receive an offer, and provides an opportunity for advanced outreach and information to be shared with a landowner at the earliest possible time.

Our website also -- well, our website now features a table that shows the top 10 locations with the highest percentage of landowners who have registered as a willing seller as of January 31st, 2016, including
those who have already sold some, but not all, of their fractional interests. This Planning Initiative will also conclude on March 11th, 2016.

It is important that landowners understand their land, consider their options, and have a plan for how to use the funds they receive from selling their land. Financial training empowers beneficiaries to grow and sustain personal wealth. More information is available at our website.

The left of the screen features an example of a quarterly report, and on the right, BLM’s website. Landowners do not need to wait until the Land Buy-Back Program is implemented on their reservation to get more information. Landowners can contact the Trust Beneficiary Call Center with questions about the Program, visit their local OST office or BIA office, or find more information on our website.

For those who were not able to join us before the Listening Session, Federal staff will be standing by during the break and after the -- and after this event ends today to discuss your land interests and trust services you may need. Thank you.
MR. MCCLANAHAN: Thank you, Santee. Now we'd like to invite Katy Grounds to the stage here. Katy is also a senior advisor for Tribal Relations in the Buy-Back Program, and she's going to help facilitate comments from Tribal leaders and individuals. Katy?

MS. GROUNDS: Thank you, John. At this time, we'd like to begin the first of two open comment periods at today's Listening Session. As John mentioned earlier, we have a court reporter here today who is developing a transcript of the comments that are shared with us. The transcript will be made available on the Program's website in the coming weeks.

For the benefit of our records, we'd ask that if you are to share comments, that you come up to one of the two microphones here at the front of the room, and that you identify yourself and your Tribal affiliation before you share your comments. And if you can speak directly into the microphone, that'll ensure that the court reporter is able to include your remarks in the transcript.

So first I'd like to invite any Tribal leaders to
speak, and please remember that we also have a second open comment period after the appraisal evaluation presentation today after the break. So any Tribal leaders who have prepared remarks who would like to share?

MR. STANDING BEAR: Thank you, Katy, and thank you, Mr. McClanahan, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Logan, and Mr. Connor. I'm glad to see you all working together and talking to each other. I wish the solicitor was with you.

Osage Nation, where I am chief, has learned some lessons, and I think the Program has, too, on the consequences of our Federal government not learning from each other. We signed the cooperative agreement. I signed it in May of 2015, and we were expecting offers to go out to our landowners in the fall of 2015. Because of the unique status we are told, of our land titles, we have not been able to do anything, even though I had told all our people in public meetings and in our newspaper that this was going to happen. Because we were not able to go forward, the credibility of my administration and this Program have suffered.
We are glad to know that working with Santee Lewis and your Program we are moving forward now, but I must urge all of you to continue to talk to each other. We did not know we were that unique. From our perspective, the procedures of land transfer have been the same for decades. Our solicitors in Tulsa and Muskogee know this. They know the rules. Our BIA in our superintendent's office and in our offices in Muskogee, they know it's never changed. It was surprise to us that this Program had not known this, but to us it's still the same Federal government.

Now, our place, in 1906 we had about 1.5 million acres, and in one lifetime, just take my grandparents just from when they were young and to the time they passed in the 1990s, we were down to 75,000 acres, most of it fragmented. And I can tell you, like a lot of you can see what happens, our people get scattered to the world. Of our 20,000 people, only 3,000 live within our reservation area because when we lose the land, off they go.

So this Program is very, very good. We want to buy the land back. We're using our own funds, too, to
buy land, and then we try to create it where they want
to come back because you can't continue as a people if
you're -- if you're gone, if you're scattered like
that. That's what we think, so we are -- we are really
trying hard, and we're really supportive of this
Program.

So this morning I met with Mr. McClanahan, and I
said the same thing. To me, I just am disappointed
that other branches of our Oklahoma BIA -- we don't
have BLM where I am working on it. BIA did not step up
to the plate and take a look at this Program, and get
as excited about it as we are and say, look, here's how
you do it in Oklahoma, just want to make sure.

But we are really happy now that the BIA
Acquisition Office, and I haven't met the director yet,
but I've been told I would, is now understanding this
and working with Santee Lewis and your team. It
appears we're getting there.

And I don't know how many other Tribes have found
this uniqueness problem, but the Federal government
needs to know we're not all the same. We all have
different rules that we consider normal from where we
sit, and we ask that -- you don't need hire new people.

You've got plenty of people in the existing Federal government that know these things. So reach out to each other because we're promoting this Program true -- as well as Tribal leaders. But when we say something to our people, they expect it to be true.

And now, since this last year, because oil and gas has gone down so much and we rely on that, a lot of our people are putting what's left up for sale. And it comes across my desk, and I'm trying to find money out of our treasury to buy it. We need this now because the financial stress is here, plus our individual allottees, they want a good price for that land. So that's the other thing we ask you to do is be sensitive to those appraisal costs, and let the Tribes come in and say, well, we'd like to suggest how to compare those with other appraisals that we know about.

So we're willing to help any way we can, and we appreciate the help you're giving us, but so far we haven't seen anything. We've just been talking. So I just signed in February a brand new cooperative agreement, and it's sitting in your office somewhere,
Mr. McClanahan. And I look forward to you signing that
so we can pick it up and get those offers this fall.

One year late, but let's get it going, and that's what
I'd have to say today. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. HAMILTON: Thank you. My name is Eddie
Hamilton, governor of Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, and
I want to thank you for kindly allowing us to speak
today, and thank the great State of New Mexico for
having this event here.

We submitted a letter of interest in 2014. We
still have not received a reply. It seems like
additional thresholds may have been added to meet
before we can actually -- the Tribe can actually
participate. We believed the Buy-Back Program was
being made available for all Tribes.

Now, our main question, we had a conversation
October of 2015 with the DME, the Division of Minerals
Evaluation, Mr. Estes. The question that we had was
basically was most of the highly fractional --
fractionated tracts which have a large number of
interest owners -- 200 to 400 -- have a mineral state.
Since the Land Buy-Back Program is to reduce fractionation, how will these purchasable tracts be categorized in stage one category of land purchases during the implementation phase?

So the response I got back from DME was, "DME performs mineral evaluation work prior to implementation at a location. Tracts will be designated as stage one, stage two, or stage three, based on DME's mineral evaluation work, and will be used on geology, not based on a tract's level of fractionation." So does this not go against the goal of reducing fractionation?

Also in February, last month, February of 2016, we sat in on a webinar that was held by Land Buy-Back Program. And it identified amount for the Cheyenne Arapahos that was made available to us, an amount identified there. We asked is that still available. The forthright answer was no. So we would like to know why that amount of money is no longer allocated to us, and has another amount been identified for us to work with in the purchasing of fractionated tracts.

How was this change authorized? Was it a written
policy? Was it a recorded decision? Where did the money go? What possible reason was there for diverting that money? Our land is still heavily saturated and fractionated with fractionation, and we have -- we have yet to be selected for this Program.

We're interested in knowing policy recorded decision was made to classify lands with paying sub-surface minerals as non-purchasable. We only -- we only learned of this new restriction within the past several months, so it seems like there seems to be un some way, somewhere, sometime the intent of the Land Buy-Back Program switched purpose from reducing fractionation to spending Cobell funds at a rapid rate and making -- spending the milestone.

And in closing from our standpoint, there's to be -- there is an appearance of adding barriers to the participation requirements. We came here today in good way and hopes that all Tribes get their equal share of the Buy-Back funds. I don't believe that our priorities to purchase land from willing sellers is being given enough consideration by those administrating the Buy-Back Program. We're not asking
for special treatment. We're asking for fair and equal
treatment to work on a nation-to-nation basis. Thank
you.

(Applause.)

MR. BURKE: Hello. My name is Gary Burke. I'm
from the Umatilla Tribe, northeast part of Oregon, and
we also participated in the Land Buy-Back Program. My
name is Gary Burke. I'm the chairman of the board of
trustees, the governing body of the Confederated
Tribes, Umatilla Indian Reservation. I appreciate the
opportunity we share to Tribal experience with the Land
Buy-Back Program, and our thoughts on how the Program
should proceed.

Oops. I've got to get real close.

The Umatilla Tribe has -- government has partially
repaired the damage that was caused by the allotment
policies. The Umatilla Tribe was one of the first
Tribes to execute the LBB Cooperative Agreement and to
implement the Land Buy-Back Program. In the following
results, we have fully utilized the purchase ceiling to
acquire 1,675 fractionated interests containing 10,142
acres of the cost of -- at the cost of $12.4 million.
According to the recent LBB report, there's over $48 million in unexpended Tribal purchases ceiling funds after Program implementation on 18 reservations. It is time to plan for these expended funds will be allocated and developing a plan that would encourage the following: that the LBB funds avoid a large over expenditures of Program funds as we are seeing in the reservations to avoid unfair allocation of the LBB funds; allocate unexpended LBB funds to Tribes that have successfully implemented LBBP or there is additional willing sellers; consult with Tribes to avoid and develop criteria reallocating unspent LBB funds.

Along with everybody else in this room that are affected by these allotment policies from a long time ago, I, too, am a landowner. I'm a chairman of the Tribe. I'm one of the chiefs of the Umatilla Tribe. We have three Tribes, which is the Confederated: the Umatilla, the Cayuse, and the Walla-Walla.

Everyone is affected by the allotment policies, and the opportunities to come here and to talk for Tribes, my Tribe especially, on how to get our land
back. Like Mr. Ernie Stensgar said, some of them come to me and also had these same concerns of selling in order to sell back to the Tribe.

I'm a treaty Tribe. My treaty is 160 years old. I also have ceded land areas, which we all utilize today. A lot of people talk about aboriginal ways of life, and talk it about in the past tense. A lot of Tribes are still practicing those aboriginal ways today, and I believe that is true. And I encourage every Tribe to keep your traditions and cultures alive, which keeps us the way we are and the people we are from the oldest to the youngest.

I'd like to thank Mr. McClanahan for giving time for us. We've spoken him to -- other times even on our reservation, he's come forward to talk to us face-to-face. It's okay to talk with letters, emails, but when you talk face-to-face with somebody it means more, at least to me, to speak with somebody. You can look at them and almost tell that they're willing to help. And whatever the endeavors are in the future, I hope that things like this will continue.

And I thank all of you for helping us on that
table there, and I encourage the people to be thankful.  
That's what the Creator teaches us. All the time, be thankful for what we've got. (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN.)  
Thank you.  
(Applause.)  
MR. ROBERT SMITH: Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Robert Smith. I'm chairman of the Pala Band of Mission Indians in Northern San Diego County. I'd just like that we want to get involved in the Land Buy-Back Program. We sent a letter of interest. We've got about 13,000 acres, which is kind of big for California, but we've got over 5,500 fractionated shares, so we look forward to being a part of the Program. And thanks for your time.  
(Applause.)  
MR. ALLEN: Jesse Allen from the Muscogee Creek Nation in Oklahoma, and we'd like to know what steps are being taken to address the unique issues of restricted landowners in Oklahoma with the Muscogee Creek Nation, and also the five Tribes, and what can we do to assist in that situation. Kind of it's almost like the Osage. We're kind of in that same situation,
so.

MS. LOUIE: (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN.) Hello, my friends. I'm Jeanie Louie from the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, and I am here representing the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians. I'm on the board for that organization. And this is not really concerning the Land Buy-Back, although our Tribe has been very successful in that endeavor, but it concerns the Scholarship Fund.

And the last conference that was held with ATNI, the Tribes there were asking if I would attend the Listening Session, and ask you some of these questions. And the first one is where and how the individuals are to apply, and if they're a high school graduate, is it for a four-year scholarship. And also, are payments for scholarships for bachelors, masters, doctors, or at any level? And does this also include technical schools scholarships?

And while we recognize that this Program does not administer the Scholarship Fund, it would be very helpful if the Program would communicate information about how the funds will be used. Thank you very much.
(Applause.)

MS. GROUNDS: Thank you. At this time, are there any other Tribal leaders who wish to speak?

(No response.)

MS. GROUNDS: Okay. If not, I'd like to invite any guests, including any landowners here today, to step up to the microphone and share comments.

MR. ADAKI: (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN.) I hope all of you distinguished guests sitting at the head table understood what I said.

(Laughter.)

MR. ADAKI: I just wanted to get a little smile from them. They're so serious --

(Laughter.)

MR. ADAKI: -- thinking about Washington, D.C. to see how the Redskins are going to do.

(Laughter.)

MALE SPEAKER: Broncos.

MR. ADAKI: Broncos.

(Laughter.)

MR. ADAKI: Honorable Deputy Secretary, the Special Trustee, the Acting Assistant Secretary of
Indian Affairs, and our Program Manager. And I understand Mr. Washburn is in the audience. Is he still here? Oh, he took off. You scared him off, John.

Okay. I'm a landowner. I now reside here in Albuquerque, New Mexico. As I said, my name is Frank Adaki. I'm Dine', and we live on the west side, Paradise Hills. And one thing that the white people have taught me going to school was save for a rainy day, and we did. My wife and I did very well. I'm retired after having been on the front lines for 37 and a half years in the criminal justice system, transferred all over the country as a Federal agent. And I've been retired, like I say, 17 years, and we have a consulting business that we have.

And also we travel quite extensively all over the country. I was stationed back in Washington, D.C. at one time. I went to the FBI National Academy there in Quantico, and I went through the Department of the Interior management training back in 1970. And I -- so I know what and how it is in Washington, D.C.

So I'm a landowner. I've attended many of these
sessions that we have, and this morning I addressed the audience in regards to my concerns. The concerns I had was the appraisal and what they are using very loosely, fair market value. We are dealing with another project which is going to end up like the Cobell case. This involves the right-of-way across allotted land, and it's going to have a significant impact all over the country, and we're going to prevail.

So the fair market value they use for a right-of-way is the same thing, and fair market value to us is peanuts. It's not what we should be getting for a 20-year lease to a major oil company. Landowners get about $26, $29 for that. Now, is that fair? It's not fair.

For this Land Buy-Back, the same thing, fair market value. We have three tracts of land, the Adakis do: South of Gallup where my dad was from, two wells; Mundialito, we have 160 acres there that belong to Mom; and then in the Pinedale area. So what we decided was to keep the land intact.

Whether we believe it or not, we as Native people can't seem to get along. We're always bickering.
We're always fighting with one another. And so, if there's a family like myself -- there's 12 of us that Mom and Dad raised. And if one or two should decide to sell, it's going to cause some real indifferences, indifferences of such that one of them is going to say you already sold, so you don't belong here. You already sold, so that road that goes over to where you live is not going to be as -- it's not going to happen. So these type of things are there, which I think we're completely overlooking.

The distinguished Tribes from the Umatilla, Coeur d'Alene, Osage, and others talk about success on their reservation. They're small reservations compared to the Navajo. Navajo Reservation is about the size of West Virginia. It has sparse rural areas.

I'm just thinking about where I'm from. Yeah, if we had a little community that was close knit and some of the landowners sold, I could see development happening. But most of these land that we're talking about are located in rural areas way out in the boonies. And in order to develop it, the Tribe is going to have to dig into their -- to their coffer to
build roads, to construct, in order to gain whatever
profit that they may want to gain.

So these are all questions that a lot of us have, which we would like for the distinguished members from Washington to think about. I know that government can do what they want to do. When the Syrian conflict was going on, when it started, I received a letter with letterhead and everything. And it mentioned that 25,000 Syrian refugees were going to be relocated to the Navajo Reservation, 25,000 over to the Standing Rock Reservation up in South Dakota/North Dakota. And that caused an uproar, and luckily it turned out to be a hoax.

So these type of things are there where the government came back later on and said -- when reservations were being established -- when they were established, there was certain criteria that the Tribes were supposed to do in order to satisfy the government that the Tribe is going to develop, strategize, and what they're going to do with the land that they got. And they were saying that most of the Tribes have not done it, so the government is there. They can do
whatever they want to do.

And so, this Land Buy-Back, it may sound good. The money is there, but the money is going to be gone, and the land is going to be gone. The individual that sells will be out in the cold. And so, this is -- these are the things that I'm looking at, that a lot of us are looking at. And I appreciate the fact that this is a Listening Session. Rather than you talking to the people, giving a chance for the people to talk. Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

MS. GROUNDS: Thank you. We're going to take a short break, but before we do that, I want to return to the panel to see if there are any responses to what's been shared.

DEPUTY SECRETARY CONNOR: Yes. Can people hear me? Yeah. If I talk into it, people can hear me. It's amazing how that works.

I appreciate the input so far. I just have a couple of high-level thoughts, but I do want to talk a little bit about our Oversight Board because I do think -- a couple of things that I think is responsive.
The Osage Nation, I appreciate your strong recommendation that we continue to talk to each other. I think that's incredibly important. And that's really the purpose of our Oversight Board, and we'll go back and discuss some of the issues that we hear, but it's for that exact purpose.

This is a complicated Program where we need strong coordination amongst the various elements of the Department from appraisal services within the Department, legal questions, Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Office of Special Trustee. So I appreciate the need for more coordination.

We need to -- and a lot of these issues that we've dealt with from Listening Sessions or input that we've gotten through consultation, we've taken to the Board and we've discussed it, and we've strategized about it. So it's good to know there's still more work to do along those lines, and we certainly have a mechanism that we will continue to employ and need to employ obviously from the comment that you made.

I do think the question of unfair allocations came up also, and I wanted to talk a little bit about that.
There is an ongoing tension with respect to the Program. It's a tension, but it's also, you know, one of the realities that we're trying to deal with in creating purchase estimates for different locations, trying to map out how we can over the course of the Program at least give an opportunity to the many different locations in excess of 100 that we need to go to over time.

So we do want to move quickly. We want to organize ourselves. We want to incentivize as much opportunity as possible in individual locations. But we're also cognizant that we can't spend all the money at certain locations, and that's why we created the purchase estimates, trying to give ourselves a target, move forward, but at the same time ensure that even as we expeditiously implement the Program at certain locations, some may be below the purchase estimate, some may be above the purchase estimate.

So far, it's kind of balanced out, and we continue to move along, and we think we can equitably allocate the resources. At the end of the day, though, our overarching goal will be to not return a dime of this
money to the Federal Treasury. This was money set
aside by Congress through the settlement process so
that it could be available for those willing landowners
to have their interests purchased, and for Tribes to be
able to consolidate land. So we all understand how
difficult it is, particularly in these constrained
budget times, to get resources to carry out a Program
like this, so we certainly want to ensure that we make
use of all those resources.

So I'd just mention that. We're cognizant. We
understand the need to be fair and try and get to
opportunities amongst all the different reservations,
the locations that are eligible. But also in the back
of my mind is we need to expand these resources, and
that's the balance that we'll continue to try and
strike as we move forward.

There are other specific issues I think. We're
looking forward to hearing more of the landowner issues
that will be raised so that we can continue to
strategize in the outreach process, and try and answer
as many questions even on an ongoing basis so
landowners can make those informed decisions that we
talked about.

But that's just a couple of quick thoughts and comments, but I want to turn it over to anybody else who -- on the panel who wants to give a quick response.

MR. ROBERTS: I'll be very brief since I'm standing between you and a break.

(Laughter.)

MR. ROBERTS: Chief, that's the reason we have these Listening Sessions, but you should feel free to reach out to any of us on this table. I know you reached out to me very early on about the Osage rulemaking. We want to be responsive, work with you, so appreciate you being here today and sharing this information.

It sounds like Oklahoma BIA, it seems -- sounds like it's -- we're on the right track, but always my phone line is open to you at any time to resolve the issues.

Along those lines, I do want to let other Tribal leaders in the room know that we do have a regional director, and his staff in the back of the room here for this region. And so, we're in listening mode here
today, but I want to make sure that Tribes, if you're from this region that you have good collaboration not only with the Land Buy-Back Program, but obviously also our regional director.

And then I just want to touch upon a couple of things. Jeanie Billy, you run -- you had a lot of questions from ATNI about the Scholarship Program. I think it's something that we can talk about here to make sure that that's -- the Scholarship Program, just so everyone in the room knows, is not administered by the Federal government. It's not administered by the Department of the Interior at all.

Having said that, I think that there's a way that we can put some of that information up on our Land Buy-Back Program website so that it's easy for you all to find because you have very good questions here. And I'm going to talk with John during the break to see what answers we can provide to you all today on that.

And finally, Mr. Adaki, one, thank you for your service. Two, appreciate all of your comments here this afternoon. One of the things you touched upon was something that I talked about during the opening
remarks, which is making sure that whatever purchases are out there from voluntary sellers, that it be strategic, right? That you don't want to purchase lands necessarily where it's not going to -- where they're vacant and hard to get to, and not going to make good use. And so -- and that's why we want to work very closely with Tribal leadership so that we are coordinated, and hopefully getting -- making the most of the resources from those -- from those individuals that do choose to sell.

So with that, I'll turn it over to Vince or John.

MR. MCCLANAHAN: Yeah, just real quick, I want to recognize the Governor from Cheyenne-Arapaho. After the break, we're going to have a presentation on the valuation approach for the Program, and I realize your questions are in large measure centered around the oil and gas or mineral type properties. And so, we'll make sure to try to cover that, and if we don't we can respond after the comment period to elaborate on that.

And then, the only other thing I'd mention is that we are looking to add additional locations to our schedule. Like we've talked about a little bit today,
we've got 42 on our schedule, and through the Planning Initiative we want to hear from Tribes, such as Cheyenne-Arapaho, that are interested in becoming involved, and our staffs have been talking quite a bit.

And so, Cheyenne-Arapaho and other places are definite candidates to be added to the schedule this summer after we get input from, you know, around up to 100 folks that aren't on our schedule yet. Thank you.

MS. GROUNDS: And with that, we're going to take a quick 30-minute break, so we'll be back in this room at 3:15. Out the left -- your left side doors, there's refreshments, food, and coffee, and beverages. And the resource tables will also be open.

(Break.)

MS. BABBY: Okay, everyone, we're going to get started again so we -- so we have enough time for another comment session. I think pretty much everyone is back in the room.

My name is Lorna Babby. I'm a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, and I've been with the Program from the beginning. It's been pretty amazing to go from our very first land sale on Christmas Eve in December 2013
to where we are today, which is pretty close to halfway
with our available funding.

I've been with the Program for two and a half
years now, but I've been dedicated to the protection of
Indian land and water rights for decades. It's really
my passion. And part of that is making sure that the
government, the Federal government, lives up to its
responsibilities with respect to Indian lands and
water.

Some of my colleagues laugh when I tell them this,
but my dad actually taught me about the allotment
policy and its devastating impact on Indian lands when
I was just a little kid. And it was -- it had a huge
impact on me, and it really -- it pretty much
determined my career path.

And I went to law school with the specific goal of
getting the education I needed to do something about
this allotment, the problems that have been created by
allotment. So to be involved with the Buy-Back
Program, it just -- it means a great deal to me.

And I also understand that we have some great
opportunities here to consolidate these fractionated
lands and to strengthen the Tribe's ability to make
decisions about land use that are going to benefit the
entire membership. But at the same time, the decision
of each individual landowner whether to participate is
a very personal one.

Although my dad really encouraged me to go to law
school and to work in this field, and to join the
Program, he had a really difficult time making up his
mind when he did receive an offer, and he didn't think
it was going to be that difficult. So I do appreciate
we have a great opportunity, but it's for every
individual to decide whether it makes sense or not.

Right now, I want to introduce one of my
colleagues who's also been with the Program from the
beginning. Alberto Ugás is a supervisory review
appraiser with the Office of Appraisal Services, and
he's going to provide some information on the Program's
appraisal methods, and we hope this is helpful
information. And then right after his presentation, we
are going to have another comment period. So, Albert.

MR. UGÁS: Thank you, Lorna. Hello. Good
afternoon, everybody. Like Lorna said, my name is
Alberto Ugás. I'm the supervisory appraiser with responsibility over the mass appraisals that are being generated for the Buy-Back Program.

I am -- I am relatively new to the feds, almost three years now when the Program started, but I had never worked for the Federal government before. My experience has been -- has been at the local jurisdictional level. I came here from Washington State. I was a deputy assessor at one of the jurisdictions neighboring Seattle, and so I have been an appraiser for a long time. I'm an old guy, believe it or not, although I do know that I look the part.

I have been an appraiser for almost 30 years, and a good 20 years of those have been working on the mass appraisal side doing appraisals of, at times, hundreds of thousands of properties for property tax purposes, so I've been around the block a little bit. And I want to tell you, the -- this is my first opportunity to work with Native American communities. It's one of those things that we go through life, and there are some things that have always been on our bucket list that we have not quite been able to reach.
And working -- not only working, but getting to become familiar with Native American communities, it's one of those things that was on my bucket list that I had never had the opportunity to do. So when -- I've always considered myself to be a sibling or a close relative of Native Americans because my father also was a member -- I mean, his ancestors were members of the Chimu and Mochica cultures on the coastal deserts of Northern Peru, which is where I born.

When you've had the opportunity to work for as long as I have and you have the opportunity to finish your career in a place on a Program like the Buy-Back Program -- I don't know if you guys have noticed it, but most of the people here have stated how important and what a privilege it is to work on the Buy-Back Program.

And there's a common thread there, and that common thread is that we get it. We get how critically important this is on Indian Country, and we are all working very diligently and very hard to do the absolute best possible job that we can. And I hope that you appreciate that because from a professional
career I can tell you it is a treat to be able to work in an environment where there are so many capable individuals, and everybody is so committed to the -- to the objective and the mission. It is a privilege, and I am, quite frankly, very fortunate to be here. So thank you.

Now, I'll shut up, and I'll get going with the presentation.

(Laughter.)

MR. UGÁS: So this is -- I work for the Office of Appraisal Services, and the office -- the mission of the office is to provide our clients, the BIA and OST, with high-quality, independent, and objective services prepared in accordance with national and Federal appraisal standards. The highest quality appraisal services are the foundation for sound real estate business decisions made by or on behalf of trust beneficiaries. Our vision is to be the finest appraisal organization in the Federal government through the professionalism of our appraisal staff, to be a center of excellence for appraisal services.

Now, we've heard this plenty today, the origins of
the Land Buy-Back Program. And at the end of the day, the objective is to purchase these fractional interests from willing sellers at fair market value. And we've heard, too, about fair market value and whether that is a dream or a reality.

Fair market value is determined by the Office of Appraisal Services. It is an appraiser's professional estimate of what a property would sell for in an open and competitive market.

Now, let me tell you, there is a legal definition for "fair market value." It's not something that is ephemeral, that it means this to you and that other thing to somebody else. There is a very clear legal definition. There has to be a willing seller, a willing buyer, neither under compulsion to buy or sell, informed in their decision making with a property that has been exposed in the open market. And all of those definitions need to be there in order to qualify as fair market value. So we're not winging it. It has to meet the criteria.

Oops, I turned it off. I did it. They shouldn't trust me with technology.
So appraisals are completed by OAS for each tract of land. They are used to provide professionally derived and impartial estimates of market value. They are required by law to provide both the beneficiary and the government information on the value of the land.

All appraisal work performed by OAS conforms to the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice. And it doesn't matter what type of appraisal you're doing, whether you're in the Federal government or whether you're in -- you're in the private sector.

All appraisals in the U.S. have to conform to the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice. If you want to sell your private property, whether or not it is trust land or you go, you hire an appraiser, that appraiser has to abide by the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice.

All staff appraisers from OAS are certified, holding the high level of appraisal licenses. To ensure a credible, impartial, and responsible appraisal process, the Buy-Back Program worked with the Appraisal Foundation. They sought an independent peer review to come and take a look at what we were planning on doing
before it had even started, and to pass judgment as to
whether the methods and the practices that we were
proposing, whether or not they were valid. And the
Appraisal Foundation agreed that the methodology that
was being proposed was sound.

Now, at a subsequent review this last September
after we had already appraised some good -- I think by
then we were close to 18,000 properties that had
already been appraised. We asked the Appraisal
Foundation to come back and do a review now of the real
work that had been done. And during that review the
following findings were made: "The team has done an
outstanding job managing the appraisal processes, and
further, in the appraisal profession, this is a major
accomplishment that should make OAS and the Department
very proud."

And what they were referring to here is the fact
that most people don't realize it, but mass appraisal
is a first-time endeavor on the Federal government.
They had never been done before. So we had to build a
system from the ground up, and we are -- we have built
a state-of-the art system that, quite frankly, most
mass appraisal jurisdictions that have been around for tens -- for many, many years can even hope to have. Because of the ability and the community of effort throughout the Federal government, we have been able to build a system that is unparalleled. And then, quite frankly, a lot of people, our peers, we just came from a convention of assessors, and they marvel at what the team at OAS has been able to accomplish in such a short period of time.

Now, none of this -- these accomplishments are only possible through the close cooperations of the Tribes in the appraisal process, and that is a critical point. It doesn't matter where we are working, we need to rely on local Tribal staff and members to become engaged in the exchange of information because the more information we have from the area that you know better than anyone else, the better the finished product is going to be.

We just finished a product in the Pacific Northwest, a heavily forested commercial timber reservation, and we were able to develop a market valuation model of commercial timber properties. To my
knowledge, that is the first time that anybody has been able to develop a commercial timber market value -- valuation model.

And so, it's a huge accomplishment that would never have happened had the Tribe not been willing to allocate significant resources to provide us the data that we needed. Nobody knows that data better than they did -- better than they do. And they were willing to sacrifice and give us and share all of that data, which is what allowed us to cross the finish line.

That close cooperation is imperative.

At its most basic level, an appraisal is defined as "the act or process of developing an opinion of value." For Buy-Back purposes, all properties appraised as though vacant, meaning that only the land is value and none of the improvements that might be there, and that's an important distinction. Buy-Back funds can only be used to purchase fractionated land. They cannot be used to purchase your house. So when we appraise a property, we appraise it as though there's nothing there, only the land.

Now, there are three major or primary methods to
develop that opinion of value. There's the cost, the income, or the sales comparison approaches. These three can be used independently, but they are most typically combined in a variety of different ways. The cost approach is based on what it would cost to replace the property or rebuild it after deducting for accrued depreciation. And obviously when you are -- when you are talking about vacant land, the cost approach is not very applicable.

The income approach is based on the income stream that the property generates capitalized to determine its present worth. So if you have a property that is generating income year after year after year, we have to calculate what the income might be. We have to capitalize it and bring it down to what its present worth might be, the present worth of that income stream, and that reaches a value conclusion. It may be or it may not be applicable on some -- on some lands -- vacant lands.

And the third is the sales comparison approach, which is based on what similar properties in the vicinity have sold for recently. And most of our
1. appraisals are based on the sales comparison approach.

2. Typically when we are working a project, we look at a map of the reservation, we draw a line typically around a 25-mile buffer or so from that -- from those boundaries of the reservation.

3. And then I have been blessed with an awesome staff. They have been trained. They have been working very diligently. We send staff out to those locations, and we tell them, you go out to those courthouses, go talk to those recorders, go talk to those assessors.

4. And you harvest every single sale that has happened within these lines for the last minimum five years.

5. For mass appraisal, you need to have a significant volume of sales data. And typically we look at everything that have sold in your area for a minimum of five years.

6. Now, when you're dealing with vacant land, and because of the nature of our Native communities, predominantly we're talking with a very consistent type of property. There are very -- they're very consistent it doesn't matter where in the country you go. So we have irrigated cropland, and we are cognizant of the
fact that irrigated cropland might come in different flavors.

There are different types of irrigation methods. You could have a center pivot. You could have surface. You could have drip irrigation. All of this is data that we need to capture for every single property that we're going to appraise and for every single sale that we're going to analyze. So at the end of the day we end up with a huge database with all of these characteristics. I call it we are mapping the DNA of every single property, and it takes -- it takes a lot of data.

We also have dry croplands, which obviously are more predominant on the northern latitudes. We have open range, whether that's on the -- on the -- on the Great Plains or down here in the American southwest. Range is range. We have recreational property, and, again, they're going to have different flavors based on the -- based on the location. We have rural commercial property, and we have rural residential property.

And those are the primary property types, and so that's really most of what we are appraising,
percent of what we are appraising. Throughout the country, there are these type of properties.

Now, depending on the property type, the number of properties needing to be appraised, the number of available sales, and the complexity of the assignment, the final report may be conducted in one of three different ways. It may be a mass appraisal, it may be a project appraisal, or it may be an individual property appraisal.

How many appraisals have we done to date? There was a previous slide that may be questioned, but as of the end of Calendar Year 2015, OAS has completed appraisals for the Buy-Back Program on 20 reservations across nine states. And these represent over 22,000 appraisals comprising about four and a quarter million acres.

And that's all I have. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. UGÁS: Oh, I forgot the most important slide. Most of you hopefully have seen this brochure which was available outside, still is available. It was prepared by the Indian Land Tenure Foundation. It is
-- it is laden with a lot of information on appraisals, how they are done, what this means, what that means. I encourage you to go and get one of those. They're available outside. And it will go a long ways and help you understand the appraisal process. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. GROUNDS: Thank you, Albert. Now, we'd like to open it up for our second and final open comment period of the Listening Session. And if there are any Tribal leaders who have prepared remarks, they're welcome to begin the comments.

MR. TSOSIE: (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN.) Hello, again. My name is Leonard Tsosie. I'm a Council delegate with Navajo Nation Council. And Navajo Nation is now participating in the Land Buy-Back Program, and so we've had some experience with this. (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN.) Thank you, Mr. McClanahan, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Logan, and Mr. Connor for coming to New Mexico Indian Country and visiting us, and we look forward to having a good dialogue and discussion with you.

With the Navajo Nation, we've identified some
Tribal priorities in this Land Buy-Back Program. And I think it's very important that the Program give it serious attention, not only the appraisal and other things, but also the Tribal priority. One of them is what we call floating allotments, and those are allotments that are out there by Tohajiilee, Alamo, and Ramah outside Mother Navajo. And so, how do we work that out, and how do we make the offer, and how do we convince and work side by side to address not only the concern of the landowner, but also in the Tribe, the Tribe to purchase and working together.

The other one is also the economic development. We have many paved roads and other ways that we can promote economic development, all those allotments around border towns. And, again, we'd like to see some serious effort on the part of the Program to help the Navajo Nation in securing some of these lands, or work with you to make them eligible, or to help in purchasing those for the benefit of the Tribe. In the end, it's all for the benefit of the Tribe, so I'd like to see that.

The other one is it appears that a decision -- a
unilateral decision has been made, and that is to not make the offer, and not let the landowner know that, you know, this is oil rich area, this is in certain categories. We're not going to send them an offer, or that those under 18 and all that, and then are not mappable.

And I think it shortchanged the allottees because we've been telling them that this Program is coming, and it's a good Program, and that this is going to happen. Then all of a sudden -- they've participated like today, and then all of a sudden they don't get an offer. Then our credibility as Tribal leaders is on the line. The credibility of the Land Buy-Back Program is on the line because then that's when they tell us and said we never got an offer, and you were praising this Program, what happened, and because a unilateral decision was made to not send out the offer for certain categories. I think we need to work together on that to try to make the offer to as many allottees as possible.

The other one, too, is not telling -- or those that are incarcerated and trying to get to them, and
then the "whereabouts unknown." For Navajo, we have over 4,000 "whereabouts unknown," and how do we reach them. And I think we need to begin to have the Land Buy-Back Program begin to share data with Navajo Nation government to identify the whereabouts, and also the BIA that are there, to see what we could do to identify these "whereabouts unknown." It also helps us not only in the Land Buy-Back Program, but also in right-of-way acquisitions and others, and I think in the end it could be a win-win thing for Navajo Nation in trying to share that information.

It appears now that all those information are kind of like hands off to us, and especially the similar thing with the appraisal. Because what'll happen down the road is that if the Navajo Nation becomes an owner of an allotment, we'd like to know who our co-owners are, you know, and who do we work with. And when the Federal government does not wish to share that information with us, then we don't know, and we're still in the dark on who our co-owners are.

And it's the same thing with the appraisal. Many of the Navajo people that do not read or write the
English language resort to their Tribal leaders, and they have come to me and they've asked me what is the appraisal of my land, the (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN), that they look at this. What is the value of my land? (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN.) How do they do -- how do they do it? And when that appraisal information is not shared with us, I end up just telling them I don't know.

And I think we need to figure out a way, and the gentleman, Alberto, was praising the review. But the thing about that is I take that with a grain of salt because there's no Tribal review of the appraisal that happened, the appraisal process. I think it's important to have a Tribal review to make sure that the concerns of our -- in the Navajo case -- of our Tribal members, and that they're being treated fairly.

We've raised this concern before, and we continue to raise that concern. And I think in the absence of a Tribal review, you can give yourself gloating reviews, but to us, it's not big deal, and it's near zero. So we'd like to address that. And then, some of these, we respectfully request that they be shared with Tribal
leaders so that we could then begin to address them.

The other thing that I would like to recommend is
I think you should lean towards a second round towards
the end. You should not send one dime back, you know,
back to the U.S. Treasury. And in the end, make the
offer even if you need to make a higher offer to expend
the funds, because I think if you send it back, it
represents a failure on the part of the Land Buy-Back
Program, and that's what Congress is going to say, that
we got so much money back, and what the heck happened.

And so, I think it's very important that you do so.

So those are my comments, and, again, thank you
for coming over and hearing us out. (NATIVE LANGUAGE
SPOKEN.)

(Applause.)

MR. JOSEPH SMITH: Good afternoon. I'm Joseph
Smith, director of Land Management for Standing Rock
Sioux Tribe. We just finished our Buy-Back Program in
December.

You know, a lot of our landowners were scattered
out the Great Plains, and Rocky Mountains, and across
the country. And so, our outreach focused on those
areas, a lot of large events in those areas. So, you know, based on the offers, you know, we had over 7,000 individuals accept an offer. The Tribe acquired under 200,000 acres. And the initial implementation plan said, you know, 766,000 acres that were purchasable, so, you know, we reduced that by 25 percent.

So with all that we have done now, you know, so now we need to look forward. So a lot of landowners didn't get an offer, chose not to accept it for their personal reasons. But a lot of them want to complete an exchange, and, you know, the Tribe contracted the appraisal Program years ago. It's not funded near enough to accomplish that. And so, you know, with the Mass Appraisal Program, you know -- you know, the reviews that it got on it, which you should start looking at making that available, you know, just not one time and done, you know. So you have a couple of years that we could use it.

It also provided values for Tribal lands in addition to allotted lands, you know, updated annually and the land doesn't change, the values do. We did provide land sale value to them for use in the Program
because without moving it forward, you know, last year we lost 137 of our members, resulted in 104 probate hearings, so those numbers are going to go up again.

The other thing that we, you know, we need is access to TAAMS. You know, we've been trying for three years to get access to TAAMS. My staff from land operations, we've all got our cards for access, but, you know, we're trying to find out where the training is, you know. We can't get at the Agency. We haven't heard it at the regional office.

You know, another thing to consider is an exchange Program amongst members enrolled in other reservations that don't live on that reservation. So a lot of our members may own land at Fort Peck, Cheyenne River, aren't able to use it and may not be able to pass it on because of inheritance laws. You know, so some exchange program amongst the members working with the BIA, OST, or whatever, to accomplish that, you know, so those people that may be able to exchange with someone living at Standing Rock or another reservation.

Thank you.

(Applause.)
MR. CLAW: (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN.) My name is Dennis Claw. I come out of Many Farms Chapter. I have a position held by me for the resource back in 1996 from my own chapter. I did my resource -- natural resource livestock and all that. And I came out here on behalf of my family. My wife is a part of -- a member of the allotment, so it seems I do have some interest in it.

And I appreciate what you said, Leonard, about on behalf of your people, and I thank you for it. And members that's sitting there and helping -- giving a helping hand to the people here, and I appreciate that. And I'd like to say a few words to my people here out of my own reservation. And I'm a salt clan born for Zuni Tachine (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN) lending you out a helping hand to buy land -- buy the land back (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN).

Back in '96, I terminated my office as a grazing official. (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN). We don't know how to work wills, and we don't understand wills, and which is a thing that brings an argument among the family (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN). When it comes to a land
issue, and land use permit, and (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN).

I was an instrument for my own people and tried to bring some understanding for the harsh arguments over the family, within the family over the property matters, you know, understanding the wills and what -- which way wills go, you know. I come out of a -- seven members out of a family, and one sister, and six of us were brothers, and that's the way we were brought up.

And I for one and my family don't understand what "will" is, you know, so I have no shame to express myself that way. So I feel that way about the same -- all of you, you know.

And then as I have looked back into the farming, ranching, and I have looked into it myself personally (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN). There's empty corrals, and dried up farms, and all these, and it brings you embarrassment as a representative from certain chapters. And that's what bring me shame, you know. And since there's a helping hand here to assist you, and I'm just thinking that this would be utilized in certain means and certain ways so you could improve
your living standards.

(NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN.) One question that I have in mind here is talking about appraisals and if the land user or landowner hires his own appraiser, can it be done. That's what I need to know, and I'm sure some of these people would like to hire their own land appraisers. And I know that they have that in mind, too, to question that.

And on the other hand, I know that the Indians are phasing out. And I for one, I have a family with a -- have different origins, you know, have Russians, and have Italians, and have different Tribes, you know. That's what I have in my grandkids. I don't have any Navajos. And I'm pretty sure that we're going to be depleted within about the next five generations or so.

So anything that comes before us, who are we really doing it for, or are we just doing it for the government, because there ain't going to be no more Navajos, no more Indians, you know. It'll be just nothing but white, blacks, or some different origins. That's the way I see it.

And all these casinos that we really fought for,
that we really brought it out here for purpose of revenue, that's not going to be ours. That's going to belong to the government. That's the way I feel about it. Some different Japanese or different nationality is going to own it, and rent it, and run it, and they're going to do it, and they're going to rent it, and they're going to pay the rent to the government. That's what they're going to do, and we'll be living in some other place.

Our grandkids is going to be living in some other place. That's the way I look at it. I already realize and visualize that thing, and that's the way it's going to be. So thinking about these things and thinking about all the practice and the understanding of (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN). Fluency, that's one thing that possibly we need to stick with that. (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN). But myself (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN). Thank for understanding. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. TOVEY: Good afternoon. My name is Bill Tovey. I'm the director of economic development for the Umatilla Tribes in Pendleton, Oregon. I'm also
treasurer for the Indian Land -- or Indian Land Tenure Foundation. Just a couple of comments.

We went through the Buy-Back Program. It was fairly successful with Umatilla. I see Iris over there. Appraisals was one issue that a lot of our Tribal members wanted appraisals, and it was very difficult for them to get appraisals. They wanted to see it on paper, those costs.

A couple other areas that could help out in the future is transparency between the Tribe and the Buy-Back Program. I think one of the gentlemen talked about TAAMS, getting on TAAMS. We compacted our bureau, and so we got bureau TAAMS, but we don't have the Buy-Back TAAMS, the module there. And so, that's -- what we'd have to do is get the information and just hand input it to figure out what our percentages were, what we're buying on those parcels.

I think another area would be that getting information real time, usually we'd wait every week, and then we'd get an update of how much -- how many offers we accepted, how much we purchased, what our ceiling was. And so, if Tribes had that directly
1 rather than having it come, you know, every week or
every other week, that would be great. Thank you.

   (Applause.)

MR. SCOTT: Good afternoon. I'd like to thank the
panel for being here for this Listening Session. I
can't say welcome to this country. I'm not from here.
I'm from Oregon, so I wouldn't be able to welcome you
here, but I'm glad you're here for this session.

And Warm Springs -- actually my name is Randy
Scott. I'm the Land Services administrator for the
Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. And we do have an
active land purchase program which I administer the
funds for it. And part of what we're -- we purchased
are when a non-member heir in probate inherits, we have
inheritance that we have, it's a public law, that we
automatically purchase the non-member heirs. And so,
that money comes out of that land purchase budget.

And we also -- we administer the affairs for our
public domain allotments. Outside of the boundaries of
the reservation, there's tracts. We have tracts in the
Delts, Hood River, John Day, and Condon. I don't have
specific numbers, but we have tracts in those areas.
We administer the grazing leases, agriculture leases on these properties, and also there are owners on these lands. The original treaty that Warm Springs signed was giving up 11 million acres in exchange for 650,000 acres, which made up our boundary of the reservation. But in that treaty, also we kept ceded rights, hunting and fishing, gathering berries, digging roots, all usual and accustomed places. That treaty was ratified by Congress.

And so, these properties that are outside of the boundaries of the reservation are still within the ceded lands, which we administer. The Tribes issue hunting tags, deer hunting, issue a ceded area tag, and the State of Oregon recognizes that tag as a legal hunting tag where they can move outside the reservation and hunt deer using that tag. There's fishing rights that we have within the ceded lands.

And this Program, as was explained earlier -- early on, when the Program was beginning that the ceded -- I mean, the public domain allotments would not be considered, but we had to prove that we do have jurisdiction. Yes, we do. We manage those lands. We
issue leases. I know where these lands are at. As Land Services, I go out there. We post signs on the -- on the boundary. This is Federal trust land, no trespassing. And only those that -- the farmers or the ranchers, they can be on there, but the general public can't enter those lands. So we do recognize and we hold jurisdiction over those lands.

And so, we're still not on the list. We sent in a letter of interest in 2014. That letter was accepted. We will -- the Tribes do intend to send another letter before the March 11th deadline. But we would also like to petition that the public domain allotments be included. A lot of the owners are non-Tribal members.

These lands are located near the Columbia River. Warm Springs has jurisdiction up to the south of the Columbia River. The Yakama has jurisdiction north of the river, the Umatilla on the -- in the east, all within our own -- their own boundaries.

And as the treaties were signed, the main intent was to move the Indian population away from this commerce area, so that's how we moved down to Central Oregon. But there were peoples that refused to move,
and these people were issued these allotments. Now, they're the public domain allotments outside the boundaries of the reservation. But being that they're in close proximity to the Columbia River, a lot of these owners are not Warm Springs Tribal members. They're Umatilla members. They're Yakama members. And when they pass on, then we automatically make those purchases, so we buy land outside of the boundary of our reservation consolidating our Tribal ownership.

So these are the -- these are the criteria, I believe, to justify to include the public domain allotments when considering Warm Springs for entering the Program. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. GROUNDS: Thank you. We have time for one or two more comments.

MR. BEGAYE: Ya'at 'eeh. (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN.) Russell Begay. (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN.) I'm the president of the Navajo Nation, and appreciate you all being here, and the opportunity for Tribal leaders to address you all.

And so, some of the concerns that we have as a
nation, our biggest concern is we want every allottee that wants to sell their land to get a good price for the land because they've been working it for most of their lives and maybe all of their lives, been passed down from their grandparents. And so, there's -- for them there's a lot of value.

And if you go to places like Oklahoma, land sale is constant. People are always selling land within 25 miles range of where an allotted land may be, or in other places where -- like California. And so, you can get a really good high price for land that you want to sell if you're an allottee in places like Oklahoma, California, and other places.

But out here on the nation, Navajo Nation, it's that you don't see that constant overturning of ownership of land. So you go 25 miles out, and the value of those in our, we believe, is equal to many of the land that are valued at higher level in places like Oklahoma, California, other places because they put as much effort into it. They value those land. They've made huge improvements on it.

And so, the appraisal system needs to be more
fair, because the selling of and the buying of land is
very limited, and because nobody wants to sell their
lands in Navajo way. (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN.) You
know, it's sacred. Land is sacred, so why should we --
why should we sell our land because it's sacred to us.
We hold it for our children, our grandchildren.

And so, the appraisal will not be as high for the
same amount of land as you get for in Oklahoma and
other places. So what I'm saying is that you need to
take that into consideration is that maybe on the
nation the value may be very low in comparison to other
places, but we believe that those values should be
higher, not because -- because we don't -- we don't --
we don't sell our land. We hold on to it. So you're
going to see very limited land exchange through the
buying and selling of it. That's one.

Then number two is we have, a lot of non-Navajo
landowners are people that have moved in, and they're
ranchers, and land has been given to railroad, and to
other non-Navajos. And so, we have them all among us.
So when we talk about land consolidation, we believe
that it needs to be amended so that we can buy land
back that were given to ranchers -- white ranchers, to
railroads, even to schools in large amount.

And so, as -- when that -- if that doesn't happen,
then our land will never be consolidated. It will
always be fractionated. So to be able to buy our land
back -- some of them were taken by counties. Others
were taken by cities. Others were taken by Federal
government, BLM. And they took Navajo land, and we
want those back. We want to buy those back using these
dollars that's been set aside in settlement.

And then other one I want to say is the first part
of it we -- our allottees did get monies back through
the settlement. And, but I think it needs to be
revisited to make sure that they got adequate
compensation from the Cobell settlement because some of
them may feel, well, maybe they didn't pay me enough.
Maybe I should've gotten more from that settlement set
aside from the Land Buy-Back Program. And so, I think
that needs to be revisited to make sure that every
Navajo that was paid out of the Cobell settlement, make
sure they got the right amount that they're owed
through their settlement.
And so, going back to Land Buy-Back is there needs to be more options available to our people. For example, if they want to sell that land, they want to make sure that they can remain there, they can -- they will be given automatic home site leases, grazing leases, and those -- maybe business site leases if they want to pursue that so that they don't sell, and then the government will come back and say, well, now you need to move because it no longer belongs to you. They want to remain there on location.

So the leasing part should be automatic is that if I sell my allotted land and I've lived there, I want to hold it for my children, I should be able to get automatically the minute I sell it. But right behind there should be another paper where I signed that says this is a home site lease for Russell Begaye, or this is a home site lease for this person, or a grazing lease, or a business site lease.

And those should be automatic because the people that live there and they want to live there and hold those land for their children, they should get that land automatically and immediately, not wait through
the whole process of clearances. And sometimes it takes two or three years to get a lease, but those should be automatic for people that are selling their allotted land.

So those are just some issues, but the thing is people that want to sell their land, they want to make sure they get the right price for it and want to be compensated properly.

So, again, thank you for coming to Navajo Country.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. GROUNDS: Thank you, President Begaye, and thank you all for your feedback. Mr. Deputy Secretary, I want to turn it to you for any final words.

DEPUTY SECRETARY CONNOR: It helps if I talk into the microphone.

I very much appreciate the input that we've received this afternoon. Very thoughtful. Covered a lot of the issues that I think we've been discussing amongst ourselves. And so, we have work to do.

I think one of the overall goals that I've noted that we've talked about and I know that continues to
evolve is the level of cooperation, and transparency, and information sharing between what we have as the Land Buy-Back Program and the Tribal governments. And I think we've incrementally increased the amount of information sharing and that transparency. My sense is that we need to continue that dialogue and move forward with that particularly.

I think this was a good presentation about the valuation that we do and the process that we go through in the appraisal process. But my sense is, particularly in Navajo because of some of the unique circumstances that exist, we'll have to continue to have that conversation and explain those -- the foundation for the valuation process. I sense that's going to be very important as we move forward. So we are committed to doing that.

With respect to Tribal priorities, that is the value of the cooperative agreement, the MOAs that we have had with Tribal governments. I think it's incredibly important that we work in partnership with the Tribal governments to do outreach to the landowners themselves, and the Tribal governments have to be
integral to that process. That's one aspect of it, but also implementing the Program in a way that recognizes those Tribal priorities I think has been our goal.

I think it's a very good point, Mr. Tsosie, that you raised and that process. I think that's where, whether it be -- I think Assistant Secretary Roberts raised this in his comments about some of the successful initiatives that have been implemented at certain locations. And that's really key to not only understand the economic development activities or the cultural protection activities that the Tribes want to do, but then working with the community of landowners where that might be the most possible, and maybe prioritize where we focus our resources so we can make offers in the most efficient manner possible. I think we will continue to do that. That is a very high priority for the Program overall.

The issue of non-eligible lands, I think there have been some policy cuts that we've made over time. I think and I hope, having coming in as Deputy Secretary after the Program had gotten up and going, I think there was a thoughtful discussion in moving
forward. And some of that was some of those policy
decisions were made evident through our Status Reports,
et cetera. But I think this has been a good dialogue
to know that in some of those areas, we need to also
make clear some of those decisions that we've made, the
basis for it. Some of them, particularly the mineral
interest one, I think, is one that it's going to be
tough to do something different at this point in time.

With tracts with improvements, we have done things
differently with public domain allotments. I think
that's part of the dialogue that we wanted to have
through this discussion. And so, that input is very
helpful as we move forward because we will be making
more decisions through the implementation process as we
move forward.

Overall I think that's just a sampling of the
issues that I heard. I think we will be continuing to
work through the liaisons the cooperative agreement
process. I have to say we have had a lot of talented
people come through this Program, and the Land Buy-Back
Program staff has been terrific in getting this thing
up and going. We keep getting these people taken away
from us because they are talented, but we keep finding more talented people, and we're very fortunate to have done that.

So we're going to keep the process moving, having these high-level discussions, having good interactions with respect to the policy decisions that we make as we go forward, and then relying on the staff to do the day-to-day work to increase transparency, the foundation for making valuation decisions, and for implementing the Program at specific locations. So I appreciate the opportunity, the input. A lot to think about the over the next couple of months with respect to this Program.

MR. LOGAN: Yes. Well, once again I'm glad that the OST is a partner in the Land Buy-Back Program. I'm happy that we have so many of our staff here in the audience.

My message is pretty short and sweet. I cannot stress to the people in the audience and to the Tribal leaders to please take advantage of the financial education programs that make up the Land Buy-Back Program, those that we provide at the OST and those in
the -- that are provided by other groups.

Financial education is key here. We have liquidity events going on throughout Indian Country, and not only financial education in terms of personal finances, but also estate planning. I think someone mentioned about wills, and please take advantage of wills clinics in your communities. We don't -- we want to make sure people make wise, informed decisions about their personal finances with respect to these liquidity events, so the proceeds from sale.

Thank you, mm-hmm.

MR. ROBERTS: Thanks. I just want to touch upon a couple of topics that a number of the speakers this afternoon raised, and that is information sharing with the Tribal governments. And I think -- you know, I know the Buy-Back Program has worked really hard to share that information because, quite frankly, I think there's not enough money from the Cobell settlement itself to purchase all of the fractionated interests out there if we had a willing seller -- if everyone was a willing seller.

And I think we've been hearing from Tribal leaders
about what is the next step when -- you know, what do we -- what do we look at in terms of after this Cobell implementation is over, is there another Cobell 2.0 where it looks at where Congress passes legislation to carry on the Program once we've paid out all of the money to those individuals that do want to sell.

We're also looking at, as most everyone knows in the room, the Obama Administration has been all about restoring Tribal homelands. And so, some of the comments, for example, from Mr. Smith earlier from Standing Rock about how do we utilize this information. How do we provide this information to Tribes to facilitate exchanges that may not be under the Buy-Back Program itself, but it's still restoring Tribal homelands to Tribes through exchanges or through at least Tribal members that are living in that area. And so, really appreciated those comments.

And then finally, I know President Begaye mentioned, you know, what about the situation where an individual sells their interests. Can they lease those lands? Can they automatically get a lease agreement? And, you know, off the top of my head the thought is,
well, these are now returned to Tribal trusts, and so,
you know, we would be looking to Tribal law on how
those lands would be used once the Tribe has reacquired
those interests.

And so, I appreciate everyone's comments today. I
hope that this was -- I know that this was a helpful
session for us. I hope that all of the people in the
hallway and this session today, it was helpful for you
all to learn more about the Buy-Back Program. And I
really appreciate your interest in the Program.

MR. MCCLANAHAN: I just want to say thank you to
all the Tribal leaders and the individual landowners
that came today. We had an awful lot of Navajo folks
here, and I'm glad to see that. We also had a number
of leaders from other Tribal nations and landowners
here, too, and I'm glad to see that.

We have additional folks here for another hour at
least at the resource tables, including information on
"whereabouts unknown" owners, which, as Councilman
Tsosie pointed out, an important part of the Program.
We work with each Tribal nation to share landowner name
and address information, and we really look to the
Tribes to help us locate landowners so that we can get them an offer. So we have information at the tables about "whereabouts unknown." And the Office of Special Trustee, their local field staff are available to help locate people. That's a main part of their mission.

The other thing I want to note is our video, again, will be online. We also know that Tribes are preparing their own videos. The Navajo Nation has done a video, and they have done that in the Navajo language. We will make that available on our website. Shoshone Bannock, Standing Rock, other Tribes through our cooperative agreements have done their own videos as well. So there's a lot of resources out there for Tribes and landowners to access.

Again, I just want to express my appreciation to everyone that came here, and I hope you have a safe trip back to wherever you're going.

We have one more comment, I guess. Sir?

MALE SPEAKER: Testing one, two, three. Well, good afternoon all of you people here, everybody. And I'm from reservation, too -- reservation side and the Tribal side. It's the area where I'm from.
So I'm kind of concerned about the allotment. I don't know they feel about it -- about the allotment. It's just not too -- not 20 miles this way and not 30 miles that way. It's just a very little area. That one-quarter section is just for one horse. There's one cow. Maybe at least three goats, horse, sheep, something like that.

At this time, I have a kind of concern about it. And I wonder how would our grandparent, our nollie sides, and our late father, mom, they're not here. They were the boss. They owned a area. But nowadays they don't really herd sheep no more. They're all in town working there just like me. So I guess that's just the -- some people might say that they just work at the lands, and they're in town, boogie woogie there and here. So that's my very concern.

So this is the mostly on the eastern portion of Navajo Nations. The western portion is that reservation. I think I'm the only one from there. How many are from reservations? Let's see hand. Oh, another one. We're just two team here. What about this side?
So some of us, we're using the reservation side and the area that we pay for yearly per so many miles this way and that way. So this is what happens. We're concerned about it just like somebody says, right? What happen if this happen, what happen then? So right now, what are we saying we Navajos are sitting here and listening. What is in our mind? That's my questions. They have a good idea, but I think we're going to pay more.

That's my thing here say with Tribal leaders when you're sitting there. Is he gone? So I'm not talking against him. I'm just -- I guess they already approved something for this area. They're good areas. We all maybe walk down there, and take pictures, and send it to New York, to Obama, let him take look at it. But Obama is good friend of mine. So this, I'm very concerned about it.

What do we feel about a reservation and -- or allotment (NATIVE LANGUAGE SPOKEN). So, and, Leonard, what is our Tribal leader's concern about this situation here? That the plans, what they have, are we saying yes and getting the money, and what do we do
with that money as they go to Tribal leaders over there
and get more boogie woogie thing. I'm just teasing
you, Leonard. You always tease me, that's why.
So that's where my concern is. So I think I'm
going back to reservation. I live in town myself. We
work there. So I may be pretty close to 30 years now
today. I was boogie woogeying here to learn more about
the things that they're talking about it, so we decided
to come down. And we got here. I went to school here
just couple -- maybe three or four yards away from
here. Actually I went to school -- finished school.
So this is my concern. We used to have elderly,
the ladies and the mens. We don't have those anymore.
They usually really want -- don't want to change
something like this. And if they come back, what would
we tell them? So that's the question that I wanted to
tell all of these Navajo just sitting there. I don't
know what their thinking is. I don't know what they're
going to say.

But I think I'm going back to White Rock and Lake
Valley informed about this. Lake Valley is on the
agenda here. I mean, and unless -- nobody is here, so
I guess they're representing two chapters here. I'm not representing. I'm just got here on my own so to find out what sort of situation with all the land back and reservation, and also on the Checkerboard area. We call it Checkerboard area. That's where we pay for the area to use it. So I think a lot of these people are from eastern portion of the reservation. So that's my concern.

And for your -- you said do you want to get paid, and some of us already paying for it on the Checkerboard side. So is it going to increase according to what animals we're going to put there. So that's my concern.

And right now, I don't think people, we're not aware of it, and also on the reservation side, some of them live on the reservation side. They move out on the Checkerboard side, half a year this side, half a year this side. So they transport their livestock like that. So that's my very concern.

What would I tell when I get back to White Rock and they have a chapter meeting? Lake Valley. Lake Valley is listed, but nobody is here from there. So I
think -- I don't know. I really don't know.

So I appreciate for your concern your side, and also you keep saying about the Navajo Nation back there. There's only one council that I see. I don't know what their plan is now at this time. So I'm just kind of -- I really don't know where we're heading, but I don't -- I think so you have a good idea to get this area is what I'm saying.

Now, I appreciate it. Thank you very much, and God bless you.

MR. MCCLANAHAN: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. ARAGON: (Off audio.) Hi. My name is Liz Aragon. I'm from the Laguna Reservation, and I have a few questions to ask.

I was wondering that once they sell the -- people sell their property, can the Tribe turn around and sell it back to non-Indians or the government take over it, and we're going to have smaller land? And then my other question is will this affect my social security? If I'm on social security, will it affect it being that if we sell the land, the large allotment? And do
I have to pay taxes on it, and is it going to affect my -- the healthcare also?

And other thing is the reason why I would like to sell my allotment is so I could remodel my house to get it to -- weatherize it, put windows and central heat and stuff like that. I can't get a loan in the city because I don't own the land. I don't own the house. I live on the reservation. That's the reason I would like to -- I would like to sell my lot. What I was wondering was, you know, these are the things that I'm worried about is about taxes and also my social security because I own a lot.

And another thing (inaudible). Why do they give it -- since this is out of a settlement, why can't they put it in a trust fund for the people and then use that money to help with the education for their children or to build their schools, schools fixed up, or for the people to remodel their houses, too. There's some houses that need to have new windows put in them because it's not -- it's not the energy efficient.

And I was thinking why should the money go back to the government when that's from a settlement, that it
was left over, they could divide among the people that
do have this land (inaudible).

MR. MCCLANAHAN: Sure. So thank you all. I know
that we're running a little bit over. I'm going to try
to address some of your questions. But as we explained
before as part of this Listening Session, we are going
to address your questions in writing as well so that
you have something, and that'll be reported out in
writing. But let me try to answer a couple of your
questions very briefly as we're wrapping up here.

In terms of if you decide to sell your interests,
that is -- that is in trust for the Tribe. It would
take an act of Congress to take that out of trust, so
the Tribe couldn't decide to just sell it. I mean, it
would literally take Congress to pass a law to take it
out of trust to sell. So it's with the Tribe forever.

In terms of the funds that you would receive for a
sale, they would be -- they would be deposited right
into your IIM account, so it would be treated the same
way as any other funds you already get in your account
itself. And so, I don't -- I don't think that those
are taxed, but I don't want to be a tax attorney today
either. So I think that they are -- but we can provide these answers to you.

And then the last issue with -- about the funds, I mean, we are already -- we're a few years into this -- into this Program. We've already paid out nearly half the funds to individuals. And so, as I said earlier, we don't expect any funds to go back to Congress at all. In fact, we think we're going to be in a situation where Tribal leadership is and the Department, you know, are going to be having to have these conversations. And I think members of Congress are going to look at, you know, how do we expand this Program to move forward because I don't think we're going to have any funds going back to Congress or to the -- to the Treasury. So thank you.

MS. GROUNDS: Thank you for your feedback, and we're going to end the session so that landowners have an opportunity to talk to us outside at the Listening Session.

MR. MCCLANAHAN: One more.

MS. GARCIA: Okay, I'll close it down here. Good afternoon, members on the panel from the Federal
government, and members of the different Tribes that are represented, Tribal leaders all the way down to landowners that are here today. My name is Martha Garcia. I'm from Ramah Navajo, and many of you probably have heard about Ramah Navajo by now. And we're here again today.

We've been attending from Ramah Navajo, myself, and staff members, and other Tribal leaders, in the past to these Listening Sessions. And we're pretty much aware of the Cobell issues and the Land consolidation Program, and then now it's the Land Buy-Back Program. And we have made comments, but we have never received feedback, and I submitted a written document to you again.

So we would like to hear and continue to work with you. And we would like to continue to work with our Tribal leaders, as Mr. Tsosie had mentioned here, that there are some concerns and issues that we need to resolve among the three communities that are outside the other land of the Navajo Nation. And we will continue to do that.

But our concerns are still -- remains the same,
and we want to continue to work with you to resolve those as we have expressed in the past, and we would like to hear from that. We have been very fortunate that we have been very fortunate that we have been able to contract many of our Federal programs, including realty. And through those programs we have been working with our community members and giving them the information that's needed for them to start working to avoid fractionation of their land in the future. And many have stepped up within the past two years to avoid that by going into estate planning, and will writing, and all that. And we were able to do that because we had contracted the realty program.

But when it comes down to working with the Land Buy-Back Program, it was very unfortunate that we were not informed because we have our Program, and we needed to coordinate with the people that are working under the Navajo Nation Land Buy-Back Program. It wasn't until after the fact that we started hearing about how things may be done. And we had a lot of questions, and we've tried to work through those, and there are questions by community members that still needs to be
addressed at this time.

So I just ask for your cooperation and work with us very closely as well as the Navajo Nation. Mr. Tsosie, if you can carry that back for us. And then, Mr. Begaye, if you're still here, we'd like to continue to work with you on this very important issue. Thank you.

MR. MCCLANAHAN: Thank you.

(Applause.)

FEMALE SPEAKER: (Off audio.) I have only one thing to say real quick. We were not asked to do interpreting, and I feel a little bit injustice to the people that were here earlier this morning. All the Navajo people left because they were limited on their English speaking. I mean, they've gone to school and they understand some of it, but they weren't able to --

I don't think they have the confidence to really come up and say things in the way that they --

I sat by a couple of people and talked to them, and they just didn't have the confidence to really talk, and they felt like they had a lot of questions. And so, I really feel like the next time you have
interpreters, if you could get interpreting equipment
so that they can pick it up like the United Nations
where you have interpreters, and then people that need
it can put it on their head, because there was a lot of
questions on appraisal, why there's percentage on it,
and others wanted to say something, and I was trying to
encourage them to go up there. I'll stand by them and
interpret for them. And they were -- they didn't feel
like doing it.

So we sat here and we tried to talk to people,
but, I mean, you know, I think it's just better having
interpreting equipment when you hire interpreters. And
I just feel like it was an injustice today to the
people that were here this morning.

MR. MCCLANAHAN: Thank you. Thank you for your --
yeah, it's excellent feedback. Thank you.

FEMALE SPEAKER: I mean, you guys are the top
head --

MR. MCCLANAHAN: Yeah, thank you.

FEMALE SPEAKER: -- echelon, so make that
accessible to the people, and I think that's really
important.
MR. MCCLANAHAN: Okay.

FEMALE SPEAKER: You want, you know, people to make comments. That's important because a lot of them, you know, they were just like, okay, we're being talked to, but they're not listening to us, so.

MR. MCCLANAHAN: All right, thank you.

FEMALE SPEAKER: So that's all.

MR. MCCLANAHAN: Okay.

(Applause.)

MS. GROUNDS: Thank you. The resource tables will be open for the next hour, so 5:30. We have a ton of food left over, so feel free to take some with you as you head home. And also, if you parked in the Convention Center parking lot and picked up a white parking ticket, stop at the welcome table and get a parking validation. That's great. Thank you.

(Whereupon, at 4:43 p.m., the meeting was adjourned.)