



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

JAN 30 2015

The Honorable W. Ron Allen
Chairman, DOI Self-Governance Advisory Committee
P.O. Box 1734
McAlester, Oklahoma 74501

Dear Mr. Allen:

Thank you for your letter dated July 1, 2014, on behalf of the Self-Governance Advisory Committee (SGAC) concerning equal participation in the distribution of resources dedicated to the Tiwahe Initiative to Self-Governance Tribes.

Supporting Indian families and ensuring public safety are top priorities for the President and this Administration. As you are all too aware, children living in poverty are far more likely to be exposed to violence and psychological trauma at home and in the surrounding community. Indian communities experience high rates of poverty, substance abuse, suicide, and violent crime.

You will be please to know that the enacted 2015 budget included a comprehensive and integrated approach to these interrelated problems faced by Indian communities. An additional \$11.6 million was incorporated for social services, child welfare, and job training programs to support the Tiwahe Initiative to provide culturally appropriate services with the goal of empowering individuals and families by promoting health education, family stability, and strong tribal communities. In its initial phase, the Tiwahe Initiative will expand the Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) capacity in those programs that address those social services with regard to Indian children and family issues, as well as job training needs.

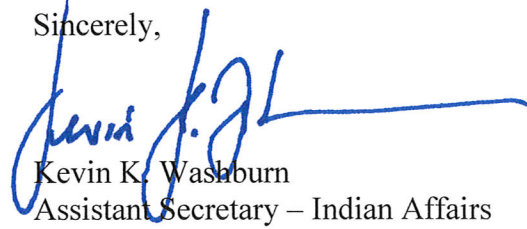
I understand your concern that Self-Governance Tribes be treated equitably and allowed to participate in the distribution of resources dedicated to this Initiative in the same manner as those tribes that participate in self-determination contracting. I share in your view that Self-Governance Tribes are well-situated to help the Federal Government achieve its goals for the Tiwahe Initiative. An understanding of unique cultural and social needs from community to community is a valuable resource in effectively achieving the goals set forth in the Initiative.

 T.S.
2/19/15

I assure you that Indian Affairs will treat Self-Governance Tribes fairly with respect to the execution of the Tiwahe Initiative.

Thank you for your letter regarding Self-Governance Tribes' equitable participation in the Tiwahe Initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kevin K. Washburn", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Kevin K. Washburn
Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs