



Self-Governance Communication & Education Tribal Consortium

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February 27, 2017

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, 9th Floor
Washington, DC 20590-9898

RE: Appoint a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Tribal Government Affairs, in the Office of the Secretary

Dear Secretary Chao:

On behalf of the Self-Governance Communication and Education Tribal Consortium (SGCETC), an intertribal organization comprised of all Self-Governance Tribes, I am requesting that you fill the position of Deputy Assistant Secretary for Tribal Government Affairs in the Office of the Secretary, in the Department of Transportation (DOT) to continue the important work that will support Tribal transit, economic and infrastructure development for Self-Governance Tribes.

Since 1988, the SGCETC has worked to ensure that the Self-Governance authority is implemented in the Department of the Interior – Indian Affairs and the Department of Health and Human Services - Indian Health Service.¹ In 2015 this authority was expanded to DOT and we have enjoyed working with the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Tribal Government Affairs to begin the process of developing a proposed rule for this authority.

The DOT is in the midst of a congressionally mandated negotiated rulemaking process to provide rules for the Tribal Transportation Self-Governance Program (TTSGP) at the DOT, established by the FAST Act. 23 U.S.C. § 207. Per statute, the TTSGP Negotiated Rulemaking Committee has a statutory deadline of August 2017 to complete its initial proposed rule. The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Tribal Government Affairs is a member of that committee, and has played a vital role


¹ Currently, of the 567 Federally-recognized Tribes in the United States, there are 250 Self-Governance Tribes in the Department of the Interior and 360 Self-Governance Tribes in the Department of Health and Human Services (some of these Tribes participate in Self-Governance in both Departments).

in the negotiations since work began in August 2016. SGCETC also works closely with the rulemaking committee to assist it in drafting these rules.

The Negotiated Rulemaking Committee has been working very diligently and up until the cancellation of the scheduled meeting in January 2017, due to the transition in the Administration, has generated good momentum that would enable it to finish the first stage of the rulemaking on schedule. Most recently we received notice that the monthly meeting scheduled for March 21-23, 2017 in Scottsdale, Arizona has also been cancelled. We sincerely hope that a new Deputy Assistant Secretary will be named by the time the next meeting is scheduled, possibly in April, to allow the Negotiated Rulemaking Committee to resume its important work and meet the statutory deadline.

We are happy to assist you in your work as Secretary of Transportation in any way that we can, and thank you for your ongoing support of Tribal Self-Governance. If you would like to discuss this request in further detail, please contact me at (360) 681-4621 or email rallen@jamestowntribe.org.

Sincerely,



W. Ron Allen
Chairman, SGCETC Board of Directors
Tribal Chairman/CEO, Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe

Cc: SGCETC Board of Directors
The Honorable Kay Rhoads, Tribal Co-Chair, TTSGP Negotiated Rulemaking Committee and Principal Chief, Sac and Fox Nation
The Honorable Joe Garcia, Tribal Co-Chair, TTSGP Negotiated Rulemaking Committee and Head Councilman, Ohkay Owingeh