

# DOI SELF-GOVERNANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

c/o Self-Governance Communication and Education

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June 17, 2019

The Honorable Tara Mac Lean Sweeney  
Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs  
Office of the Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Room 4660 Main Interior Building  
1849 C Street  
Washington, DC 20240

## **RE: Urge your Attendance and Participation at the SGAC Meetings and Support for the Indian Programs Advanced Appropriations Act (IPAAA)**

Dear Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Sweeney:

On behalf of the Self-Governance Advisory Committee (SGAC), I write to reiterate our request that you attend and participate in our SGAC meetings. While we value the presence of your esteemed senior staff we cannot stress enough how critical your participation at these meetings is to Tribal Leadership and the mission of the SGAC. SGAC is successful because the committee is co-chaired by both a Tribal leader and the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. Without active participation from both co-chairs, it sends a message, whether intended or not, that the meetings are not high priority. Tribal beliefs and values include an emphasis on face-to-face interaction to build trust and mutual understanding, as well as, a real sense of a shared mission.

These meetings are an integral part of the Self-Governance government-to-government relationship. The SGAC was formally sanctioned by the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs in 1998 and continues to serve a vital role in effectuating the policy recommendations to implement the Tribal Self-Governance recommendations and authorities within the Department of the Interior under Title IV of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA) P.L. 93-638 as amended. These meetings serve as a forum for strengthening our Tribal/Federal partnership and addressing issues of mutual concern, resolving issues in dispute, building trust and respect and strengthening communication.

A summary of the issues and action items discussed during the April 2019 meeting is attached for your review and consideration. We would like to draw your attention to one issue that is of great importance to us, the *Indian Programs Advanced Appropriations Act (IPAAA)*. This legislation would protect essential funding for programs and services for American Indians/Alaska Natives (AI/AN) from the detrimental impacts of budgetary uncertainty caused by government shutdowns, Continuing Resolutions (CRs), and other budgetary anomalies by authorizing Advanced Appropriations for the Bureau of Indian

Affairs (BIA) and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). Advanced appropriations for Tribal programs and services is vital to ensure that the lives of our citizens and welfare of our communities are not held hostage by self-serving political agendas that have real life consequences.

Self-Governance Tribes bore the brunt of the recent thirty-five day government shutdown because there were no funds being distributed via compacts for emergency services, such as, police, fire, first responders and other critical government services. While the loss of life and serious injury were of grave concern to us, so too, were our Treaty rights and trust resources whose protection and sustainability has a direct impact on the survival of our way of life and Tribal culture. We can no longer rely on contingency plans to avert the dire impacts of the abrupt disruption of core governmental functions; we need your support to take steps to ensure that our trust and treaty rights are protected. The IPAAA will provide long term budget certainty and insulate Indian programs and services from unrelated political battles. We urge you to send official correspondence to Congress sanctioning your support for this legislation.

We will continue to work closely with the Office of Self-Governance and your scheduler to identify opportunities to engage with you face-to-face so that we can solidify our partnership and work towards achieving comprehensive solutions to our various issues. If you have any questions and/or concerns I can be reached via email at [rallen@jamestowntribe.org](mailto:rallen@jamestowntribe.org) or by phone 206-369-6699.

Sincerely,



W. Ron Allen, Tribal Chairman/CEO  
Jamestown S'Klallam Tribes and  
Chairman, DOI-SGAC

Cc: SGAC and Technical Workgroup Members  
Sharee Freeman, Director, Office of Self-Governance