



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON DC 20420

December 9, 2009

Dear Tribal Leader:

The White House Tribal Nations Conference on November 5, 2009 was an historic event. During the conference, President Obama signed a Memorandum on Tribal Consultation, pronouncing tribal consultations a "critical ingredient of a sound and productive federal-tribal relationship". The memorandum directed all federal agencies to develop a plan of action to implement President Clinton's Executive Order 13175 on "Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments" within ninety days.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) would appreciate your help developing VA's action plan. The first step is to provide your thoughts and perspectives on the following issues to VA's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA) by Wednesday, December 23, 2009. Comments can be emailed, faxed, or sent by postal service. Contact information is included in an enclosure accompanying this letter.

- What actions or events should trigger consultation;
- What procedures best ensure meaningful, timely consultation;
- Who should participate in consultation;
- How should follow up after consultation be documented and communicated; and
- When are alternatives to consultation, such as conferences, workshops sessions or task forces, appropriate to improve communication and coordination with tribal nations.

IGA will incorporate your suggestions in a draft action plan. The plan will be mailed to you the week of January 4, 2010. Please provide written comment on the draft action plan to IGA no later than Wednesday, January 18th. If you prefer to provide your feedback by telephone, VA will host several conference calls to solicit your suggestions. The conference call schedule is outlined in the enclosure accompanying this letter. We have also enclosed President Obama's Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Executive Order 13175.

Please contact my office if you need additional information or have any comments or concerns. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "EMILY SMITH". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Emily Smith

Enclosures (3)

Department of Veterans Affairs
Consultation Participant Information

Send formal written comments by e-mail, fax or postal service to VA's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs:

E-mail: tribalgovernmentconsultation@va.gov

Fax: 202-273-5716

Postal service to:

Emily Smith
Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (075)
810 Vermont Ave. N.W.
Washington, DC 20420

Conference Call Schedule: The conference call number is 800-767-1750. If you plan to participate, please e-mail tribalgovernmentconsultation@va.gov or call (202) 461-7400 for the conference call access code.

January 18, 2010	10 AM EST
January 19, 2010	1 PM EST
January 20, 2010	4 PM EST

For questions, please contact the Department of Veterans Affairs Intergovernmental Affairs Office at (202)- 461-7400. Additional information will be forthcoming and will be posted as it becomes available at www.va.gov.