



Department of the Interior's Federal Indian Trust Responsibility



The Department of the Interior is legally obligated to ensure that American Indian and Alaska Native resources and lands are properly managed, protected and conserved. Interior, as trustee for the tribes, has an affirmative duty to protect tribal health and safety, to fulfill all treaty and statutory obligations and to exercise utmost good faith in all dealings with the tribes.

In recognition of the importance of the Department's trust responsibilities, the Secretary has established policies and procedures for the Departmental bureaus and offices to follow.

Each Departmental bureau and office must:

- ✦ Establish procedures to ensure that impacts of their activities or proposals on Indian trust resources are explicitly addressed in planning, decision and operational documents;
- ✦ Remove any obstacles that may detrimentally affect or impede working directly and effectively with tribal government(s);
- ✦ Identify and describe the potential impacts of their actions on Indian trust resources;
- ✦ Explain how they will ensure that there will be no detrimental affects on tribal rights, Indian trust resources, and health and safety;
- ✦ Explain and describe how the decision will be consistent with the Department's Indian trust responsibility; and
- ✦ Engage in meaningful consultation with tribal government(s) when impacts on Indian trust resources, tribal rights, and tribal health and safety are identified. Consultations must be open and candid with respect for the sovereign status of American Indian tribal governments.

Departmental Manual Part 512, Chapter 2
*Departmental Responsibilities
for Indian Trust Resources*

For a complete text contact:

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