

October 11, 2012

President John Yellow Bird-Steele
P.O. Box 2070
Pine Ridge, SD. 57770

Dear President Yellow Bird-Steele,

The mission of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC or the Commission) is to license and regulate the civilian use of radioactive materials in the United States in order to protect public health and safety, promote common defense and security, and protect the environment.

Recently, a heightened interest in uranium recovery development and new nuclear reactor construction has resulted in a significant increase in the number and complexity of consultations between the NRC and Native American tribes. As a result, the Commission directed the NRC staff to develop a proposed policy statement and protocol on NRC consultations with Native American tribes. As a part of these efforts, the NRC produced a draft "Tribal Protocol Manual", dated September 2012 which is enclosed with this letter.

The NRC would appreciate your comments on the enclosed manual in addition to suggestions on the development of a proposed tribal policy statement. The questions below are intended to assist the NRC in developing an effective tribal consultation policy statement. Respondents are not limited to these questions and are encouraged to submit any comments or feedback they think would benefit the NRC in developing a tribal consultation policy statement.

- How can the NRC strengthen government-to-government relationships with Native American tribes?
- What practices have the NRC or other Federal agencies employed that have been effective in identifying tribal interests and resolving tribal concerns about proposed agency actions?
- Are there specific Tribal Policy Statements in other Federal agencies that could serve as a starting point for NRC's efforts?
- What unique tribal issues should the NRC be aware of as a non-landholding¹, regulatory agency that issues licenses under the Atomic Energy Act?

Please submit any comments that you may have by April 1, 2013. Instructions on submitting comments can be found in the "Accessing Information and Submitting Comments" section of the enclosed *Federal Register* notice or online at www.nrc.gov where a graphic displaying the Tribal Protocol Manual will be prominently displayed for a period of time, after which it will be moved to the "Spotlight" section on the NRC home page. We hope that you find the enclosures to be informative and useful.

¹ A landholding agency, such as the Bureau of Land Management, holds or controls land as part of carrying out its agency mission.

Finally, please inform the NRC of your Tribe's preferred method of communication (e.g., e-mail, postal mail, etc.) and points of contact for NRC staff. NRC staff and I will participate in the National Congress of American Indians' 69th Annual Convention and Marketplace in Sacramento, CA from October 22-26, 2012. Please stop by booth 513 if you would like to submit comments on the Manual, provide suggestions for the development of the Tribal Policy Statement or learn of other NRC activities. If you wish to obtain additional information about the NRC, or any particular NRC licensing or regulatory action, please contact Stuart Easson of the Intergovernmental Liaison Branch, at 301-415-5134, or by e-mail at Tribal_Outreach.Resource@nrc.gov.

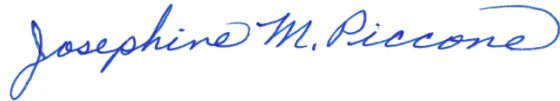
Sincerely,



Josephine M. Piccone, Director
Director of Intergovernmental Liaison
and Rulemaking
Office of Federal and State Materials
and Management Programs

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Sincerely,



Josephine M. Piccone, Director
Director of Intergovernmental Liaison
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