

# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

**AUG 31 2015**

Ms. Teresa M. Romero  
31411 La Matanza Street, Suite A  
San Juan Capistrano, California 92675

Dear Ms. Romero:

By letter dated January 14, 2014, the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs granted the suspension that you requested to the consideration of issues referred by the Interior Board of Indian Appeals (IBIA) that were subsequently referred by Secretary Sally Jewell for consideration. That letter provided that within 90 days of publication of the finalized Part 83 regulations in the Federal Register, which occurred on July 1, 2015, you must file a letter instructing us whether we should proceed with that referral process based on those original grounds outlined by the IBIA and referred by the Secretary, or whether any changes in the regulations merit consideration of additional grounds. That 90 day period expires on September 29, 2015. A copy of that letter is enclosed.

As noted, on July 1, 2015, the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs issued a final rule that revised the regulations for “Federal Acknowledgment of American Indian Tribes” (80 FR 37862-37895). Enclosed is a copy of these regulations that became effective on July 31, 2015.

The 2015 regulations provide that by August 31, 2015, the Office of Federal Acknowledgment (OFA) will:

notify each petitioner that has submitted a complete documented petition but has not yet received a final agency decision that it must proceed under these revised regulations unless it chooses by September 29, 2015, to complete the petitioning process under the previous version of the acknowledgment regulations as published in 25 CFR part 83, revised as of April 1, 1994. (§ 83.7(b)).

Your group has submitted a complete documented petition and has not yet received a final agency decision. Therefore, pursuant to § 83.7(b), you need to notify this office *in writing, signed by the named leader of the group or its governing body*, whether you choose to proceed under the 2015 regulations or the 1994 regulations. Enclosed is a sample letter for your consideration. Your letter must be postmarked on or before September 29, 2015. **If your letter is not postmarked on or before September 29, 2015, your petition will proceed under the enclosed regulations.**



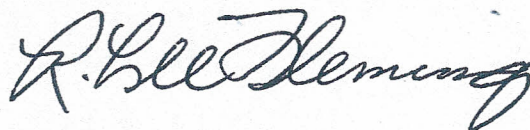
If you proceed under the 2015 regulations, you do not need to submit a new documented petition, but you may supplement the original petition (§ 83.7(c)). OFA will begin review of documented petitions in the order of their receipt (§ 83.23(a)). If you respond to this notice that you wish to proceed under the 2015 regulations and that you do not seek to supplement the original petition, we intend to maintain the current order of review of pending petitions to the extent possible. If you respond that you wish to proceed under the 2015 regulations and that you wish to supplement your petition, the order of review will be based on the date that OFA receives the supplemented petition. In the event that you choose to proceed under the 2015 regulations, we invite your views regarding whether to proceed with review under Phase I, § 83.26(a), or whether another phase of review under the regulations is more appropriate. If you choose to continue under the 1994 regulations, however, the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs will issue a decision on the grounds referred by the Secretary within 120 days of receipt of your letter, as provided in the January 14, 2014 letter.

The regulations require the petitioner to provide a redacted version of the petition removing any privacy or other information protected under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (§ 83.21(b)). If you choose to supplement your original petition, please redact or remove from your supplement any privacy information or other information protected under the FOIA and provide us a copy of those pages without the redactions (§ 83.21(b)). OFA will redact protected information in any prior submissions.

Privacy information is information that affects *living* individuals and includes names, birth dates, family relationships, blood quantum, medical or personnel matters, home addresses, or other personal information that is not generally known. In addition to privacy information, information that is protected by FOIA that may be in your petition includes certain financial information, such as bank accounts or privileged communications with a lawyer. If you believe there is no protected information in your submission, please let us know.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Office of Federal Acknowledgment, Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, 1951 Constitution Avenue, N.W., MS-34B-SIB, Washington, D.C. 20240, or call (202) 513-7650.

Sincerely,



Director, Office of Federal Acknowledgment

Enclosures