



COALITION OF LARGE TRIBES

Blackfeet Nation • Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe • Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Indian Reservation of Oregon
Crow Nation • Eastern Shoshone Tribe • Fort Belknap Indian Community • Mandan, Hidatsa & Arikara Nation
Muscogee (Creek) Nation • Navajo Nation • Northern Arapaho Tribe • Oglala Sioux Tribe • Rosebud Sioux Tribe
San Carlos Apache Tribe • Shoshone-Bannock Tribes • Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation
Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Tribe • Spokane Tribe • Ute Indian Tribe • Ute Mountain Ute Tribe • Walker River Paiute Tribe

February 4, 2025

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Chairman
Committee on Indian Affairs
838 Seate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Lee, Chairman
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
363 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Brian Schatz, Vice Chairman
Committee on Indian Affairs
838 Seate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich, Ranking
Member
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski, Chairman Lee, Vice Chairman Schatz and Ranking Member Heinrich,

I write as Chairman of the Coalition of Large Tribes (COLT)—an intertribal organization representing the interests of the more than 50 tribes with reservations of 100,000 acres or more, encompassing more than 95% of the Indian Country lands and more than half the Native American population—to deliver COLT’s enthusiastic endorsement of Mr. William “Billy” Kirkland’s nomination to serve as the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs. A citizen of the Navajo Nation, Billy is one of our own and has lived and breathed the joys and challenges of large land base tribes his entire life. From the cradle, he has learned to respect and honor Treaties as the supreme law of the land. From our perspective, there is no better nominee to serve Indian Country in this pivotal role.

The Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs is the person who will support Secretary Burgum as the chief steward of the trust relationship between the United States and Indian tribes. When Billy served in a similar role in the first Trump White House team, Billy was a tremendous representative for the President in engaging in government-to-government relations with tribes. COLT tribal leaders dealt with him often. He was accessible. He was helpful. He was a good listener. Importantly, he was also always able to connect us with the right folks across the federal government to help us advocate for our tribes’ priorities, significantly on public safety, healthcare and economic development. He clearly understands and respects tribal sovereignty and Treaties. He has spent his career as a public servant, working for Indian Country and other poor communities. One issue to which he has given a great deal of his time, and which COLT also strongly supports as a priority, is religious freedom. Having an Assistant Secretary with such deep experience on protecting sacred sites and tribal cultural practices would be tremendous.



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COLT is thrilled to see Billy nominated to the Secretary's Office. He is someone in whom we have complete trust and confidence. We do not expect him to always agree with every position a tribe or tribes might advance, but we know he will listen and be ready to offer compromises and creative solutions to do absolutely the best he can for tribes.

We also appreciate his professional and leadership experience. Like Secretary Burgum, Billy too knows technology and he knows energy. He has lived tribal economic development efforts and understands navigating federal permitting challenges. Billy is always about lifting up others. His experience over a broad range of industries and financing deals is a rare and valuable set of skills. He is exactly the kind of leader tribes need at the Interior Department.

Billy Kirkland has COLT's highest recommendation and endorsement to serve as Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs.

Very Respectfully,

DocuSigned by:
Chairman J. Garret Renville
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J. Garret Renville, COLT Chairman,
Chairman of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate of the Lake Traverse
Reservation, South Dakota