

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 11AM ET, Tuesday - Sept 14, 2021

Tribal Organizations Pen Letter to Secretary Haaland Demanding Proper Consultation on Wolf Protections

Navajo Nation, Association of American Indian Affairs, and organizations representing hundreds of tribes sign letter demanding emergency relisting of Gray Wolves

Washington, D.C.,-- Sept 14, 2021-- Today, leaders representing nearly 200 Tribal Nations sent a letter to Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, the first Indigenous cabinet member, urging her to act on an emergency petition to restore wolves to the Endangered Species List. Countless Indigenous communities view the wolf as a sacred creature. The Trump administration's decision to delist wolves in 2020 infringed upon Tribal sovereignty and culture, and the Biden administration has indicated that it will allow the Trump decision to stand.

The letter, [which can be read here](#), demands that Secretary Haaland honor the federal government's treaty responsibilities towards Tribal Nations, which includes consulting Native leaders on relisting and delisting measures that are tied to Indigenous land-based religion and culture. As the letter explains, neither President Trump nor President Biden have consulted Indigenous representatives on the topic of wolf protections, despite the importance of the wolf to Native cultures. The Department of the Interior requires tribal consultation, as does Biden's Executive Order 13175.

The letter asks Secretary Haaland to honor these commitments to Tribal nations by signing an emergency wolf relisting measure which would grant temporary protections to wolves for 240 days. As the letter states, "The failure to take action here, thus ignoring the concerns of tribal nations, would signal to Indian Country that President Biden's promises to Indian Country are hollow." The letter also requests a meeting with Secretary Haaland to discuss these matters.

Harold Frazier, Chairman of the Cheyenne River Sioux, said "For far too long, the federal government has ignored its treaty and trust obligations to Tribal Nations. Delisting the wolf-- a creature critical to many Indigenous cultures and religious practices--without tribal consultation was just the most recent a relentless pattern of oppression, assimilation, and relocation. The Biden administration has given lip service to questions of Tribal sovereignty, with an executive order mandating Tribal consultation and the appointment of the first Indigenous cabinet secretary. We urge the administration to honor its commitment by adopting the emergency wolf relisting measure so that sovereign Tribal governments can be consulted in the question of permanent relisting or delisting."

President Andy Werk, Jr. of the Ft. Belknap Indian Community Council added, "By delisting the Wolf without the consent and consultation of Tribal Nations, the federal government continued a pattern of ignoring Tribal sovereignty, skipping Tribal consultation when convenient for the trustee, and violating sacred treaty and trust obligations. We ask that Secretary Haaland act on our request to meet with her, and honor treaty obligations towards Tribal Nations by granting emergency protection for the Wolf."

Cecelia Rose LaPointe, Founder and Executive Director of the Native Justice Coalition, said, “Had the federal government conferred with Tribal leaders on the decision to delist the wolf, they would have heard that the wolf is sacred, figuring prominently in our creation stories, religious traditions, and cultural rituals. Treaty and trust obligations mandate that the government give us a seat at the table when deciding policies that impact our lives and cultures. In order to allow for a just and inclusive process of Tribal consultation, the government must authorize emergency wolf protections.”

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