



United States
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Council for Native American Farming and Ranching
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Mary Kate: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome. Thank you for joining in today's Council for Native American Farming and Ranching. With that, I will turn the call over to Leslie Wheelock, director of Tribal Relations.

Leslie Wheelock: Good afternoon, everybody. This is Leslie Wheelock, director of the Office of Tribal Relations at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. I want to welcome everyone to the Council for Native American Farming and Ranching teleconference meeting. Today is Thursday, September the 1st. We apologize for our meeting getting started a little bit late. We have been working to ensure that we have council members available and online. We've got some folks who are taking care of business and fighting wildfires and so forth. People will be joining us throughout this call and will be announced as they join us.

I'm going to begin with a roll call of our current members. Mark Wadsworth. Mark Wadsworth is currently not online. Porter Holder. Porter Holder is currently not online. Angela Peter. Angela Peter is currently not online. Derrick Lente. Derrick Lente is currently not online. Edward Sosa. Edward Sosa is

currently not online. Gilbert Harrison. Gilbert Harrison is currently not online. Jason Wheeler?

Jason Wheeler: Here.

Leslie Wheelock: Jason Wheeler is present. Jerry McPeak.

Jerry McPeak: Here.

Leslie Wheelock: Jerry McPeak is present. Joe Leonard.

Carl-Martin Ruiz: Carl-Martin Ruiz for Dr. Leonard.

Leslie Wheelock: Carl-Martin Ruiz filling in for Dr. Leonard.

Jeff Knishkowy: And Jeff Knishkowy for Dr. Leonard.

Leslie Wheelock: Leslie Wheelock is present. Mary Ann Thompson.

Mary Ann Thompson: Present.

Leslie Wheelock: Sarah Vogel. Sarah Vogel not currently online. Tawney Brunsch?

Tawney Brunsch: Present.

Leslie Wheelock: Tawney Brunsch is present. Val Dolcini?

Female Voice: We're Val's delegate.

Leslie Wheelock: We have a delegate for FSA.

Jim Radintz: This is Jim Radintz. I'm here.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you, Jim. Jim Radintz for Val Dolcini online. That's it on the roll call. I want to welcome our council members who have joined us. As I mentioned, we have

council members who will be calling in who are currently on other business.

A review of our agenda. This is a fairly quick agenda. This is a meeting that was requested by the council in order to review the recommendations of this council that came out of our last meeting or that were begun at our last meeting to get those recommendations ready for the secretary through you. We did not have enough time to conclude all of those recommendations during the meeting and so have established this meeting as the time to do that.

Prior to going through a working session on those recommendations, we will have a public comment period during which the public will be invited to comment from 1:30 until 2:30 this afternoon. We have a review of meeting materials that have been distributed to our council members and Josiah Griffin will be reviewing those right now.

Josiah Griffin: Good afternoon, everyone. This is Josiah Griffin. I am the acting designated federal officer on behalf of the Council for Native American Farming and Ranching. I distributed, as Leslie mentioned, proposed recommendations that were made both from the council's previous meetings and also in response to the three subcommittees' meetings through all of the council members. You will find that information in the proposed or draft letter to the Secretary of Agriculture. I ask that

when we review the language for any of these conversations or recommendations that we read out as a matter of public record both the recommendation itself and the rationale. You'll find the recommendation in bold and the rationale in plain print. Does anyone have any questions?

Leslie Wheelock: So I think with that, Mary Kate, how close are we to 1:30? We've got about five minutes, it looks like.

Mary Kate: Yes.

Leslie Wheelock: Any questions? Anybody want to chat about anything for five minutes? Josiah, did you send this out as a separate email that people will be looking for?

Josiah Griffin: So, as a matter of records, I have forwarded out the draft letter to the secretary in the same email that I have sent out on the CNAFR member teleconference line information and agenda. I have reported that out to everyone within the past I would say 30 minutes. So if you didn't see it the first time, it should be right at the top of your inbox.

Leslie Wheelock: At this point, I think we're just waiting for the clock to wind down in preparation for the public comment period.

Mary Kate: Leslie, this is Mary Kate. I just want to let you know there has been another speaker who has joined us on our private speaker line here.

Sarah Vogel: That would be me, Sarah Vogel, calling from North Dakota.

Mary Kate: Hi, Sarah. How are you today?

Sarah Vogel: Good. Really good.

Mary Kate: Excellent.

Leslie Wheelock: Terrific. Sarah, that's Mary Kate. She is our moderator for today. And with the addition of Sarah Vogel, we have a quorum. Thank you for joining us, Sarah.

Sarah Vogel: Thank you.

Leslie Wheelock: We're about to begin the public comment period. That should begin at 1:30. Mary Kate, you may have additional council members to join during this period. Please interrupt us to let us know that they are online.

Mary Kate: I will do so.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you so much.

Mary Kate: I'd like to give instructions to your audience members now on how they would let us know if they'd like to make a question, or ask a question, or make a comment.

Leslie Wheelock: That would be great. Please proceed.

Mary Kate: Simply press #2, that's #2 on your telephone keypad to let us know that you'd like to speak. You will

receive a notification once your line has been opened. At that time, you could help us by stating your name and then also including your tribal affiliation or your organization name. It is 30 minutes past the hour so, Leslie, is there anything in particular you need to say to officially start the public comment section?

Leslie Wheelock: I do. I would like to acknowledge that we do have people on the line. I invite them to join us in this meeting, share their views, opinions, questions, and comments and thank them very much. Thank you all very much for joining us. Thank you.

Mary Kate: So again, if you'd like to say anything, simply press #2 on your telephone. We do have someone waiting to make a comment. I'm going to go ahead and open their line. Caller, please go ahead. Your line is now open.

Kenneth Pin: Can everybody hear me?

Mary Kate: Yes, we can.

Kenneth Pin: Good morning and good afternoon. My name is Kenneth Pin. I am the tribal administrator for the Pueblo of Cochiti in New Mexico. Prior to me coming here, I was a contractor with the Institute of American Indian Arts which received funding from USDA to do outreach and education to farmers and ranchers to the pueblos and tribes in New Mexico. And I guess the focus of this call-in is to talk about barriers

of participation for the tribes for USDA programs. Is that right?

Leslie Wheelock: That would be very helpful to us, yes. Thank you.

Kenneth Pin: There were several factors that I encountered when I would meet with the -- I think I actually visited probably 12 of the 19 pueblos. What I heard most often was the overall application for various programs and the three that we were focusing on were the value added, the small business developments, and the rural energy - the REAP program - applicants found the application very cumbersome and very difficult to get through. The match requirements were excessive especially for the energy program which required applicants to put up 75 percent to get 25 percent.

I think, overall, USDA is very inflexible in terms of their application and other programs where they're dealings. I've been working with pueblos in New Mexico for the last 16 years. I'm talking about specifically the ag programs and not so much really utilities or the housing or community facilities. Especially the agricultural programs, USDA is very inflexible in that they want pueblos and tribal members to be able to figure out and work with the rules and regulations of the USDA rather than the USDA trying to contour or cater their applications for pueblo members.

Generally speaking, we didn't get very much participation because of some of these issues that I just raised - the match, the application, and the demands of the application, and the amount of information they require. A lot of these programs didn't quite fit with some of the pueblos because of the requirements of USDA. That's just the start. I got a few other things, but that's just the start.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you, Mr. Pin. We would like to hear a few other things. At this point, I'd like to ask the council whether anyone has questions on those first set of issues that Mr. Pin has raised that you'd like to address to him.

Sarah Vogel: This is Sarah Vogel. I would just like to encourage the gentleman who just spoke to provide us with his contact information so that there can be a dialogue on that. Because I think you've just touched the sources of these issues and you probably have a great deal more information to share with either the staff of OTR or the council.

Josiah Griffin: Hi, Sarah. This is Josiah Griffin. Mr. Pin, on top of being acting designated federal officer for the council, I help to coordinate the program RH [phonetic] on behalf of the Office of Tribal Relations. If you don't mind, I would like to talk with you offline as well about how we can be

of additional assistance with working through these programs.
And I can provide you my email address if you're interested.

Kenneth Pin: Josiah, go right ahead. You can give me the email address. And then, if there aren't any other comments, I can go back to my other points.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, sir. Sir, if are you ready?

Kenneth Pin: Yeah. Go ahead.

Josiah Griffin: My email is josiah.griffin@osec.usda.gov and you can also find our contact information at usda.gov/otr.

Kenneth Pin: Okay, I got it. josiah@osec.usda.gov.

Josiah Griffin: It is josiah.griffin.

Kenneth Pin: Okay. I got it. Some of the pueblos to the north - I'm talking about Taos, Picuris, and Nambé and Ohkay Owingeh - they have bison. They have bison herds. And one of the regulations they run into was that bison is considered an exotic species so it requires a special inspection certification by USDA. Some of the pueblos actually slaughter on tribal land. But if they were to sell any of their bison meat off the res, they would have to get the special USDA inspection certification which is \$57 an hour. Cattle is not considered exotic but bison is even though bison is indigenous to this country, so that rule is kind of backwards. I think if that inspection rule was eliminated, you would see a lot more raising of herds of bison

and especially selling to more of the general public markets in New Mexico.

Right now all of the bison that's being sold in the State of New Mexico is slaughtered in Colorado and then shipped down. But you have a lot of bison operations in the state, especially amongst the pueblos up north. So that indirectly is an issue with the programs. I think if that hurdle is eliminated, you would actually get more bison cultivation and then possibly more participation in USDA programs.

Leslie Wheelock: Sir, this is Leslie Wheelock at USDA, director of Tribal Relations. There's a very long and complicated history as to how the determination of the exotic species was made. We will be happy to take this recommendation to the organization that works on it, which is the Food Safety and Inspection Service. They have had this request and recommendation at other times and we're happy to enhance that request. Thank you. If you have other comments.

Kenneth Pin: Just one more. This came up in talking with a young lady who was doing planning for the Pueblo of Sandia. We would certainly like to see local growers, pueblo and tribal growers who do community farms or hoop houses, to be able to supply their own programs at certain meals. Like Head Start, like the senior program in schools. I don't know whether it's an organic certification requirement or what. Certainly local

farmers cannot even supply their own tribal or pueblo programs of food that can be served as part of the meal program which is a healthy, nutritious way to eat. It would help local farmers. It's an economic development strategy.

So right now these programs buy from those big purveyors like Nobel, and Sysco, and Ben E. Keith, and Shamrock and those guys. They opened up the #10 can and dumped out the green beans and don't rinse it and you get high salt content, when we have all these fresh vegetables available through the local farmers. So I don't know if that's an organic certification issue or what, but certainly children and seniors and everybody else that lives on the res will have a healthier lifestyle if some of the local foods that are grown right here would be able to be served through those programs.

Leslie Wheelock: Sir, if you would check with some planner that you were talking with, if you could share that person's contact information with Josiah as well, we'd be happy to get back in touch with him or her. There are programs that can buy locally-produced fresh fruits and vegetables. And there are other programs that we can put her in touch with, as well as getting in touch with some of the organizations there in New Mexico that work with that kind of a service already to help bridge that knowledge across to her and the farmers and

agriculture folks that he or she is working with. We'd be delighted to do that.

Kenneth Pin: Great. Thank you.

Leslie Wheelock: You're very welcome. Thank you. Do we have other questions or comments from the caller?

Mary Kate: As a reminder, if you'd like to make comments or ask a question, simply press #2 on your telephone. Again, just press #2 on your telephone.

Jerry McPeak: So I can go, I still have to raise my hand, is that true?

Mary Kate: Yes, sir.

Jerry McPeak: This is Jerry McPeak from Creek Nation in Oklahoma and with CNAFR. I didn't catch the caller's name. But we are currently in Creek Nation attempting to establish our own processing plant to do some of the various things that you're talking about. We're a little more interested in mainline production, but at the same time we have a tribe in the northeastern part of Oklahoma who is having to go off their area to get their bison processed but not as far away as you guys have to go.

But we think that getting our own, making our own processing plant is a logical thing for us. It is a doable thing. I recognize our population density may be considerably greater than yours. It offers us some opportunities. But I

think too that that puts us in control of our own destiny by doing it ourselves with our own tribe and it is always possible. We're actually behind one authority going and so I also saw the profit for the tribe, too. But I sometimes think, we're talking about stuff determination, I sometimes think there are some other deals that we can do to help that.

On the other note, on the form you're talking about filling out, you're absolutely right. Those things are laborious and tedious. It's just boring always to hear when we talk about federal agents not being willing to come to the reservation or to the area. At the same time, we find other citizens who go to them. I'd be very interested. If you went to these people, if they wouldn't sit down with you to help you fill those things out, that would be very disappointing. If that were the case, I would certainly like to know if there was anyone who had attempted to do that or attempted to go where they were and sat down with them and filled out these forms because they are laborious. Thank you.

Mary Kate: Mr. Pin, your line is still unmuted, if you wanted to make any comments.

Kenneth Pin: Yeah. About the application, I know the state office in Albuquerque, the USDA state office, they have had workshops. They run through the application process and the application itself, but not to the point where they actually

help you fill out the application. That was one of the things that we were looking to possibly do through the contract work with the IAIA - Institute of American Indian Arts - and to start having more meetings locally from Taos Pueblo - which is the most northern pueblo - to Albuquerque which is about a two-and-three-quarter of an hour drive. If you make the round trip and stay for one hour at the workshop, that's your whole day. So a lot of these smaller pueblos don't make that trip. But we are looking at trying to do more local training.

As far as the processing plant, some of the pueblos out west of Albuquerque are going to have a lot of cattle. They've talked about that to try to get away from the large purveyor out here. I don't know if I should name them. I mean they supply a lot of the food for casinos, army bases, and schools. And because they are so large, they are able to handle the economies of scale. Some of the pueblos have talked about creating their own processing plant, but I think that cost is rather prohibitive.

What did happen is we had a local food co-op contact me and asked me about getting bison from one or two of the pueblos. They were offering to ship or transport, slaughter, package, and sell bison in their stores. They were going to try that as an experiment to see how much is the cost and also the profit margin. But they were willing to transport the animal about

maybe 125 to 150 miles, which can be a little scary with transporting bison that distance because the animals can be very unstable.

There was an effort here to do processing locally, which was something called a Mobile Matanza which was a mobile slaughter unit. But the Taos County Economic Development Corporation which owned it and ran it ran out of funding to keep it going. It costs about \$200,000 a year to maintain that operation. They processed bison, cattle, yak, sheep, and pig for a lot of the ranchers, not just pueblo or tribal ranchers up north but a lot of the ranchers up and around the Taos and north of Santa Fe area. But that mobile unit has been put away because of lack of funding.

Mary Kate: Mr. Pin, if I can interrupt you for just a second. I wanted to let the council members know there's another person who's just joined us on the speaker line. This is Mary Kate. I will be moderating today's event. Can you tell us your name, please?

Gilbert Harrison: Hello.

Mary Kate: Yes. Hello, sir or ma'am. Can you tell us your name please?

Gilbert Harrison: This is Gilbert Harrison.

Mary Kate: Hi, Gilbert. How are you today?

Gilbert Harrison: Fine. Sorry, I'm late.

Mary Kate: Got it. And to any of the other council members, I want to let you know that it seems that Leslie and Josiah have just dropped off for a minute. I anticipate that they'll call right back. They probably accidentally just hit their hang up button. But in the meantime, if anybody else wants to -- oh, I do see someone who just came back in. So let me just give them a second to listen to the announcements that you hear when you first join and hopefully they'll tell us when they're back in here. And welcome, Gilbert.

Gilbert Harrison: Okay. Thank you.

Mary Kate: Leslie and Josiah, is that you? Are you back online?

Josiah Griffin: Yes, we are. I apologize.

Mary Kate: That's okay. Just so you know, Gilbert Harrison has joined the line.

Leslie Wheelock: Welcome, Gilbert.

Gilbert Harrison: Hello, everybody.

Mary Kate: And Mr. Pin, I'm sorry to interrupt you. Please continue what you were saying.

Kenneth Pin: No. That's pretty much it. The cost of transporting animals is high. Some of the tribes that do have larger herds, they just end up selling it to this large purveyor or supplier of foods. So they're actually taken out of the processing process. They just sell the animals. But they talk

about having their own processing plant. That in itself is really a sovereignty issue, I would think, we have total control of your animals from start to finish.

Mary Kate: Jerry, anytime you want to say anything, you can go ahead. Your line is open.

Jerry McPeak: Okay. This is Jerry McPeak again. Sir, part of what you've talked about I appreciate and understand. I'm a cattle producer and very involved with production of our cattle here, of our own herd in the Creek Nation as well as my own. But also at the same time I think that sometimes, if it's not possible for us to do it even when there are maybe grants available, then it's a little illogical to ask some person who is not Indian or not a native or some group to finance something that's not going to be possible. So I think we have to look at whether or not this is a reasonable selection of a business to go into for us. If it can't be possible for us when we've got some grants and some, I'm not sure we can expect someone else to build it and do it when they've got to do it without anything else.

There is some self-determination for us, in my opinion, in some things that we do. I think sometimes we got to look at ourselves and say, hey, this is not a logical thing for us. Let's find another business to do that works. I know they recognize that. It sounds a little harsh, but that's actually

what we're doing here and we found a lot of tribes in Oklahoma. We think we're going to have less government participation programs in years to come so we look at businesses to see if they can stand alone and if they will function without any government help whatsoever. That is one of our criteria.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you, Jerry. Are there other comments or questions?

Mary Kate: And again, as a quick reminder, if you'd like to say something, please go ahead and press #2 on your telephone keypad.

Sarah Vogel: This is Sarah Vogel. I would like to ask Mr. Pin or others from OTR, whether the agencies at USDA who have been doing these webinars and advertising them well but then the people have to travel to where the offices of USDA are for the training, whether they have done much with the online training where it's possible with modern technology - which is I think pretty affordable - so you can go through applications line-by-line and do mockups and have everybody be there in virtual time. Then possibly people wouldn't have to travel so far if they could get Internet access and a computer.

I think this is the way a lot of business is done nowadays, that people don't have to go to actual seminars. They just go to webinars. Does OTR know about how much this is going on within USDA now and whether there is an opportunity for doing

more of them in areas such as Arizona, New Mexico and so forth, Indian country?

Leslie Wheelock: This is Leslie Wheelock, director of the Office of Tribal Relations at USDA. We do work with the Intertribal Agriculture Council that is based in Montana. It has people throughout New Mexico and Arizona and other states on that kind of programming. That is a resource, that is those people are few and far in between. So it's a fair question.

One of the things that several of our USDA agencies had done over the last year was to establish webinars through IAC, that IAC monitors and manages, and makes sure that that information gets out through that network. It may not be the best known network, but those webinars have been provided by several different agencies of the department.

As Mr. Pin was saying and as you, Sarah, mentioned, it's not like sitting down and going through line-by-line with an individual an application. That usually is where our folks can benefit. However, it's I think more substantial in some cases than asking people, as you said, to drive to Albuquerque where they could get one hour and then necessarily drive home. It's a resource issue more than anything else. Our resources, in terms of the personnel out of USDA, have been cut rather significantly year-to-year over the last several years. With those cuts, we

lose the people who are on the ground working with our farmers and ranchers and others.

The program like the one that Mr. Pin was describing is established in order to help to fill those gaps. I really appreciate you, sir, calling us and letting us know that even though we do those programs, there are still significant barriers because even somebody out there whom USDA is looking to help provide those resources is trapped in terms of the amount of time and amount of travel that can be made in order to get that information out to people. So we do appreciate that.

If other folks who are on the line would like to describe some of the changes that have been made or some of the things and programs that you are seeing coming out of USDA that are addressing or attempting to address the concerns that people have with our application process, please feel free to jump in at this point - people who are on the council. Thank you.

Tawney Brunsch: This is Tawney Brunsch with Lakota Funds. Can you guys hear me okay?

Mary Kate: Yes, we can hear you.

Tawney Brunsch: Great. I get confused between mute and unmute sometimes. I'll just say that we have worked with our local USDA Office of Rural Development in Rapid City and tried to assist some of Lakota Funds' loan clients with that REAP application, for example. And I will say that I think that's

one recommendation that we could support, is that that local Rural Development offices continue to utilize some leverage in the relationships that they have with organizations like Lakota Funds or others and maybe to advise their other non-profits out there that have their feet on the ground and are the practitioners doing the work in the field with the people. That's a pretty good relationship to be promoting.

But the truth is that REAP application is almost too much for me to understand. By the time we were done with the application and supplying all of the supporting documentation, it was probably four inches tall. Honestly it was kind of overwhelming. So I think there needs to be some of both things going on. Yes, find a way to simplify the application. And then, yes, continue to promote those partnerships so you can connect your clients with some hands on assistance.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you, Tawney. Other council comments or questions?

Gilbert Harrison: Excuse me. This is Gil. Sorry to come in late. I have the agenda before me. Where are we at on the agenda?

Josiah Griffin: Hi, Gilbert. This is Josiah. We are currently in the public comment period which is designated to last from 1:30 to 2:30.

Gilbert Harrison: Okay. I'll just hold on then. Thank you.

Leslie Wheelock: Mary Kate, do we have any other callers who would like to continue?

Mary Kate: At this time no one else has raised their hand. But I will remind them that if you'd like to speak, please go ahead and press #2 on your phone and I'll open up your line.

Gilbert Harrison: Hello.

Mary Kate: Hello.

Gilbert Harrison: I'm still here.

Mary Kate: Oh, that's good. That's Gilbert. Gilbert, you are on the speaker line so your line will remain open the whole time. If you want to say something, you're welcome do so at any moment.

Gilbert Harrison: No. I'm okay. Thank you.

Mary Kate: And then if you're not speaking, I would just ask if you could just mute your own line. Either if you have a mute button on your phone. If you don't, you can press star 6. Star 6 will mute your line. And then if you want to just unmute it, you just push star 6 again.

Gilbert Harrison: Just to do what?

Mary Kate: To mute your own line so we don't hear background noise from your line.

Gilbert Harrison: I'm fine. I don't hear anything.

Mary Kate: We're hearing it from your line.

Gilbert Harrison: Hello?

Mary Kate: Hi. This is Mary Kate. Is this Tony? Tony?
Were you trying to say something, Tony?

Tony Kramer: No, I was not.

Mary Kate: And Leslie, your other audience members are very quiet. They're not raising their hands.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you, Mary Kate. For the council members who are on the line, we're going to give our folks in our public pool a few more minutes to talk to us. And if we have no more participation, we will proceed with our recommendation discussion. So please hold on just a few more minutes. Then we will go into the working session possibly a bit early, which we may need to interrupt if we have people who are calling in late during the time designated as the public comment period. Thank you. Mary Kate.

Mary Kate: Yes, Leslie.

Leslie Wheelock: This is Leslie Wheelock. If you'll keep track of anybody else who might call in the next 20-plus minutes, I would like to be respectful of our council members' time and go ahead and continue our meeting, please feel free to interrupt us if there is somebody calling in.

Mary Kate: Okay. Certainly. Thank you.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you very much. So council members, we're going to proceed with our working session. What we will be doing is reviewing subcommittee recommendations that have been put forward or that came out of our last meeting and that has been worked on subsequent to that meeting. I'm going to turn the session over at this point to Josiah Griffin to work through the recommendation section. Thank you.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Leslie. This is Josiah Griffin. For those council members who joined the line a little bit late, in one of the recent emails that I've sent to everyone alongside the agenda was a draft letter of our recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture. This letter was divided into the subcommittee sections. So we have Youth and Education, Land Management, and Credit and Credit Deserts. I would like to go through each of these individually and having the subcommittee leads step in.

What I will ask is that we read through, as I said, for public record each of these recommendations alongside their rationale. And as we read through those recommendations, open it up to the council for discussion and feedback, as well as finalization. Does anyone have any questions? Okay. So hearing none, I would like to turn it over to Jerry McPeak to begin the meeting through the first recommendation. I

understand that you had an additional recommendation that you'd like to propose to.

Jerry McPeak: Hello.

Mary Kate: Hi, Jerry. You can just go ahead at any time. Your line is always going to be open.

Jerry McPeak: Okay. It was kind of a pop quiz. I was digging down in my papers that were so efficient having here.

Josiah Griffin: Jerry, with your permission then, as you're working through that, I can go ahead and read out the first recommendation.

Jerry McPeak: Yeah. I think that I still got them but I don't want to hold out whatever you emailed [sounds like] to me anyhow.

Josiah Griffin: Yes, sir. So the first recommendation from the Youth and Education Subcommittee reads: The council recommends the secretary ask the Secretary of Education to provide a briefing to the council outlining how they, the Department of Education, support native youth through funding to Future Farmers of America or FFA programs in Indian country, as well as the Department of Education's decision-making process for incorporating new FFA locations.

The rationale for that recommendation reads: That the Department of Education oversees and administers the federal funding supporting chapters of FFA. However, there are very few

chapters and schools located in Indian country that are tribally-controlled schools or Bureau of Indian Education schools. The council requests a briefing from the Department of Education that identifies any statutory language that precludes education from working with any educational institutions located in Indian country. The council also seeks recommendations for where education's FFA resources could be leveraged with the USDA 1994 Tribal Land-Grant Colleges and Universities program.

So hearing both the recommendation and the rationale, Jerry, I'd like to turn that over to you and the council to begin discussing or providing feedback on that language.

Jerry McPeak: Can you all hear me? Hello?

Female Voice: I can hear you.

Jerry McPeak: Part of our discussion on our meeting out there in Idaho was that we could bring the youth up. We also felt like there was some responsibility which kind of fits to what was said before, some responsibility of the tribe themselves to have a commitment to want to make agriculture important. But on the BIA schools and the schools that we don't have total control of, it's our feeling that if you don't make agriculture programs available, then why would children be interested in agriculture. If you don't make basketball programs available, then there's not going to be as many kids on playgrounds playing basketball. If you don't make math

available, you would not make kids to be caring about a math book. So we think if we're really going to promote and believe in agriculture, that it should be made available in the schools. And that was the context of that recommendation. So we recommend it for approval, I guess. Is that the next step, Josiah?

Josiah Griffin: Yes, sir. So because the subcommittee brought that recommendation forward, I would just need someone to second the recommendation from the council at-large. Then at that point we can take a vote.

Sarah Vogel: This is Sarah. I'll second.

Leslie Wheelock: Sarah is seconding.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Sarah. So with Sarah's second, who do we have from the council in favor of this recommendation?

Mary Ann Thompson: Mary Thompson in favor.

Jerry McPeak: Jerry McPeak.

Sarah Vogel: Sarah Vogel.

Tawney Brunsch: Tawney Brunsch.

Gilbert Harrison: Gilbert Harrison.

Jeff Knishkowy: Jeff Knishkowy for Carl-Martin Ruiz and for Dr. Leonard.

Tony Kramer: Tony Kramer for Jason Wheeler.

Jim Radintz: Jim Radintz for Val Dolcini.

Josiah Griffin: So the motion passes. I will turn it over to the next recommendation which reads: The council recommends the secretary appoint a native youth who is currently enrolled in a college or a technical school or has less than ten years' experience in farming and ranching to provide the council with a younger generation perspective on the future of agriculture and ranching in Indian country.

The rationale reads: Millennials and the iGeneration communicate and operate in technological channels that are significantly different than previous generational cohorts. As a result, the USDA must amend their planning and communication and outreach strategies to ensure our future generations of farmers and ranchers know what opportunities, resources, and technical assistance is available for those beginning a new farming and ranching operation or poised to take over an existing operation. The youth often bring a fresh perspective and may more readily identify solutions to longstanding obstacles for new farmers and ranchers.

Jerry, did you have any feedback or additional information that you would like to provide on that recommendation?

Jerry McPeak: This is Jerry McPeak. That was pretty self-explanatory. We do have some concern from a legal standpoint on our ability to limit the selection of any one person to a certain category I guess with that. However, when we talk about

diversity, it's not like transparency. If you talk about transparency but they really don't want it, if we don't have diverse, part of our diverse coverage, at least we have these young people. And we probably wouldn't have made that if there weren't a couple of slots [sounds like] that were open that we could do. But there are so it's certainly not going to bump any lumps anywhere.

Mary Ann Thompson: I have question. Mary Thompson.

Jerry McPeak: Go for it Mary.

Mary Ann Thompson: Should they specifically say be a member of the Council for Native American Farmers and Ranchers?

Jerry McPeak: I asked about too, Mary. And maybe I'm not the right one. But when I asked about that, there were two open spaces already that had not been filled, so it would not replace anyone that was already in there. That's my understanding. Is that correct, Madam Director or Mr. Josiah?

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Jerry. So with the council membership ending in September 8th, we are starting a new slate for the 2016 to 2018 council period. Now, with that in mind and with one of our previous members resigning, we do have that additional space where no current member is seated. Now it would also be at that council's determination whether or not that member would be a full member or an ex officio non-voting member.

Leslie Wheelock: This is Leslie. We do have the ability on the council to appoint ex officio members. They do not have to be members of the federal family. So that if there is a desire to have someone represent, that is requested to be at the council meetings on a regular basis, we would have to find the funding for that. However, we do have within the setup of the council the ability to invite someone to sit with the council on a regular basis as an ex officio.

Sarah Vogel: This is Sarah. Is there a minimum age, maybe I missed it, for the Federal Advisory Committee Act in terms of members of a council like this?

Josiah Griffin: Sarah, this is Josiah. Not to my knowledge now. With someone who is under 18 years old, we would expect that they would need a chaperone.

Sarah Vogel: Yeah. It seems to me that we might be better off with someone who is 18 to 21 in that area. That certainly would roughly halve the age of our people on the council today. At least in my case that person would be less than one quarter of mileage. So I think if we get somebody in their early 20's who has some sort of career plans to get into agriculture and farming and ranching or in school for some more concrete plans, so maybe a high school student, those might be the best people because it is a two-year commitment also.

Jerry McPeak: This is Jerry McPeak again. I agree to some extent except that it's been my experience working with those college students that by the time they reach college age and they have declared that they wanted to be an agriculture major, they have enough interest in agriculture and pretty much know enough.

The problem I have with this a little bit is I think experience is the best teacher. I've got lots and lots of years of college, but the fact -- I like that we are trying to identify the age by talking about college or technical schools. What we're trying to do there was get to some age. Actually ten years' experience sounds rather extensive to me because that would almost get in your way from being someone that was really young. But my experience with those students is I think the kids that get out of high school, no, they don't get it. I'm telling you having worked with college kids that are just coming in.

I've worked with those campouts with 500 kids in the summertime. They're very, very disciplined but they don't get the gravity of the situation. I do think that they need to be past high school age to understand the gravity of it. And then too, the deal of bringing a chaperon with them obviously is not a very handy situation and it is expensive as well. But I could

sure see changing this to, if we could find some way to word it where I don't want college to be an exclusionary point.

Sarah Vogel: Is it legal for us to say younger than 30? I mean are we running into other issues?

Jerry McPeak: We kind of want to do that, but then we recognize the legality of that. And you're better at that than I am. But the legality of that, I think that's like requiring a certain group. But I'm not sure that we can -- you guys are more up on that than I am though.

Sarah Vogel: Well, one way of doing it might be to write it the way of -- like a person who has knowledge of challenges faced by younger entry level Native American farmers and ranchers. That would open it up to many people. That would certainly open it up to the native youth that you are after. And USDA is [indiscernible], but I like it because it gets across. But we want somebody with knowledge of native youth and that could mean you, Jerry. [Cross-talking]

Leslie Wheelock: Sarah, this is Leslie. Jerry and I could both qualify for that. I'm not sure about Jerry, but I know that I don't have the perspective.

Sarah Vogel: But when all the others are picking somebody for this spot, you're going to be looking at somebody that is themselves a young person. But we're not necessarily going awry of certain lines [sounds like]. I am an example. I think the

way the council membership was written, it had to be somebody with knowledge of Native American farming and ranching and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And because I have been a lawyer for Native American farmers and ranchers, I was able to squeak in. Thank you for that. But it wasn't restricted per se to only Native Americans which might have been objectionable. But we can write it in such a way that it isn't a problem.

Jeff Knishkowsky: This is Jeff Knishkowsky. Just two thoughts. I think from the language I've seen in either charters, I think I've seen it in charters and other groups before that might address this is where it says to provide the council with a younger generation's perspective. If it had the word to represent the perspective on the council, the word represent instead of provide, so then it would not only be providing it but it would actually have to be somebody who is affiliated with that perspective somehow or who first hand is a representative of that perspective.

The other comment I wanted to make on the language, and this may be similar to what the first commenter had said, was in the beginning where it says it recommends the secretary appoint a native youth. Originally, when I read it, I didn't realize it meant as some kind of member. So I think some kind of language that clarifies that it means appoint to the council in whatever capacity that might be.

Mary Kate: This is Mary Kate. I'm sorry to interrupt, Leslie, but we do have another person who has joined us on this line. I want to go ahead and give them the opportunity to tell us their name.

Katrina Thompson: It's Katrina Thompson [phonetic] back on, sorry.

Mary Kate: Thanks, Katrina.

Jerry McPeak: This is Jerry McPeak. Two responses. I agree with -- I didn't catch it who was speaking a while ago. But when they talked about CNI [phonetic], I'm very extraordinarily closely involved with youth every day so I have a perspective. But I do not in any way claim to be them. It's a little bit like being Indian or being black, you can tell it by understanding it. But until you're there, you really haven't done it. And even though I'm extremely close to these young people, I think the deal about perspective just doesn't go far enough when you're talking about that, the younger generation's perspective.

A couple of us or several of us have the perspective and we're very close to them, but we really like to know from inside their heart how they feel. I really think there's some merit to that. We're not trying to fill a position to write on a resume sometimes. We actually feel like that younger person generally sees something different. It's just like staying on the side of

the mountain. When you're at the bottom of the mountain or the top of the mountain you see it differently although it's all the same mountain.

So we really want to get that younger person. And we talked about perspective. We have perspective, but that isn't the same idea. The deal is that from a legal standpoint, we believe we need someone young on here if we can get them. I just don't know how you write that thing to get that.

Sarah Vogel: This is Sarah. One way of addressing this - because we have a gap right now and we're reopening the application process - is if we all focus on trying to find by -- did you say the 22nd is when the extended period to apply for the council? So to reach out, Jerry, you probably know some folks and other folks know other folks that could be on this council. I mean then they could start work right away. They wouldn't have to go to the secretary. We could just make sure or to try to get some good and qualified people who could be selected by the secretary.

Josiah Griffin: Sarah. This is Josiah. As a matter of clarification for public record and for those on the line, as a reminder, everyone's current council term ends on September 8. There is no inherent guarantee that the secretary will seek to reappoint or re-nominate all current council members. That is just something that I would like everyone to be mindful of in

the way that they're addressing this recommendation and the conversation at large.

Jerry McPeak: We totally get that. All of us absolutely get that. However, we're not going to cut the legs out from under someone who is staying. That's just the way it is. So if you'll understand where we're coming from and I assure you that's where we're all coming from. That may be a little plain spoken, but that's absolutely where we're coming from. So we understand it and we get it, but at the same time we're not going to take the responsibility of cutting someone out.

Sarah Vogel: If we can encourage in the meantime a young person to apply that's qualified, then this whole recommendation could be mooted.

Jeff Knishkowsky: This is Jeff. I suppose I should re-look at this. I was wondering if there is a Future Farmers of America or a comparable organization that has a Native American Indian or Alaska Native branch. That would be a place to do outreach to.

Jerry McPeak: No, there is not. The FFA has. We have lots of Native Americans in FFA in Oklahoma and in agriculture, but there is not a branch or anything remotely close to that.

Jeff Knishkowsky: There's not a comparable organization that's not FFA.

Sarah Vogel: This is Sarah Vogel. The Center for Indigenous Food and Agriculture Policy has that youth program in the summertime in the camp. I mean that's one area I see has a network of young people in a scholarship contest and so forth that many, many young people participate in. We've seen them. I see meetings where the council meets in conjunction with IAC, so I think there are places we can have outreach to.

Leslie Wheelock: This is Leslie. I have a request with regards to the language of this recommendation. This is because we don't know ever what kind of applications we're going to get. This would essentially put it back on, yes, to Tribal Relations to do some legwork on this, as well as our council members. But my suggestion is to say instead of the council recommends the secretary appoints a native youth and so forth, that the council recommends the secretary seeks to appoint a native youth. Even if we had native youth applications, it may be that this wouldn't work out or we might get a whole lot of great ones. But I think that asking the secretary to include that perspective or outreach to that age group within the application process is advisable in order to fulfill out what this recommendation is seeking to do. Thank you.

Jerry McPeak: This is Jerry McPeak. Yeah, I agree with you. I think there is recommend to the secretary to pick or the secretary consider a native youth. I like that language a whole

lot better. I'm not the lawyer in the bunch but I really think -- what is not ready that -- are you here that made this recommendation at our meeting? I guess not. Anyhow, the idea is great. The idea is good. Getting a perspective, that young person is really involved in agriculture is great. But, Leslie, I think you're right to reword that.

We don't get into the minutiae down here in the small print. The top part of it is in pretty good shape really - a younger generation perspective. I think that's what we want. I think of the minutiae down here -- I kind of liked that. I liked what you said and I'd like to make that change with you. You want the council to recommend to the secretary to consider.

Sarah Vogel: Seek to, I think it was.

Leslie Wheelock: Yeah, seek to is the language. I recommend it. It's a more active role. It actually puts back upon this office, the Office of Tribal Relations, as well as all of those organizations that helped us get the word out a desire. So it goes into language that we write. In particular we're seeking a young person, or young people, or youth who are in this group to help us with that age group, or to give us the perspective of that age group or whatever. But it gives us marching orders.

Jerry McPeak: I like that. Could you make that motion?

Leslie Wheelock: I can. This is Leslie. I am moving that we add to the first sentence the word 'seeks to' so that the first sentence reads: The council recommends the secretary seeks to appoint a native youth. I am not looking for other changes. Thank you.

Jerry McPeak: I second that motion.

Sarah Vogel: This is Sarah. I second that amendment or motion, whichever it was, from Leslie.

Jerry McPeak: Okay.

Josiah Griffin: Do we have a motion? Do we have a second? Do we have a motion to approve the recommendation as it stands with this addition?

Jeff Knishkowsky: I so move this adjustment.

Sarah Vogel: I second. This is Sarah.

Josiah Griffin: Okay. So those in favor.

Sarah Vogel: Aye.

Leslie Wheelock: I don't think there's anyone who's opposed.

Josiah Griffin: Is there anyone opposed? [Cross talking]

Jerry McPeak: If you're going to take that all at one motion, you're making the amendment and the total motion at the same time to accept -- Josiah, do you have to ask them to amend it and to accept the paragraph at the same time?

Josiah Griffin: Yes, sir.

Jerry McPeak: Okay. First off, I don't think that's Robert's Rules of Order. Second, if the answer is no, we're still on discussion. I would like again to put some onus back on ourselves and that the CNAFR should encourage young agriculturists to seek membership of the CNAFR. So if you're going to roll all those in one, then I would like to add that. Again, I think self-determination is something that we need to buy into. And you buy into it by example better than talking about it in my opinion. So are we going to take the amendment or are we going to take the whole thing?

Leslie Wheelock: Jerry, I think first of all you have to take the language amendment. A language amendment has been offered and seconded.

Jerry McPeak: Yeah. But the way it was stated by Josiah there, we were doing the amendment and the paragraph though.

Leslie Wheelock: I heard you. We're backtracking.

Jerry McPeak: Okay. So we are doing the --

Leslie Wheelock: We're going to take the language amendment. The language amendment that we're discussing is the one that has the words 'seeks to' to the first sentence. That language amendment I think was seconded by Sarah. Is there any discussion on just that language amendment? I'm going to make this vote simple. Are there any votes in opposition to making that language amendment?

Male Voice: No.

Leslie Wheelock: That language amendment carries unanimously. Jerry, do you want to make a second language amendment?

Jerry McPeak: Yes. Add to that we encourage CNAFR members to speak or encourage young agriculturists for new appointees.

Sarah Vogel: This is Sarah. Could I react to that?

Jerry McPeak: Sure.

Sarah Vogel: Yes. This is a letter to the secretary so I don't know that we need to put something that we're encouraging ourselves to do into a letter to the secretary. I think we should consider ourselves encouraged. I plan to send an email out this afternoon to various intended people I know of that know young people and encourage them. We have a window until the 22nd to get new council members, but I don't think we need to put anything directed to ourselves within this letter to the secretary.

Jerry McPeak: And for myself, I've always felt this situation has started four years ago, I think the secretary needs to know that we're involved and we have some commitment to doing something. This was not a message telling him to do anything, but a message letting him know that we too would do something. We're not sitting him out there by himself. I don't think any of this has an act of law anyhow. What we're doing is

merely a resolution that has no power. I would like for him to know that we would attempt to do something as well rather than just asking him to do something. It's called leadership.

Leslie Wheelock: Jerry, this is Leslie. Can we put that in the rationale as from the perspective of the council? We individual members encourage you through - whatever - but essentially putting it in as a leader phrase within the rationale itself that we support him. We, the council members, personally support efforts to bring native youth into agriculture. Period. Finished, the rest of the rationale.

Jerry McPeak: Are we all on doctoring it up? I just think we need to be involved. If you're going to ask someone else to do it, you should be willing to do it yourself. And you know, I'll go for it the other way as far as that goes. I just believe that we shouldn't ask someone to do something we're not willing to do.

Sarah Vogel: I've already done it.

Josiah Griffin: At this point, do we have a motion to consider that addition in either the recommendations or the rationale? This is Josiah.

Jerry McPeak: You're asking for a motion, right?

Josiah Griffin: Yes, sir.

Jerry McPeak: Well, if I'm a member, I so move.

Josiah Griffin: Do we have a second?

Gilbert Harrison: This is Gilbert. I'll second that.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Gilbert. Is there any further discussion on that topic? Hearing none, is there anyone opposed to the inclusion of Jerry's addition to either the recommendation or the rationale?

Sarah Vogel: This is Sarah. I think it's a fine idea. It just needs -- I think the language, I leave it up to OTR to work on the language. I don't think it's necessary, but it doesn't do any harm.

Leslie Wheelock: We'll be happy to do that.

Josiah Griffin: So hearing no additional objections, the movement passes unanimously. Does anyone else have any discussion for the recommendations, including the proposed changes that were passed? Okay. So at this point, do we have a motion to pass the recommendation with the amendments?

Jerry McPeak: This is Jerry. I so move.

Josiah Griffin: Do I have a second?

Connie Holman: Yeah. This is Connie. I'll second it.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Connie. Do we have any objections to passing that recommendation at large? Hearing none, I would like to move on to the next recommendation proposed by the Youth and Education Subcommittee. That recommendation reads: The council recommends that the secretary explore Facebook and other social media to enhance outreach

targeted for our native youth and young adults on USDA resources. The council is requesting update from the USDA Office of Communications within six months on the effectiveness of using these mediums.

The rationale reads: While broadband continues to challenge rural America's access to information, Native and non-Native youths are actively utilizing social media to share information and news. Identified resources are then circulated among their peer cohort and discussed with family helping to bridge the generation gap. As USDA works to strengthen its relationship with the next generation of agricultural producers, business and homeowners and community leaders, tribal communities are often more responsive to tribal specific resources and should be included in all our relevant outreach practices.

Jerry, as the subcommittee lead, do you have any additional information or feedback for that recommendation? Hi, Jerry. This is Josiah. If you are speaking into the teleconference line, you might be on mute.

Jerry McPeak: Can you all hear me?

Josiah Griffin: Yes, sir.

Jerry McPeak: This is Jerry McPeak. I move that this recommendation be accepted as written.

Josiah Griffin: Do we have a second?

Gilbert Harrison: This is Gilbert. I'll second that.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Gilbert. Is there any additional discussion for this recommendation? Hearing none here, does anyone oppose submitting this recommendation to the secretary? This recommendation passes unanimously. Jerry, are there any additional recommendations on behalf of the subcommittee that you would like to propose before the council?

Jerry McPeak: No [indiscernible]?

Leslie Wheelock: Yes, we can.

Jerry McPeak: What was that other one, Josiah wrote sometime last week? What's the other thought I had?

Josiah Griffin: I don't have it in front of me. I would need to pull it from my email.

Jerry McPeak: No. There's nothing else as a burning desire that I have.

Jeff Knishkowsky: This is Jeff. Josiah, I was trying to say something but I was on mute just as you were taking the vote. It was just a minor thing on the wording. It goes along where it says the council recommends that the secretary explore Facebook. My guess is we might want a little tweak on the language there unless we require in our recommendation that the secretary himself be going on to Facebook. That the secretary have appropriate staff or something like that, whatever we would normally do.

Sarah Vogel: Maybe explore the use of Facebook to enhance USDA outreach?

Jeff Knishkowsky: Uh-huh.

Sarah Vogel: That would be a motion then.

Leslie Wheelock: So Sarah has made the motion.

Josiah Griffin: Sarah has made the motion to amend the recommendation to read: The council recommends that the secretary explore the use of Facebook and other social media to enhance outreach. Does anyone have a second for that motion?

Sarah Vogel: I had also said USDA outreach.

Josiah Griffin: To enhance USDA outreach. Thank you, Sarah.

Mary Thompson: This is Mary Thompson. I'll second that.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Mary. Does anyone have any further discussion for amending the recommendation as it reads currently? Hearing none, does anyone have any objections? Okay. So the amendment passes as that. Is there any further discussion for this recommendation that the council would like to put forth? At this point, with no further discussion, I ask if there's anyone from the council who would like to make a motion to pass the recommendation with Sarah's amendments.

Leslie Wheelock: This is Leslie. I so move.

Josiah Griffin: Do we have a second as well?

Sarah Vogel: Sarah. I'll second.

Josiah Griffin: Do we have any further discussion on this topic? If so, I ask that you take yourself off of mute. But hearing none, is there anyone who is opposed to submitting this recommendation before the secretary with the amended changes? It looks like this motion passes unanimously. So that concludes the recommendations that were proposed by the Youth and Education Subcommittee.

At this time, we will be moving forward with the Land Management Subcommittee. The first recommendation that was proposed reads: The council recommends the secretary request the director for the Bureau of Indian Affairs or his or her delegate consistently participate in each Council for Native American Farming and Ranching meeting.

The rationale reads: Engaging in agricultural land leases or other production-based land practices on tribal lands often must comply with Bureau of Indian Affairs' requirements. Incongruent policies and procedures between the BIA and USDA often cause burdensome timelines or limits access to vital resources for American Indian and Alaskan Native producers. Previously the council has requested a representative from the Department of Interior to participate in discussions and provide meaningful feedback on identified concerns. A liaison from DoI regularly attended meetings from May 2014 to December 2015, departing with the change of employment. Currently the council

does not have direct access to a liaison from its fiduciary trustee to properly address this and other land use concerns. The council recommends the secretary engage the BIA director to ensure national BIA representation is present and available at CNAFR meetings.

Gilbert, as the subcommittee lead, do you have any additional information that you would like to add here?

Gilbert Harrison: This is Gilbert. Thank you. I think we've discussed this a number of times over the year. So our subcommittee, we're satisfied with what the language says at the rationale. Thank you, Josiah.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Gilbert. Is there any further discussion from the council on this recommendation?

Leslie Wheelock: This is Leslie. I'm just trying to figure out one thing, and that is whether it's more appropriate to request the Secretary of the Interior to direct the director for the Bureau of Indian Affairs to have a delegate consistently participating in the council meeting.

Jeff Knishkowsky: Leslie, this is Jeff. I was just looking at that same issue about the secretary to secretary versus secretary to BIA director. So I would think some type of change in language to include reference to the Secretary of Interior would be appropriate.

Leslie Wheelock: Then my following question, and I don't know the answer to this, is whether that direction from the Secretary of the Interior comes to the director for the Bureau of Indian Affairs or the assistant secretary for the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Jeff Knishkowy: And so if we're not sure about that, we might be able to just kind of leave that more vague and just say that the secretary request that the Secretary of Interior ensure that instead of who the Secretary of Interior has to request.

Leslie Wheelock: I would say ensure that an executive level delegate consistently participates in this council.
Executive level delegate from --

Jeff Knishkowy: The Bureau of Indian Affairs. And I think we need to settle that also.

Leslie Wheelock: Yeah. So for everybody on the phone, the language that I just went through is: The council recommends the secretary request the Secretary of the Interior to ensure that an executive level delegate from the Bureau of Indian Affairs consistently participate in each Council for Native American Farming and Ranching meeting.

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you.

Leslie Wheelock: I'm going to make that motion.

Josiah Griffin: We have a motion. Do we have a second to amend the recommendation as it currently reads?

Gilbert Harrison: This is Gilbert. I'll second that.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Gilbert. Is there any further discussion that the council would like to bring forth on the change?

Jeff Knishkowy: Jeff here. Just again another minor language thing. I noticed some of the recommendations when referring to the Secretary of Agriculture say Secretary of Agriculture and some say secretary. I guess I just thought of that given that we're talking about two secretaries in this one.

Leslie Wheelock: We'll fix the other ones up. Thank you.

Josiah Griffin: So recognizing that we will work to make all of these recommendations uniform on how they address the Secretary of Agriculture. Is there any further discussion that the council would like to bring forth on this change? Just to be sure. Hearing none, is anyone in opposition to the change of the recommendation as read by Leslie? Okay. The modification passes unanimously. Looking at the recommendation as it has been amended, is there any further discussion that council members would like to speak on for this recommendation? Okay. Do we have any motion to approve the recommendation as amended?

Jeff Knishkowy: I so move.

Gilbert Harrison: I second that motion.

Josiah Griffin: So we have Jeff move. Gilbert, can I count you as the second?

Gilbert Harrison: That would be fine. Thank you.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you. Is there any further discussion on the recommendation? Are there any objections to this recommendation? Did I miss anybody? So hearing none, the motion passes unanimously. The second recommendation is from the Land Management Subcommittee.

Connie Holman: Josiah, can I interrupt for a second. This is Connie.

Josiah Griffin: Yes, ma'am.

Connie Holman: I have to get off here at 1:00 to assist the loan clients. I'm wondering. Are we still going to have a quorum if I have to jump off?

Josiah Griffin: Thank you for letting me know, Connie. At this point, yes. At this point we have nine representatives from the council. We only need eight to maintain a quorum.

Connie Holman: Great. And then the other option might be if we were to jump ahead to the Credit and Credit Desert Committee recommendations, we could get it done real quick.

Josiah Griffin: Certainly. Gilbert, do you have any opposition to that?

Gilbert Harrison: No.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you. So with this change, we are looking at the third page of the draft letter to the secretary with the preface: During the past four years the council has

made numerous recommendations on credit and credit desert issues to the secretary. The council appreciates the attention paid for these recommendations by FSA. The council further encourages the secretary to be vigilant in the upcoming months that the reforms and improvements undertaken thus far under his administration are fully incorporated into the FSA system and operation so that these reforms will be permanent and long lasting.

The first recommendation reads that the council recommends the secretary directs the Farm Service Agency to engage with the appropriate state-certified mediation programs to ensure that mediation services are available to financially-distressed Indian producers wherever they are located.

The rationale reads: The council notes the significant and increasing financial stress being experienced by farmers and ranchers due to dramatic declines in farm income. The council is concerned about the potential stress for Indian producers in particular. Given the lack of credit sources in Indian country, it recognizes that mediation can play a critical role in facilitating communication between Indian producers and their lenders. We, as an organization, should be required if possible but certainly encouraged to conduct outreach in Indian country to ensure that Indian farmers and ranchers are aware of the

availability and benefits of producer, creditor, and mediation services.

Does anyone have any additional discussion that, Tawney, that you would like to mention on the recommendation?

Jeff Knishkowsky: I just want to just look at this a little more closely real quickly.

Josiah Griffin: Okay. And we don't currently have a motion yet. Are you interested in making a motion either to approve the recommendation or to change the language?

Jeff Knishkowsky: Are you talking to me, Josiah?

Josiah Griffin: Yes, sir. And I'm assuming that this is Jeff?

Jeff Knishkowsky: This is Jeff. Sorry. I just wanted to just take a closer look at some of the wording.

Sarah Vogel: This is Sarah. Could I ask a question? You said we have nine on board now. We're going to have eight after Tawney leaves. Will we still have a quorum at eight?

Josiah Griffin: Yes, we will. If there is anyone else who drops off making our number below eight, we will have to cease business on submitting recommendations.

Sarah Vogel: So could you survey the group to see if anybody does have to leave early? Because we may have to speed up if somebody is leaving early.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Sarah. That is a good point. So the time right now is 3:00 PM Eastern Time. Looking at everyone's schedule, are there any other individuals that are looking or needing to leave before this meeting is scheduled to end?

Sarah Vogel: This is Sarah. I have to leave about ten minutes to 5:00.

Josiah Griffin: Is that 5:00 PM --

Sarah Vogel: Your time, Eastern Time.

Leslie Wheelock: Mark should be on by then.

Josiah Griffin: Mark Wadsworth should hopefully be on by then. With it being 3:00 PM currently, that still gives us a couple of hours.

Sarah Vogel: Yeah.

Jeff Knishkowsky: This is Jeff. Although I have to drop off at 4:00, Carl should be back before then. As I understand it, we're one vote. Right?

Josiah Griffin: Yes, sir, as Dr. Leonard's delegate.

Jeff Knishkowsky: Yeah. So I think we'll be okay.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you for clarifying that, Jeff. Turning our attention back to the Credit and Credit Desert's recommendation, do we have any further discussion or motions to either amend or approve the recommendation as it's currently written?

Jeff Knishkowy: Well, this is Jeff. I've got some familiarity with this program from my work at USDA in mediation and alternative dispute resolution although I have not been so connected to it in the last two years. Having said that, as I'm reading the recommendation as written, it talks about the secretary directing FSA to engage with the appropriate state-certified mediation programs to ensure that mediation services are available to financially-distressed Indian producers wherever they are located. So I have a question of clarification about the word "they."

Here is the preface for my question first. As I recall it, the certified mediation programs at least some years ago were not located in every single state in the U.S. There are some states that do not have state-certified mediation programs. At the end of the recommendation, it says to financially-distressed Indian producers wherever they are located. Is the "they" referring to distressed Indian producers or is the "they" referring to state-certified mediation programs?

Tawney Brunsch: The producers.

Jeff Knishkowy: The producers?

Leslie Wheelock: Grammatically, it would be producers.

Jeff Knishkowy: So then my point on the way the recommendation is worded would be as follows. Let's say given this is how it was maybe five, six, seven years ago - there were

certified mediation programs in 35 or 40 states. The certified mediation programs often would not have any ability to make available the certified mediation services to producers in the states that did not have the certified mediation programs. So every once in a while there might be a state that has producers and that might have distressed Indian producers but it not might have a certified mediation program.

So I'm only raising that point. I'm going to look at the map on the FSA website to see if that is still the case. There may be states where that recommendation would not be implementable. There may be non-certified mediation services, but there might not be certified mediation services in all of those states.

Sarah Vogel: This is Sarah. Would it be possible to alter the language to say that mediation services are available to financially-distressed Indian producers within their regions or just a period after producers?

Leslie Wheelock: This is Leslie. I think the period works.

Sarah Vogel: I like the period. Too often states overlook Native American producers in all programs.

Jeff Knishkowsky: So Sarah, this is Jeff. I'm scrolling on this website. As your amendment would be worded, would it then

be limited to producers in areas that are covered by state-certified programs?

Sarah Vogel: I think in context, yeah.

Jeff Knishkowy: Okay.

Sarah Vogel: Certified mediation programs make sure that mediation services are available to financially-distressed Indian producers.

Leslie Wheelock: You got it.

Josiah Griffin: So do we have a motion to adjust the recommendation to read: The council recommends that the secretary direct the Farm Service Agency to engage with the appropriate state-certified mediation programs to ensure that mediation services are available to financially-distressed Indian producers. Period.

Tawney Brunsch: I'll do it.

Sarah Vogel: I'll make that motion to amend.

Tawney Brunsch: I beat you, Sarah.

Sarah Vogel: Pardon?

Josiah Griffin: Do we have a second?

Jeff Knishkowy: I second.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Jeff. Is there any further discussion on that change?

Sarah Vogel: I think I heard Tawney say something.

Leslie Wheelock: I thought I did too.

Tawney Brunsch: I spoke over the top of you. I said, yes, I would be in favor of making that motion. But whoever you have documented as making it, that's fine.

Sarah Vogel: Let Tawney have it.

Jeff Knishkowy: Sure.

Sarah Vogel: And Tawney, you can have the big motion now. Okay?

Tawney Brunsch: Right.

Sarah Vogel: Okay. Good. Move along.

Josiah Griffin: The records are amended. Tawney is making a motion in favor of the change, and Jeff is the second. Is there any further discussion on the recommendation as altered?

Jeff Knishkowy: Can I just add that I'm looking at the -- I don't know if this is the most up to date. It says 2016 on the map. And the map that I'm looking at seems to have, just so you know, maybe 37 certified states that provide the mediation services. From what I can tell, it looks like perhaps they do not exist in Georgia, South Carolina. It might be Tennessee. Maybe that's Kentucky. West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, New Hampshire. Massachusetts. No. I'm sorry. Massachusetts has it.

Sarah Vogel: Yeah. But wherever they are, they should be trying to reach Native Americans too.

Jeff Knishkowsky: Right. Over the years there have also been efforts in states where a certified program has not come in to exist, and sort of kind of have an existence. There have been at various times efforts to ensure that those services are also made available in non-certified states as Sarah, I'm sure you know and others may know. But I don't know what the current state of that is because part of this goes to funding. The funding goes to the certified states by and large. So there could be language that addresses non-certified states as well, but there may not be as much. That may be tougher.

Sarah Vogel: Jim Radintz, are you also --?

Jeff Knishkowsky: Jim is on, right.

Sarah Vogel: I think he runs it.

Jeff Knishkowsky: Jim, are you still there?

Connie Holman: Jim had to step away. Associate Administrator Mike Schmidt came in and got him. I just walked in the door, so if you could repeat your question, I'll try to answer it for you.

Josiah Griffin: And Connie, as a matter public record, this is Josiah, would you mind just introducing yourself?

Connie Holman: Yes. This is Connie Holman. I am the director for Loan Making for farm loan programs. In this particular instance, I'll be acting for Jim Radintz.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you.

Connie Holman: I know you were talking about mediation, but I don't know beyond that.

Sarah Vogel: For the purposes of this motion, I think this goes as when we had our discussions during the Credit Committee, it was we expect that there is going to be a big financial crunch that's coming up. We are hoping that this would help those state mediation services remember that there are Native American farmers and ranchers out there and encourage them to be contacted.

Well, there may be mediation services other than state-certified mediation services. I don't know that the secretary can direct or influence them. So I'm pretty happy with the language as it is and I'm kind of worried about losing Tawney for the rest of the discussion.

Tawney Brunsch: I'm good, you guys. I'm just hanging out until my [indiscernible] gets here. So we do want to be kind of ready to go ahead and jump off in a hurry.

Josiah Griffin: As Connie moves into the discussion, are there any additional plans that council members would like to bring forth on the recommendation?

Gilbert Harrison: Not me. This is Gil.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Gilbert. So we, to my record, have the amended change. Is there anyone on the council who's

interested in passing the recommendation or making a motion to pass the recommendation as amended?

Sarah Vogel: This is Sarah. I will.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Sarah. Do we have anyone who would second?

Gilbert Harrison: This is Gilbert. I'll second.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Gilbert. Is there, one last time, any additional discussion to be brought forth on this recommendation or on the motion? Okay. Hearing none, is there anyone who opposes passing the recommendation as amended? Hearing none again, the recommendation passes unanimously.

We will move on to the next Credit and Credit Desert recommendation reading. The council recommends that the secretary direct the Farm Service Agency to publish a plain language comprehensive borrower guide and send a copy to each FSA direct loan borrower as soon as possible but not later than December 31, 2016.

The rationale reads: The council notes the significant and increasing financial distress being experienced by farmers and ranchers due to dramatic declines in fund income. FSA is in the final stages of developing a comprehensive borrower guide that explains FSA loan servicing in plain language similar to the guide to the loan programs developed as part of the Keepseagle consent decree. The council believes that this guide could be a

critical resource to Indian borrowers and their advisors particularly since many borrowers are in isolated locations, many miles from an FSA loan officer. Additional printed copies should be available upon request and the guide should be available online as well.

Connie, do you have any additional information that you would like to bring forth on that recommendation?

Connie Holman: Well, I don't know. I'm just now seeing this, and I don't know how long Jim had them before the meeting to look at. I can see, because this says to each FSA direct loan borrower, that would be a very time-consuming and a very extensive exercise I think. I don't know if we'd be able to get the folks in Saint Louis to do that for us or not.

The timeframe worries me a little bit because when we enter the New Year we'll probably -- and the thing in NRM and RCR [phonetic]. I'm really not sure how the timeframe and the expense will play out. You're talking about every borrower, I mean, every FSA borrower and not everyone that's identified as Native American. Correct?

Josiah Griffin: That is what the recommendation currently says, yes. I would additionally like to provide Tawney a space for any clarification or remarks. Tawney Brunsch, excuse me, on the recommendation.

Tawney Brunsch: Just for your information, I think Jim is the one who wrote this actually. But now with me rereading it, I thought the intent was that you guys be made available to the FSA agents and/or we talked about the agencies or the other organizations that might work with the FSA offices like Lakota Funds to then be able to share with their borrowers.

Connie Holman: That I think we can handle with no problem. But the idea of making sure that one was physically mailed to each individual borrower, like I said, that would be awfully expensive and awfully time-consuming for that short period of time.

Tawney Brunsch: Right. And obviously we would be utilizing all online resources as much as they were available.

Connie Holman: Right. Well, then that I think is extremely possible the way that you just explained it.

Sarah Vogel: This is Sarah. My recollection was that Jim drafted this language too. But I do understand the concern about the mailing and so forth. But we did do a plain language guide. Their numbers of copies of the plain language guide were limited and I think they did not reach all of the people that could have benefited from it. I think if there was a whole set, there would be more widespread distribution than occurred with the plain language guide. But perhaps we could tweak the

language a little bit by saying something like, and make copies available for FSA direct loan borrowers.

Connie Holman: Yeah. I think it would be easy for us to publish it. And I think it would be easy for us to make it available. It's already available online so I mean that I think that part is easy, which is just to send them. It's when others --

Sarah Vogel: Jim said it isn't available yet. Well, this was a couple of weeks ago. It wasn't available then because it was still in some kind of review by somebody in the process. But Jim said to get it done before December 31st.

Connie Holman: Then that's the new servicing guide that he's talking about. Yeah, that would be possible and feasible for us today.

Josiah Griffin: Hey, Sarah. This is Josiah. Hearing your concern and feedback, would you like to make a motion incorporating these amendments?

Sarah Vogel: Me? Sarah?

Josiah Griffin: Yes, ma'am.

Sarah Vogel: So it would be to publish a plain language comprehensive borrower guide and make copies broadly available to FSA direct loan borrowers, that's my proposed amendment.

Leslie Wheelock: This is the end of the part --?

Josiah Griffin: So that was Leslie. Leslie was asking if the --

Leslie Wheelock: Oh, I'm sorry. Sarah, this is Leslie. You stopped at borrowers, but do you mean to have the additional language following that, to say it in the recommendation?

Sarah Vogel: Right. Exactly. The rest of it will remain the same. Be broadly available to FSA direct loan borrowers as soon as possible but not later than December 31st. Everything else is the same.

Josiah Griffin: This is Josiah. So in looking at that proposed change, do we have a second?

Tawney Brunsch: I'll second it. This is Tawney.

Josiah Griffin: Was that Tawney?

Tawney Brunsch: Yeah.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Tawney. So is there any further discussion that anyone would like to bring up regarding that change? Hearing no one off of mute, is there anyone who opposes amending or editing the recommendation to include Sarah's changes? So hearing no opposition, that change has been included for the proposed recommendation. Is there any additional discussion? Anyone who would like to bring forth on the recommendation as amended? So with no discussions, would anyone like to make a motion passing the recommendation incorporating Sarah's changes?

Sarah Vogel: This is Sarah. I will.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Sarah. Do we have a second?
It sounds like there is someone also on the line.

Gilbert Harrison: Yeah. This is Gilbert. I want to second that.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Gilbert. One last time, is there any additional discussion from the rest of the group? Is there anyone who opposes passing the recommendation with the updates? This recommendation also passes unanimously hearing no opposition.

Moving on to the third credit and credit desert recommendation or proposed recommendation, the recommendation reads: The council recommends the secretary explore all possible synergies between USDA and the Center for Indian country Development. The rationale reads: In mid-2015 the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank established the Center for Indian country Development. Its goal is to provide the energy insight and coordination to Indian country development initiative across the Federal Reserve System and also to take lead in forging partnerships with other national and regional organizations.

Its principal area focuses in research so it concerns four topics - land, business and entrepreneurship, housing and homeownership, and education. USDA has deep interest and involvement with each of these four areas. We believe that

significant opportunities for mutual support exist between USDA and the council for Indian country development and that significant benefits to Native Americans could arise as a result of this cooperation.

And Tawney, do you have any additional information that you would like to provide on this proposed recommendation?

Tawney Brunsch: I don't. Sarah, I'm going to defer to you I guess because I think you know more about the work that the center is trying to move forward with.

Sarah Vogel: Yes. This is Sarah. I had brought this up or mentioned it before I think at other council meetings. It's relatively new. It's got an advisory committee in which I'm one of the members. I think it's a really exciting opportunity because it brings in the muscle, the power, the background, the scholarship, the insight and the credibility that all of the Federal Reserve Banks throughout the country have. They're hoping to be a resource center for all of the Federal Reserve Banks.

It's pretty new. It's headed by Patrice Kunesh who used to be a -- is she the deputy undersecretary? I forgot her title, but she was in charge of Rural Development at USDA. She was, I think, originally from Standing Rock. So I think one of the recommendations to the council quite some time ago was that the secretary coordinates nationwide with banks and other lenders

and so forth. There didn't seem to be much of an uptake on that challenge, but I think the opportunity now exists that the USDA and this council can partner, facilitate, encourage, look for synergies with the Center for Indian Country Development. I think it's off to a good start. There's a website in the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank if people want to look and learn more about it, the work plan and stuff like that.

Josiah Griffin: This is Josiah. Thank you, Sarah, for providing that context. With the context and the proposed recommendation as it stands, is there anyone else who would like to discuss the language or wording of the recommendation or rationale? So with no one coming off of mute, is there anyone who would like to make a motion to pass the recommendation as it's currently written? If there is someone who is interested in passing this recommendation, I would --

Sarah Vogel: Sarah. I've just been making too many motions there.

Tawney Brunsch: I will second.

Josiah Griffin: And Sarah, as a matter of public record, there are no limits to the number of motions that any council member can make.

Sarah Vogel: Well, that's pretty good then.

Leslie Wheelock: Get them in while you can.

Josiah Griffin: So we have a first and we have a second. Are there any additional items to discuss with this motion? So with no one voicing an opinion at least that I can hear, is there any opposition to passing this recommendation? Going once, going twice. It's so moved.

Tawney Brunsch: With that, you guys, I'm so sorry but I'm going to have to jump off now.

Josiah Griffin: Perfect timing.

Tawney Brunsch: Perfect. All right. Thanks everybody.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Tawney.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you, Tawney.

Sarah Vogel: Thank you, Tawney.

Josiah Griffin: So with the council's permission, we will return back to the second recommendation under the Land Management Subcommittee which reads: The council recommends the Secretary of Agriculture to partner with the Department of Interior to create a new chart showcasing differences and similarities between grazing permit requirements.

The rationale reads: The USDA Forest Service, as well as the Department of Interior's Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Indian Affairs, each maintain different requirements for applications and participants in their grazing permits. These processes are often unclear and the requirement differences are burdensome to not only American Indian and

Alaska Native producers but other ranchers nationwide. A single language document outlining each agency's requirements for grazing land permits would promote greater transparency for ranchers seeking to enter these arrangements.

Gilbert, would you like to provide any additional context for that recommendation?

Gilbert Harrison: No, I don't.

Josiah Griffin: So with that in mind, is there any discussion or would the council like to provide additional feedback for the recommendation as it's currently standing? Hearing none, is there anyone who would like to make a motion that the recommendation be submitted to the secretary?

Gilbert Harrison: Gilbert Harrison. I'll make that motion.

Josiah Griffin: Do we have a second? Thank you, Gilbert. So with no standing second, is there any additional feedback that council members would like to provide or would anyone be interested in voicing a second for passing that recommendation?

Jeff Knishkowy: I second.

Josiah Griffin: Is that Jeff or Jerry?

Jeff Knishkowy: Jeff.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Jeff. So I'm asking one last time, is there any additional discussion for this motion? Hearing none, is there anyone who opposes the recommendation as

it's currently written? Going once, going twice. It's so moved.

I will move on to the third proposed recommendation. There is a slight typo here so I will be correcting that as a matter of public record. The council recommends the Secretary of Agriculture establish a more transparent Forest Service permit process by fulfilling requirements set forth in 7 CFR 15b nondiscrimination and programs or activities conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The rationale reads: Permit access to Forest Service grazing lands provides a substantial benefit to ranchers across the United States. And according to its 7 CFR 15b, Subsection 4b, each agency shall collect the number of applicants and participants by race, ethnicity, and gender subject to the appropriate privacy protection. That will showcase the Forest Service's success in its grazing leases and to identify tribal or other race-based groups that are not regularly allowed access to these grazing lands. The council urges the secretary to ensure greater transparency in USDA processes.

Gilbert, would you like to provide any additional context here?

Gilbert Harrison: No, I don't. I think that's discussed pretty much at a couple of our previous meetings.

Josiah Griffin: Is there any additional discussion that council members would like to put forth?

Leslie Wheelock: This is Leslie. I have a problem with this in that if I read it, I wouldn't know what it's asking me to do because the language for the requirements or even a brief description of the requirements in that CFR section doesn't really tell me what I'm missing. It just says fulfilling requirements in this regulation, but it doesn't tell me what those requirements are or what this recommendation is really concerned about.

Sarah Vogel: This is Sarah. I'm willing to search with somebody else on the call. But as I recall, the Forest Service said at the last meeting, and I was listening in by the telephone at the meeting in Idaho, that they do not collect any data on the ethnicity or race or whatever of people who have permits for grazing from the Forest Service. So they don't know whether there are any, many, or none Native Americans who have access to or who are presently have leases or permits from the Forest Service. I don't know if I'm incorrect on that. I think they're just saying to the Forest Service to start collecting this information or gathering it. Am I incorrect, because I wasn't there in person when these things were given?

Leslie Wheelock: Sarah, this is Leslie. You are correct. And I know what all this says. It's just that if I'm reading

this in a letter, if I'm the secretary and I'm reviewing this and I'm trying to figure out what I'm supposed to be doing here, I have to go look it up - the CFR 15b. We all know what we're talking about or we're pretty sure we know what we're talking about, but I don't know what that language is. So I think we'll probably be going to have to pull out, toggle the language that we're referring to and put it in there.

Sarah Vogel: I think that's a good idea not just from the standpoint of the secretary, because he's got an army of lawyers that can look it up for him, but for the public.

Leslie Wheelock: Josiah just pointed it out to me that it's in the explanation. For some reason, he read it and I didn't hear it. Never mind.

Sarah Vogel: Never mind. Okay.

Leslie Wheelock: I'm sorry for that. It's been a long day.

Josiah Griffin: So with the concern resolved, are there any additional points that the council members would like to bring forth on this recommendation? Hearing no items for discussion, is there a council member who might be interested in making a motion to pass the recommendation as it's currently written?

Gilbert Harrison: This is Gilbert. I'll make that motion.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Gilbert. Do we have a second?

Sarah Vogel: This is Sarah. I'll second.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Sarah. I'm asking one last time here, are there any items for discussion with this motion? Hearing none, are there any objections to passing the motion for this recommendation?

Jeff Knishkowsky: This is Jeff. We do not oppose it, but we're going to abstain though on this one. I just want to make sure that could be reflected.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Jeff. I will make as a matter of public record or note as a matter of public record that the Office of Civil Rights is abstaining from this vote. Are there any other objections or individuals looking to abstain? So hearing none, this recommendation passes for the secretary's consideration.

Now moving to the next recommendation, it reads: The council recommends the Secretary of Agriculture have the chief of the U.S. Forest Service to establish an effective, uniform, and binding policy recognizing trust lands as base property for grazing and livestock use permits.

The rationale reads: The USDA Forest Service's regional field structure has allowed for variance and the recognition of trust land as base property required for grazing and livestock use permits. Trust land is held by the federal government on behalf of individual allottees and federally-recognized tribes

and allows them use of these lands for mutually agreed purposes, including grazing. Any refusal to recognize trust land as base property creates a barrier to access Forest Service programs for tribes and American Indian and Alaska Native ranchers. The council urges the secretary to ensure greater equity for Forest Service grazing and livestock use permits.

Gilbert, is there any additional context to that that you would like to provide for this recommendation?

Gilbert Harrison: No. Again, this issue has been discussed several times in our face-to-face meetings so I think people are aware of what we're trying to do. I don't have any additional information.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Gilbert. Are there any additional topics or points for discussion regarding this recommendation? So hearing none, is there anyone who is interested in making a motion to pass or amend this recommendation?

Gilbert Harrison: This is Gilbert Harrison. I make a motion to approve this recommendation.

Mary Ann Thompson: Mary Thompson. I second.

Josiah Griffin: All right. Are there any additional topics for discussion regarding this motion? Hearing none, is there anyone who would like to object or abstain from approving

this recommendation? So with no additional comments or objections, the recommendation passes unanimously.

The last recommendation under the Land Management Subcommittee reads: The council recommends the secretary or the Deputy Secretary of Agriculture attend at least one Council for Native American Farming and Ranching meeting per calendar year.

The rationale reads: As it currently stands, the council is concerned with the lack of predictable feedback from USDA staff on request to clarify regulations, resources, and standard operating procedures. Where the council has requested USDA participation on key agenda items, representation may not be readily available. Where agencies have agreed to address questions or concerns, these responses are often sporadic or incomplete. Participation by the secretary or deputy secretary at least once per year will compel other USDA parties to be more consistent and available to work with the council.

To keep it standard, Gilbert, are there any additional contexts or information that you'd like to provide here?

Gilbert Harrison: I think this is appropriate. We are the executive council for Native American farmers and ranchers and we felt that it is important that the secretary or his deputy at least sit down with us once a year to see how things are going. That was the thought behind this. Thank you.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Gilbert. So is there anyone from the council who'd be interested in providing additional feedback or discussion on this recommendation? Hearing none, is there anyone who would be interested in making a motion on this recommendation?

Gilbert Harrison: This is Gilbert Harrison. I make a motion to pass this, move this, approve this.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Gilbert. Do we have a second?

Sarah Vogel: This is Sarah. I'll second.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Sarah. Is there any additional item for discussion regarding this motion? With no one stepping in here, does anyone object to passing this motion and submitting this recommendation to the secretary? Going once, going twice. So moved.

This concludes all of the proposed recommendations that were provided by the various subcommittees for the council to consider. At this time, with Leslie as the --

Leslie Wheelock: April and July 2016, do you want to talk about those?

Josiah Griffin: Thank you.

Jeff Knishkowsky: Josiah.

Josiah Griffin: Yes, sir.

Jeff Knishkowsky: This is Jeff. Carl, are you on the line yet? I was transitioning from my office to my car during the

last two items from the Land Management Subcommittee. Just so you know, it is possible that I had my votes for the last two items reversed in that the other one, the last one, may have been the abstention. And the other one before it might have been in favor. So we may need to get back to just correct the record on that once I check back with Carl.

Josiah Griffin: Okay. So, Jeff, all of the Land Management Subcommittee's recommendations have been passed. But as a matter of public record, you're welcome to speak with me offline as you make those corrections.

Jeff Knishkowsky: Thank you.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you. So, as I was saying, this concludes all of the proposed recommendations that were submitted by the subcommittees in this draft letter to the secretary. Council members will also find those recommendations that were passed during the April and July 2016 meetings. If the council is interested, I would be happy to read the language of those recommendations for public record. I'll defer to you, Leslie, as the acting chair here.

Leslie Wheelock: These have already been passed and discussed. I'm not sure we need to go through them again unless council members would like to hear these. For those of you who don't have these in front of you, there are five additional recommendations that came out of prior meetings that have not

yet gone in the letter of recommendation to the secretary, and that will be accompanying the recommendations that came out of this meeting today. Those recommendations were made in the April and July meetings and so we now have a compendium of recommendations to make to the secretary that staff here will be working on over the course of the next two months.

Mary Ann Thompson: Leslie, this is Mary Thompson. I have these in front of me and I'm not sure that I see the need to redo them unless they need to be read on the record.

Leslie Wheelock: No. They are already in the record.

Tony Kramer: Hello.

Leslie Wheelock: Who is that?

Josiah Griffin: Is that Derrick or Carl? Carl-Martin?

Tony Kramer: This is Tony Kramer for Jason Wheeler.

Female Voice: Hi, Tony.

Josiah Griffin: Sorry, Tony.

Tony Kramer: Yeah. And I do apologize. I hope this wasn't the July one I was at because if it is, I missed it completely. And since you've already passed it, it's up to you what you want to do. But there is no 50 percent drawdown program with EQIP. It's a 50 percent advanced payment. I don't know if that makes any difference or not, but that's the actual description of what that is.

Leslie Wheelock: Oh, that's a good point.

Tony Kramer: The people who will look at that will kind of go what are they talking about? So it's a 50 percent advanced payment that EQIP currently allows for tribes and the socially disadvantaged.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Tony. That is helpful for the record and also on our submission for the secretary.

Tony Kramer: Thank you.

Josiah Griffin: Is it safe for me to say that for my notes, that you're talking about the first recommendation that's listed in the April and July in the same category?

Tony Kramer: Yes, the one about the 50 percent cap. Yeah, the funding drawdown of the 50 percent cap be allowed as major milestones are completed. It's a 50 percent advanced payment.

Leslie Wheelock: This is Leslie. I'm going to ask Gilbert if this change makes a difference in the way that you wanted this recommendation to read because, as I remembered it, this came out of a discussion that you started. I don't know if it's your recommendation, but it's certainly part of a conversation that you began.

Gilbert Harrison: Which one of the language are you talking about?

Leslie Wheelock: We're on the first. We have the additional April and July 2016 recommendations, those that were made at that meeting, and I will read it out loud to you. It

says: The council recommends the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program determine at the application stage what the final contract amount at the completion of the project will be, that all cost components and their scheduling be well-defined, and that customers be allowed substituting a 50 percent advanced payment.

Gilbert Harrison: Yes, that's correct. Yeah.

Leslie Wheelock: Okay. Tony, did I put that language in the right place?

Tony Kramer: Their scheduling will be well-defined and that the customers will be allowed, yeah. Or the customer will be allowed a 50 percent cap. I'm sorry. Yeah, it doesn't read right now.

Leslie Wheelock: It doesn't. I think we need to adjust that so that it reads properly. But what you're saying, Tony, sounds like that's already happening.

Tony Kramer: Yeah. I guess that's why I'm a little confused, Gilbert. Folks can get up to a 50 percent advance and they don't have to have everything completed in 90 days, but they have to extend that advance in 90 days. At least that's the way the statute reads in the new Farm Bill. Maybe it's not being implemented correctly which is a good comment to keep in here that we could look into that.

Josiah Griffin: So looking at the recommendation, OTR cannot work with Tony and his staff, as well as Chief Wheeler's staff to clarify the language. Or Gilbert and the council, if Tony's comments addressed the root core of why that recommendation was passed, I leave that to your discussion to determine whether or not this recommendation should still be included.

Leslie Wheelock: This is Leslie. There are other requirements in there besides the 50 percent advanced payment, but I think that we have to get that language right in order to ensure that we've covered the things that are meant to be covered in here. The strict time requirements for expenditure of that advanced payment are not covered in the recommendation itself, but they are mentioned in the rationale. So there's a potential that it needs to be written. The recommendation itself needs to be edited so that it pulls in some of the components that are actually in the rationale. We might have to circulate this one more time just to get the language right.

Tony Kramer: You know what? I apologize for that, folks. But I want to make it so it's valuable when it gets to the secretary. That's all.

Josiah Griffin: I'm sorry, Tony. I didn't mean to cut you off. For everyone's memory, after the December of 2014 meeting, there were a series of recommendations that were not passed.

And those recommendations were circulated through email and taken up for official vote in April. This recommendation we split into two parts, viewable with the first bullet under the April and July 2016 recommendations and the second bullet of the April and July 2016 recommendations. I just want to put that in context. And I understand that that was probably a little confusing. Thank you, Leslie.

Leslie Wheelock: I'm sorry. I'm confused. I think what we want to do is take this first bullet and ensure that we have it written in a way that works in terms of the recommendation and the rationale behind the recommendation. Then we'll recirculate it for editorial comment, if that's okay with the council, without changing the context of the recommendation itself.

Gilbert Harrison: This is Gilbert. As long as the intent -- all I'm trying to say is maintain that. The language can be adjusted to fit all the requirements of what needs to be done.

Leslie Wheelock: I think that's our goal.

Tony Kramer: This is Tony again, if I could. And you guys could help me with this. I think I understand. There are actually two issues here. But if you went with that first, what's in bold, that all cost components and their scheduling be well-defined, just stop there and then go on to your comments.

Second, EQIP currently allows for an advanced payment of up to 50 percent. However, a 50 percent advanced payment in an underestimated project is not beneficial. That can be a true statement. Do you see what I'm getting at?

Leslie Wheelock: Yeah.

Tony Kramer: Does that get to the point, Gilbert? I think if we took the last sentence off above, about them being allowed a 50 percent because they already are but then keep it down below. And second, EQIP currently allows for an advanced payment of up to 50 percent. I have heard that concern before, that if it's estimated too high, you get too much money almost upfront. I know that sounds crazy. Then there's that requirement to spend it in 90 days, it could be difficult. At least that's what I've heard.

Gilbert Harrison: That's what we're trying to kind of get across is that cost estimate, time constraints and advanced payment certainly don't make sense.

Tony Kramer: Yeah.

Gilbert Harrison: We want to clarify it a little bit to make it easier.

Josiah Griffin: So with the council's permission, I would like to just go ahead and read out the recommendation as proposed under Tony's changes.

Leslie Wheelock: Amended.

Josiah Griffin: Or as amended under Tony's changes: The council recommends the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program determine at the application stage what the final contract amount at the completion of the project will be, that all cost components and their scheduling be well-defined. Period.

The rationale would start at: Native Farmers and Ranchers using EQIP for individual and community projects from trust lands are being burdened with additional costs which they are not expecting and significant time delays that also cause project costs to increase. Project plans need to account for a complete design of NEPA documentation or construction of other components relevant to the project.

Second, EQIP currently allows for an advanced payment of up to 50 percent. However, a 50 percent advanced payment of an underestimated project is not beneficial and it imposes strict requirements for completion. The current process of funding by NRCS causes an individual or a tribe to pay in advance. This can be a hardship on minority farmers and ranchers on trust lands with loans on trust lands being difficult to obtain.

Gilbert Harrison: That sounds fine to me.

Josiah Griffin: So is there any additional comment on the recommendation as amended? Okay. Are there any additional

recommendations that the council members would like to propose before the council at-large?

Jeff Knishkowsky: Josiah, this is Jeff. I'm going to have to be getting off in a couple of minutes. I don't know if Carl has rejoined. I'm not sure if that's going to affect the quorum, but I just wanted to mention that.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Jeff. It looks like we are wrapping up. So, yes, is there someone who would like to speak?

Sarah Vogel: This is Sarah. This is just a very quick question. A few days ago I received a package from Joanne Dea, the ombudsperson, with a map and some statistics and a comparison to the census and materials like that. It was just sent to me with a note that just said from Joanne Dea. Did anybody else get that map or the materials and the statistics, or is it just --?

Josiah Griffin: This is Josiah. When Joanne Dea presented before the council in July, she was able to provide the documentation packet to all of the council members who were physically present. So we wanted to make sure and Joanne wanted to make sure that you were able to receive a copy of the information that was discussed. I apologize that it took you so long get it. Our mail on our end has just seen some delays unfortunately.

Sarah Vogel: Well, that's fine. I don't know if anybody had a chance to look at it, but it did seem as though the comparison between the census and the loan making does give basis for some fuller inquiry in terms of is there adequate outreach of other nearby offices and like what's going on in some of these regions where the statistics do not match. I'm glad she finally did it.

Josiah Griffin: So, Sarah, since you now have the information, are there any additional recommendations that you would like to make reflecting on what was provided by the USDA ombudsperson?

Sarah Vogel: No. I have not had an opportunity to carefully look through it. I noticed a few disparities in Arizona, for example, which pops up often. But I haven't studied it. I'll send my comments later.

Josiah Griffin: Feel free to send them to our office, the Office of Tribal Relations. We will work with you, as well as the relevant USDA agencies, to make sure that your inquiries are responded to.

Sarah Vogel: Thank you.

Josiah Griffin: You're welcome.

Jeff Knishkowsky: Josiah, I'll be getting off now.

Josiah Griffin: Okay.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you, Jeff.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Jeff.

Jeff Knishkowsky: Sorry to leave you.

Josiah Griffin: No. No worries. We are wrapping up. In this meeting the council members have passed every recommendation that was proposed by the council subcommittees. So we would work with Mark as the council chair to make sure that he receives a finalized list of these recommendations with all of the amended edits and changes for his signature before your council term ends.

As the acting designated federal officer, I have been watching this council for the past three years now. I just wanted to thank each and every one of you for your service to Indian country and to the department in proposing recommendations and making the USDA a more effective and efficient partner for our tribes across the country.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you, Josiah.

Mary Ann Thompson: Thank you, Josiah.

Leslie Wheelock: This is Leslie. I wanted to make sure, ask if there is any additional business that council members would like to take care of today?

Sarah Vogel: I'd like to thank the staff of OTR and all your hard work, we appreciate it. Thank you. I do. Thank you.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Sarah.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you, Sarah.

Mary Ann Thompson: This is Mary Thompson. Can you hear me?

Josiah Griffin: Yes, ma'am.

Mary Ann Thompson: With regards to Sarah's comments about the census and the information that she received from Joanne, I had requested additional information and I did receive it. So, Sarah, if you have any thoughts about making any recommendations, would you kind of keep me in the circle? Because I have a little bit of a concern and an issue too, but I'm not exactly sure how to word or put my thoughts into words to make the recommendation.

Sarah Vogel: Sure. That would be great. Good. Yeah, I'll do that.

Mary Ann Thompson: Josiah and Leslie and everyone that's still on the conference call, I appreciate all of your input and all of your help. It's been a great joy and honor working with you. So I guess I will close with that comment and wish everybody well.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you, Mary.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you, Mary.

Male Voice: Thank you, Mary.

Sarah Vogel: Yeah. And Josiah, aloha.

Josiah Griffin: Aloha.

Sarah Vogel: Mahalo.

Josiah Griffin: Mahalo.

Leslie Wheelock: So with that, on behalf of the Office of Tribal Relations, on behalf of the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, this is our last meeting. I do want to thank our council members for all of the time and all of the support, all of your good words, great meetings, and your thoughtfulness and working together to push forward things that we can only accept and try to move in here that benefit Indian country and its farmers and ranchers and everybody else. Because, as we know, we're all for Indian America beyond the farming and ranching aspects. We do appreciate all of your hard work, all of your labor, and especially all of your time. This is not an easy commitment. We understand we drag you away from families and work obligations frequently enough, and we very much appreciate all of your time and all of your assistance and all of your support. So, with that, I have no more comment.

Gilbert Harrison: Leslie, this is Gilbert.

Leslie Wheelock: Hi, Gilbert.

Gilbert Harrison: I have one request. We are the secretary's council. I think it would be appropriate if we got a letter of thank you with the USDA seal and the secretary's signature saying thank you very much, my council, for helping.

Leslie Wheelock: I think we can make that recommendation to the secretary, Gilbert.

Gilbert Harrison: Thank you very much. You all have a good day.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you very much.

Sarah Vogel: Thank you. Bye.

Leslie Wheelock: Thanks everybody.

Male Voice: Thank you everyone.

Leslie Wheelock: Oh. Wait.

Josiah Griffin: If there are no additional comments, do I hear a motion to adjourn this meeting?

Mary Ann Thompson: I so move. I make the motion to adjourn. Mary Thompson.

Josiah Griffin: Okay.

Leslie Wheelock: Thank you.

Josiah Griffin: Thank you. You all have a good rest of your day.

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