



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

MAY 21 2019

Mr. William H. Leonard
4630 Ben Hur Road
PO Box 186
Mariposa, California 95338

Dear Mr. Leonard:

Thank you for your letter of May 9, 2019, renewing an earlier request for an extension of the comment period on the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation's ("SSM") Proposed Finding ("PF"). You also presented a non-regulatory "Proposed Alternative" procedure for evaluating the SSM petition for consideration. The Office of Federal Acknowledgment (OFA) within the Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs (AS-IA) received your request by fax on May 9, 2019.

The Department published notice of the SSM PF on November 23, 2018, which started a 180-day comment period, scheduled to end on May 22, 2019. The Federal acknowledgment regulations provide that the comment period that follows a PF "may be extended for up to an additional 180 days at the Assistant Secretary's discretion upon a finding of good cause." 25 C.F.R. § 83.10(i) (1994). Upon review of your request, the AS-IA has found good cause to grant a 180-day extension to the comment period. Comments are due on or before November 18, 2019. Through this letter, OFA is notifying the petitioner and interested parties of this extension.

As stated at the formal meeting on April 24, 2019, the Department has interpreted its regulations to allow for more than one extension of the comment period following a PF. Please note that, like this extension, any further extensions of the comment period will require good cause. Prior to granting an additional extension, the AS-IA may inquire into the research and analysis that SSM plans to perform during the extension and may ask SSM to explain why it did not complete that work during the initial comment period or the period of any prior extension. Approval of additional extensions may also depend on the length of additional time sought. Also, please note that, during the extended comment period, OFA will be available to provide informal technical assistance through scheduled teleconference.

With regard to the "alternative" procedure you proposed for evaluating this petition, the AS-IA is not considering any alternatives to the established regulatory process.

Finally, OFA will be transmitting a copy of the April 24, 2019, formal meeting transcript to each participant and is continuing to process your FOIA requests. Should you have any questions or

wish to schedule a teleconference, please do not hesitate to contact OFA at 1849 C Street, NW, MS-4071 MIB, Washington, DC 20240, or call (202) 513-7650. We look forward to working together.

Sincerely,



Director, Office of Federal Acknowledgment

cc: Mr. Stephen V. Quesenberry
Interested Parties

