



Nez Perce

TRIBAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

P.O. BOX 305 • LAPWAI, IDAHO 83540 • (208) 843-2253

February 14, 2025

The Honorable Mike Crapo
United States Senate
239 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable James E. Risch
United States Senate
483 Russell Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Russ Fulcher
United States Congress
1514 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Simpson
United States Congress
2084 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Reduction in Force at Tribally-Connected Federal Agencies

Dear Senator Crapo, Senator Risch, Representative Fulcher, and Representative Simpson:


The Nez Perce Tribe has been informed that the Office of Personnel Management has directed agencies to begin the process of firing nearly all federal agency employees that are still within their probationary period. This directive is expected to affect approximately 200,000 employees across the government and is not based on a review of the performance of the employee or the value of the service provided by the employee. As a result, many vital public services, including services to Native American tribes based on treaty, statute, and trust obligations, will be severely impacted as there is no exemption provided to agencies such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Indian Health Service from the firing mandate.

The relationship between tribes and the United States is grounded in a federal trust responsibility rooted in the United States Constitution, treaties, and countless federal laws and policies, which has resulted in a protected legal status of Tribal Nations as political entities rather than a racial class. The federal government acts as a trustee and has charged itself with moral obligations of the highest responsibility and trust towards Indian tribes, and in doing so, has established programs and services necessary to fulfill its trust and treaty obligations. The agencies that provide these tribal services are already plagued by chronic underfunding and significant staffing shortages and such an indiscriminate culling of these agencies is harmful and dangerous.

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The Nez Perce Tribe strongly opposes these efforts to minimize the workforce at these important tribal agencies and asks that immediate action be taken to halt this effort.

Sincerely,



Shannon F. Wheeler
Chairman