



*Nez Perce*

**TRIBAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

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

March 4, 2025

The Honorable Doug Burgum, Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington DC 20240

***Re: Northern Idaho Agency of the Bureau of Indian Affairs on the Nez Perce Reservation***

Secretary Burgum:

The Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee (“NPTEC”), the governing body of the Nez Perce Tribe, is strongly opposed to closing the Northern Idaho Agency of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (“BIA”) located at Lapwai, Idaho.

The Trump Administration appears to be blindly closing federal offices without considering its own obligations and the impact on local communities. The Northern Idaho Agency of the BIA has been in operation on the Nez Perce Reservation for decades. Their presence on the Reservation is essential to keeping the tribal-federal relationship intact for the Nez Perce people.

Employees at the Northern Idaho Agency BIA assist with many issues, such as trespassing on tribal lands, obtaining permits for rights of way, and assisting with probate matters and public safety. Pulling BIA staff from the Reservation would create even more hardship than the Tribe has already experienced. These employees are already overworked and stretched beyond capacity, so losing them would create a bottle neck of need at more distant offices.

As the trustee to the Nez Perce Tribe, the federal government made a solemn promise to preserve and protect Nez Perce lands, to educate Tribal members, and to provide other governmental services. The United States and the Nez Perce entered into treaties in which the Tribe ceded thousands of acres of homeland. In exchange, the federal government promised to provide these services. We implore you to urge the President to uphold his trust responsibility and preserve ongoing services to Indian tribes.



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We invite you to meet with us at any time.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

*for* Ryan Datman  
Shannon F. Wheeler  
Chairman