



Principal Deputy Director Margaret Everson
US Fish & Wildlife Service
1849 C Street NW
Room 3331
Washington, DC 20240-0001

July 15, 2019

Dear Director Everson,

RE: The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Proposed Rule: Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and Migratory Bird Treaty Act; Religious Use of Feathers.

There is incongruity to sovereign Indian Nations being expected to submit “public comment” to a federal agency on a policy position that impacts the tribe(s) in question. The Nations of the Blackfoot Confederacy are sovereign entities, with inherent sovereign standing and rights. It is, therefore, improper to place sovereign Indian Nations on a par with NGOs, advocacy organizations, or concerned members of the public by requiring us to participate in “public comment” forums or be denied a voice if we do not. Every nation of the Blackfoot Confederacy has held a nation-to-nation relationship with the United States since the signing and ratification of the Treaty of Lame Bull in 1855. The Blackfoot Confederacy makes this submission in keeping with our sovereign standing, in a direct exchange with the head of the federal agency concerned, in the context of the government-to-government obligation that prevails.

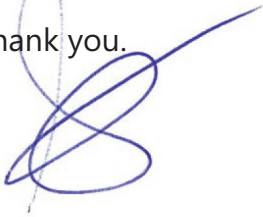
The Blackfoot Confederacy opposes the petition before the FWS to revise regulations pertaining to tribal nations and tribal members in respect to the possession and use of eagle feathers. The changes proposed could severely weaken the rights and standing of federally recognized and treaty tribes; standing that buttresses tribal sovereignty and tribal religious and spiritual freedoms protected under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

The Blackfoot Confederacy supports the resolution passed by our historic allies of the Great Sioux Nation and the sister tribal nations of the Great Plains Tribal Chairman’s Association (GPTCA):

"THE GREAT PLAINS TRIBAL CHAIRMEN'S ASSOCIATION, INC. CALLS UPON THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE TO DENY THE PETITION FOR RULEMAKING SEEKING TO REVISE REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE "INDIAN TRIBE" EXCEPTION IN THE BALD AND GOLDEN EAGLE ACT TO ALLOW NON-INDIANS TO POSSESS AND USE EAGLE FEATHERS."

This powerful resolution reflects our position.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Chief Stanley C. Grier –
President of the Blackfoot Confederacy Chiefs.**

BLACKFOOT CONFEDERACY

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