

**WASHINGTON D.C.  
OFFICE**

Wendy Helgemo  
whelgemo@bigfirelaw.com

**NEBRASKA OFFICES**

1404 Fort Crook Road South  
Bellevue, NE 68005  
531-466-8725  
info@bigfirelaw.com

601 Buffalo Trail  
Winnebago, NE 68071  
402-878-4383

Sheila Corbine  
scorbine@bigfirelaw.com

[Bigfirelaw.com](http://Bigfirelaw.com)



## TRIBAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATIVE — CLIENT ALERT

---

**TO:** TRIBAL LEADERS AND BUSINESS CLIENTS  
**FROM:** BIG FIRE LAW & POLICY GROUP  
**DATE:** JANUARY 29, 2021  
**RE:** UPDATE FROM WASHINGTON

---

Happy New Year. We continue to ride the rollercoaster into 2021. So far in less than a month, we have witnessed a new Congress getting sworn in, an insurrection at our United States Capitol and a Presidential Inauguration. The world continues to battle a pandemic and Americans have begun to get COVID-19 vaccinations. As President Joe Biden begins to fill his cabinet and roll out his policies and priorities, he has set an aggressive table for his first 100 days. Please find an update on highlights of his first couple of weeks.

### **I. Biden Nominations**

#### **A. Deb Haaland - Secretary of the Interior**

President Biden nominated U.S. Representative Debra Haaland, a citizen of the Pueblo of Laguna, to be the 54th United States Secretary of the Interior. As one of the first Native American women elected to the United States Congress and a 35th generation New Mexican, Rep. Haaland serves the 1st district of New Mexico. She sits on the Armed Services Committee and is the Vice-Chair of the Committee on Natural Resources. She is a leading voice to fight climate change, protect women from violence and ensure that America keeps its promises to Native Hawaiians, Alaska Natives and American Indians. Rep. Haaland is a role model for Indigenous youth and women and girls around the world. No confirmation hearing has been scheduled yet. She would be the first Native American to head the department.

#### **B. Other Key Offices**

The nominees for Director of the Indian Health Service and Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs have not been named yet.

### **II. Executive Actions**

#### **A. Vaccine**

On January 26, President Biden issued “Fact Sheet: President Biden Announces New Steps to Boost Vaccine Supply and Increase Transparency for States, Tribes, and Territories.” With a National

Action Strategy, President Biden set a goal to administer 100 million shots in 100 days and ramp up vaccine supply as fast as possible. The administration will increase vaccines to states, tribes and territories, provide a three week look ahead on supply to states, tribes and territories and double the nation's supply to 200 million doses by the end of the summer.

See Fact Sheet [Here](#)

## **B. Personal Protective Equipment**

On January 21, President Biden issued “Executive Order on a Sustainable Public Health Supply Chain” to secure supplies necessary to respond to COVID-19 for state, local and tribal governments.

See Executive Order [Here](#)

## **C. Keystone**

On January 20, President Biden issued an Executive Order called “Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis.” This action revoked federal approval for the Keystone XL Pipeline and halted pipeline activities.

See the Executive Order [Here](#)

## **D. Tribal Consultation**

On January 26, President Biden issued a “Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships” to ensure that federal officials speak with and listen to tribal leaders in formulating federal policy that affects tribal nations.

See the Executive Action [Here](#)

## **E. Climate Change**

On January 27, President Biden issued an Executive Order entitled, “Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad.” This action places a pause on new oil and natural gas leases on public lands or in offshore waters and does not apply to existing leases.

See the Executive Action [Here](#)

## **F. Rulemaking on Hold**

Lastly, President Biden put a halt on pending rules so his administration can review past actions of the Trump administration.

See the Executive Action [Here](#)

### III. Native American Appointees

To date, these are President Biden's senior staff who are tribal citizens:

**Elizabeth "Libby" Washburn**

Chickasaw Nation  
Senior Advisor on Native American Issues  
The White House

**Matt Dannenberg**

Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa  
Senior Associate Director of the Presidential Personnel Office  
The White House

**JoAnn Chase**

Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation  
Director of the American Indian Environmental Office  
United States Environmental Protection Agency

**Anne Marie Bledsoe Downs**

Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska  
Deputy Solicitor for Indian Affairs  
United States Department of the Interior

**PaaWee Rivera**

Pueblo of Pojoaque  
Associate Director of Intergovernmental Affairs and Public Engagement  
The White House

**Heather Dawn Thompson**

Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe  
Director of the Office of Tribal Relations  
United States Department of Agriculture

**Robert Anderson**

Bois Forte Band of Chippewa  
Principal Deputy Solicitor  
United States Department of the Interior

**Wahleah Johns**

Navajo Nation  
Director of the Office of Indian Energy  
United States Department of Energy

**If you have any questions about the issues discussed in this newsletter please contact your Big Fire Attorney:**

<b>Wendy Helgemo</b>	<b><a href="mailto:whelgemo@bigfirelaw.com">whelgemo@bigfirelaw.com</a></b>
<b>Sheila Corbine</b>	<b><a href="mailto:scorbine@bigfirelaw.com">scorbine@bigfirelaw.com</a></b>
<b>Leonika Charging</b>	<b><a href="mailto:lcharging@bigfirelaw.com">lcharging@bigfirelaw.com</a></b>
<b>Nicole Ducheneaux</b>	<b><a href="mailto:nducheneaux@bigfirelaw.com">nducheneaux@bigfirelaw.com</a></b>

**About Big Fire Law & Policy Group, LLP**

*Big Fire Law & Policy Group is a 100% Native owned and majority woman owned national law firm providing legal representation and advocacy in a broad range of service areas, with an emphasis in tribal law and federal Indian law.*