



CENTRAL COUNCIL
Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
Office of the President • Edward K. Thomas Building
9097 Glacier Highway • Juneau, Alaska 99801

Executive Council of the Central Council
TLINGIT & HAIDA INDIAN TRIBES OF ALASKA

Resolution EC 25-26

Title: Executive Order 14210 Impacts to Indian Programs

WHEREAS, the Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit & Haida) is a federally recognized tribe with more than 38,000 citizens; and

WHEREAS, under Article X of the Tlingit & Haida Constitution, the Executive Council is the governing body of Tlingit & Haida when the Tribal Assembly is not in session; and

WHEREAS, the Tribal Assembly is not in session; and

WHEREAS, Tribal Nations are and always have been inherently sovereign governments that have a unique political, government-to-government relationship with the United States; and

WHEREAS, treaties have provided Tribal Nations with guaranteed rights to Tribal self-government, protection, safety, and economic development; and

WHEREAS, the United States' obligation to Tribal Nations are based on their political status as Indians – a status that is unique to Indians and enshrined in the U.S. Constitution; and

WHEREAS, the relationship between Tribal Nations and the U.S. government has been defined in statute and case law as a political relationship that further distinguishes Indian programs from federally funded programs and policies for the general public; and

WHEREAS, despite the trust relationship requiring the federal government to provide for the health, education, and welfare of Tribal Nations, Congress has chronically underfunded the Indian Health Service (IHS), the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), and other Indian programs resulting in under resourced programs, services, and activities implemented by the IHS, BIA, and BIE and have vast needs for Tribal government resources and services for their citizens; and

WHEREAS, the United States fulfills its legal trust and treaty obligations through both the direct delivery of Tribal programs and services provided by federal agencies and through provision of federal staff and dollars to Tribal Nations; and

WHEREAS, essential services provided by federal employees include healthcare services through IHS, law enforcement, land management, and public safety through the BIA, and educational services through the BIE; and

WHEREAS, countless other essential and legally mandated services are federally provided, and such programs are not discretionary, they are legal obligations rooted in treaties, trust obligations, the U.S. Constitution, and long-standing federal statutes; and

WHEREAS, IHS medical facilities regularly face significant vacancy rates for physicians, nurses, and other key clinical providers which average 30 percent; and

WHEREAS, the BIA experiences chronic understaffing, and staff frequently already carry multiple workloads; and

WHEREAS, the BIE already serves to oversee or operate K-12 institutions, residential schools, dormitories, and two institutions of higher education, the staff of approximately 300 is insufficient to meet the critical and varied nature of all of these responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, a cause of the chronic failures of federal agencies to meet their trust and treaty obligations is the persistent inadequacy of federal recruitment, hiring and retention of sufficient federal staff to meet the needs of Tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, federal employees serve as a vital economic foundation in rural communities and federal employment is disproportionately high in Indian Country; and

WHEREAS, the public administration sector accounts for approximately 12.5% of all jobs in Tribal areas, compared to only 4% in nearby counties;¹ and

WHEREAS, the White House has stated that reducing the federal workforce is an Administration priority, and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has now ordered most federal agencies to immediately lay off probationary employees; and

WHEREAS, Tlingit & Haida understands that, pursuant to the memorandum from the OPM, more than 200,000 federal probationary employees (hired within the last one to two years) are planned to be terminated on or about February 14, 2025; and

WHEREAS, IHS typically has 14-18 percent probationary staff at any given time, and a work force of 15,000 employees who provide direct care to patients, and only a handful of providers have an exemption, but not enough to ensure services meet need; and

WHEREAS, Tlingit & Haida understands that approximately 2,300 U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) probationary employees are being considered for termination, including approximately 120 Indian Affairs employees; and

WHEREAS, Tlingit & Haida further understands that approximately 90 BIE probationary employees of the Agency workforce have been terminated thus far, crippling the Agency and post-secondary workforce which may lead to the closure of both Haskell Indian Nations University and the Southwest Polytechnic Institute; and

¹ Kunesh, P. H. (2019, January 14), *The U.S. government shutdown: Its impact on Indian country is deep: Center for Indian Country Development*. The U.S. government shutdown: Its impact on Indian Country is deep. <https://www.minneapolisfed.org/article/2019/the-us-government-shutdown-its-impact-on-indian-country-is-deep>.

WHEREAS, Executive Order (EO) 14210, *Implementing The President's "Department of Government Efficiency" Workforce Optimization Initiative*, requires a reduction in force for all federal departments and agencies; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order (EO) 14210 Sec. 3(c) provides protections for public safety, immigration enforcement, and law enforcement, as well as protections for employees whose functions are mandated in statute; and

WHEREAS, IHS has previously been provided exemptions for staffing freezes, reductions, and other personnel actions, recognizing both the agency's direct provision of care and its significant role in meeting trust and treaty obligations; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has provided broad exemptions, and the same should be provided for IHS, DOI, and other critical agencies serving Indian Country;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska formally support the withdrawal of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) memorandum directing the termination of probationary federal employees; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Tlingit & Haida urges OPM, alongside every Agency Head and Department of Government Efficiency Team Lead to ensure the employees whose functions are in service of fulfilling the trust and treaty obligations to Indian Country are exempted from this and future comprehensive actions towards workforce or federal funding reduction; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon OPM and Departments to issue a blanket exemption from any workforce reductions for all employees of the Indian Health Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Indian Education, and all Tribal offices throughout all federal agencies, as well as other federal employees whose role is to deliver services or funding to Tribal programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that OPM, Office of Management and Budget, and respective Departments and Agencies immediately conduct Tribal Consultation to understand the critical services provided to Indian Country and the grave impact these staffing changes will have; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of the Tlingit & Haida until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

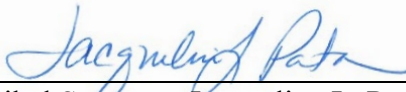
ADOPTED this 21st day of February 2025, by the Executive Council of the Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, by a vote of 6 yeas, 0 nays, 0 abstentions and 0 absences.

CERTIFY



President Richard J. Peterson

ATTEST



Tribal Secretary Jacqueline L. Pata