



MAY 24 2019

Dear Tribal Leader:

I am writing to update you on the Tribal Consultation for the Indian Health Service (IHS) *Sanitation Deficiency System – A Guide for Reporting Sanitation Deficiencies for American Indian and Alaska Native Homes and Communities* (commonly known as the “SDS Guide”).

By letter dated July 2, 2018, I initiated Tribal Consultation on proposed updates to the SDS Guide, which is used to establish the processes by which IHS Areas collect and report the current sanitation deficiencies affecting American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) homes and communities. At the request of Tribes, I extended the comment period through September 14, 2018, to provide additional time for comments. During the comment period, 41 responses were received that included 71 unique comments on the SDS Guide. I want to thank the Tribes and Tribal Organizations that took the time to review and provide comments on the document.

On March 20, 2019, the IHS Office of Environmental Health and Engineering (OEHE) met with the IHS Facilities Appropriation Advisory Board (FAAB) in Rockville, Maryland, to discuss the results of the Tribal Consultation and to receive feedback on the finalization of the SDS Guide. At the meeting, the IHS OEHE provided the FAAB with a summary of the comments received, and the FAAB requested additional time to review the comments in detail. Following the meeting, two conference calls were held to discuss the comments and proposed responses. I want to thank the FAAB members for their active engagement and feedback.

A summary of the comments received during Tribal Consultation and how the IHS incorporated them into the updated SDS Guide can be found under the Links header at <https://www.ihs.gov/dsfc/resources/>. IHS based these responses on a thorough review of the statutory requirements, program policy, and input from the FAAB. The comments are provided with limited modifications to remove identifying information and to group similar comments together.

The IHS OEHE plans to issue the updated SDS Guide for use in the 2020 SDS reporting cycle. The updated SDS Guide will be posted under the Documents header at the above-stated link by September 30, 2019.

If you have additional questions, please contact RADM Mark Calkins, Director, Division of Sanitation Facilities Construction, IHS, by telephone at (301) 443-1046 or by e-mail at mark.calkins@ihs.gov.

Sincerely,

/Michael D. Weahkee/

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