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Contact: Blake Androff
(DOI) 202-208-6416
Nedra Darling
(ASIA) 202-219-4150

Salazar Applauds Senate Confirmation of Kevin Washburn as Interior's Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today applauded the Senate's confirmation of Kevin K. Washburn, a member of the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma, to serve as Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs at the Department of the Interior. The Senate confirmed Washburn's nomination, which President Obama announced in early August, by unanimous consent last night.

"As we continue to strengthen the integrity of the nation's government-to-government relationship with federally-recognized Indian tribes and empower Native American and Alaska Native communities, Kevin Washburn will be an outstanding addition to our leadership team and a vital asset for President Obama's initiatives in Indian Country," Salazar said. "Kevin's professional and academic achievements and his thorough knowledge of the critical issues facing the Nation's First Americans will help us to fulfill the President's commitment to empower tribal governments and advance their economic and social goals."

Washburn is Dean of the University of New Mexico School of Law, a position he has held since June 2009. Prior to that, he served as the Rosenstiel Distinguished Professor of Law at the University of Arizona James E. Rogers College of Law from 2008 to 2009 and as an Associate Professor of Law at the University of Minnesota Law School from 2002 to 2008. From 2007 to 2008, Mr. Washburn was the Oneida Indian Nation Visiting Professor at Harvard Law School. Previously, he served as General Counsel for the National Indian Gaming Commission from 2000 to 2002, and as an Assistant United States Attorney in Albuquerque, New Mexico, from 1997 to 2000. Mr. Washburn was a trial attorney in the Indian Resources Section of the U.S. Department of Justice from 1994 to 1997. Mr. Washburn is a member of the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma. He earned a B.A. from the University of Oklahoma and a J.D. from Yale Law School.

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Washburn will lead a team that includes Lawrence S. "Larry" Roberts as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. An enrolled member of the Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin, Roberts, who joined Interior on September 5, is an accomplished federal attorney with extensive experience in federal Indian law and programs. He had been serving as General Counsel of the National Indian Gaming Commission since July 2010.

Donald "Del" Laverdure, the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, has been serving as the Acting Assistant Secretary. During his tenure, Laverdure has worked to resolve long-standing water rights issues, improve public safety and education in tribal communities, accelerate the restoration of tribal homelands, and help Indian nations pursue the future of their choosing.

Editors Note: A photo of the new Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs can be downloaded at:
<http://www.indianaffairs.gov/WhoWeAre/AS-IA/OPA/Photo/index.htm>

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