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INTERIOR CONFIRMS POARCH CREEK LANDS ARE PROTECTED BY FEDERAL LAW

POARCH CREEK INDIAN RESERVATION, Alabama – June 6, 2012 – - The United States Department of the Interior, has sent a letter to the Alabama Escambia County Commission (Commission), decisively dismissing its contention that the Poarch Band of Creek Indians' (PBCI or Tribe) lands are not protected by federal laws.

In a June 4th letter, the Interior Department's Acting Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs confirmed that PBCI's land was, indeed, taken "in trust by the United States in 1984 and proclaimed to be a Reservation in 1985" and that PBCI "enjoys all rights and privileges associated with having its Reservation held in trust." This letter shows that Chairman Stokes' attempt to tax the Tribe's trust lands is without merit.

Indian tribes are recognized several times in the United States Constitution. Most notably, the "commerce clause" acknowledges that tribes are considered separate, distinct governments as are states and foreign nations. Therefore, none of these entities, nor their lands is, subject to taxation by another form of government.

In April, Chairman David Stokes announced at a press conference that Brian Taylor, an attorney from Elmore County who once worked for former Alabama Governor Riley, had been hired by the Commission after convincing several members that PBCI's lands had not legally been taken into federal trust and were subject to the County's property tax. Under a written agreement signed several years ago, the Commission and the Tribe had agreed to sit down and discuss any potential problems or areas of concern. However, the Tribe was not notified of the Commission's action until Mr. Stokes' press conference.

"It is unfortunate that Chairman Stokes did not attempt to sit down with the tribe before taking this action," noted Robbie McGhee, head of the Tribe's Government Affairs office. He continued, "His move by the Commission has clearly strained our relationship. We have given the Commission hundreds of thousands of dollars to be spent on improving the county. We have paid millions in taxes, and created thousands of jobs that employ county residents and add to the tax base. This was a short-sighted attempt on the part of the Commission that we hope will not have a long-term effect on the relationship between our government and the County. "

Tribal Chairman Buford L. Rolin said, "We are committed to being good neighbors to Escambia County and throughout the State. We are pleased to be able to continue to create jobs, contribute millions of dollars to the schools, provide fire protection, public safety, and infrastructure improvements in Escambia County, and serve as an economic driving force in Alabama."

Attached is the letter from the Department of the Interior, stating that the laws that have protected the Tribe's lands for over 25 years were never under question.

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United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

JUN 04 2012

Mr. David M. Stokes
Chairman, Escambia County Commission
P.O. Box 848
Brewton, Alabama 36427

Dear Chairman Stokes:

Thank you for your letter dated April 17, 2012, to Secretary Salazar requesting information about the Reservation for the Poarch Band of Creek Indians (Band). The Secretary has asked me to respond to your letter.

In response to your request, the Department of the Interior can confirm that the land referenced in your letter was acquired in trust by the United States in 1984 and proclaimed to be a Reservation in 1985. The Band's Reservation, including the portion of the Reservation that is situated within the geographical boundary of Escambia County, Alabama, is held in trust by the United States for the Benefit of the Band. As such, the Band enjoys all rights and privileges associated with having its Reservation held in trust by the United States under Federal Law.

Sincerely,

Donald E. Laverdure
Acting Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs