

EXHIBIT D



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

Central California Agency
1824 Tribute Road, Suite J
Sacramento, CA 95815-4308

IN REPLY REFER TO:

MAR -7 2000

Silvia Burley, Chairperson
Sheep Ranch Rancheria
1055 Winter Court
Tracy, California 95376

Dear Ms. Burley:

The purpose of this correspondence is to provide you with a summary of the discussion that occurred during a meeting on February 15, 2000, held at the Central California Agency (Agency), with Yakima Dixie, Vice-Chairperson of the Sheep Ranch Rancheria (Tribe), his brother Melvin Dixie, and other interested parties. The summary responds to the concerns you expressed in your letter dated February 15, 2000. We also respond to your requests expressed in your letter dated February 24, 2000.

The Meeting of February 15, 2000

At the request of Yakima Dixie, Vice-Chairperson, which he made during a meeting at the Agency with him and other interested parties on December 28, 1999, we scheduled a meeting to be held at the Agency on February 15, 2000. As explained in our February 4, 2000, letters to you and to Mr. Dixie, the purpose of that meeting was to discuss the issues raised in those letters, as well as steps the Tribe may take to resolve this matter internally. Mr. Dixie also requested that only members of the General Council and one non-attorney representative for each side participate in that meeting. We understood Mr. Dixie's request as a desire to ensure a free exchange of ideas among those persons comprising the body possessing authority to decide the issues.

By letters dated February 9, 2000, you informed the Agency that the Tribe concluded that the February 15, 2000, meeting was inconsistent with Tribal management of its own affairs. On that basis, you and Rashel Reznor declined to participate in that meeting.

On February 15, 2000, we informed Yakima Dixie, his brother Melvin Dixie, and other interested parties, of the decision of Rashel Reznor and you not to participate in the scheduled meeting. However, Yakima Dixie requested a brief meeting with us to address general questions arising from our February 4, 2000, letter to him. We agreed to meet for that limited purpose. The following is a summary of the ensuing discussion.

At the outset of the meeting, we reiterated to the parties present the Agency's position that the issues raised in our letter of February 4, 2000, are internal matters. As such, the parties present needed to seek redress within the appropriate Tribal forum empowered to process and decide such issues. We also reiterated our view, notwithstanding a Tribal decision to the contrary, that the appropriate Tribal forum is the General Council. At present, we view, again notwithstanding

a Tribal decision to the contrary, the General Council as comprised of Yakima Dixie, Rashel Reznor, and you. The rights of Melvin Dixie, Rocky McKay, and other interested parties, to participate in the governance of the Tribe are to be determined by the appropriate Tribal forum, and are further discussed below.

Your Membership Status

The discussion then turned to the assertion by Yakima Dixie that his act of August 5, 1998, to accept Rashel Reznor, Anjelica Paulk, Tristian Wallace, and you, as enrolled members of the Tribe was a limited enrollment. He explained that he intended only to grant to the four of you such membership rights necessary to qualify the four of you for services offered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to members of federally recognized tribes. Yakima Dixie stated that his intent was consistent with the context in which you originally approached him, seeking a means of obtaining additional assistance after such assistance previously provided to you by the Jackson Rancheria was discontinued. As evidence of his position, Yakima Dixie produced videotape of a meeting held at Yakima Dixie's residence on or about October 16, 1998, at which representatives from the Agency and the California Indian Legal Services were present. We viewed a portion of the videotape documenting a discussion of your potential eligibility as a member of the Tribe to receive scholarship, housing, and other assistance. Afterward, we expressed our view that it was unlikely that the Tribe would find such a limitation on your enrollment expressed in the videotape. Further, we pointed out the fact, as stated in our letter of February 4, 2000, that the documents signed by Yakima Dixie to effect your enrollment expressed no such limitation. Moreover, we explained that Yakima Dixie's subsequent actions tended to establish the contrary view that you possess full rights of membership, since Mr. Dixie only objected to your participation in the deliberations of the decision-making body of the Tribe many months after the transition in leadership.

Allegations of Fraud or Misconduct

The discussion then turned to the allegations of fraud or misconduct relative to the change in Tribal leadership during April and May 1999. Yakima Dixie asked what action we were going to take. We explained that there was no action for the Agency to take, consistent with our position as expressed in our letter of February 4, 2000, that the allegations are issues properly decided within the appropriate Tribal forum. Thus, we explained, in light of federal law and policy, there was no basis for Agency involvement, since this situation is a dispute of an internal nature.

Your Decision Not to Participate in the Meeting

Yakima Dixie then asked why you and Rashel Reznor did not attend the meeting, and whether we were going to do something about your lack of participation. We explained that attendance at the meeting was not mandatory. Our reasons for fulfilling Mr. Dixie's request were threefold. First, we believed fulfilling the request was appropriate to provide a safe neutral location for the meeting. Second, by hosting a meeting at the Agency, we would assure our availability to answer general questions regarding steps the Tribe may take to resolve this matter internally. Third, we believed the meeting would assure a free exchange of ideas among the persons comprising the body possessing authority to decide the issues. However, we believed that requiring the mandatory participation of the parties would likely be viewed as an intrusion into an internal matter of the Tribe.

We also discussed your letter to Yakima Dixie, dated February 9, 2000, wherein you informed Mr. Dixie of the Tribe's decision to extend to him a thirty-day period within which to raise his concerns and present his issues to the Tribe. We reiterated to Mr. Dixie of our position that, where issues are internal in nature, their resolution must be sought within the appropriate Tribal forum. In light of your letter and consistent with our position, we suggested that Mr. Dixie send to the Tribe a letter stating his claims and requesting a hearing. Moreover, we recommended Mr. Dixie provide the Tribe with notice of that address where he expected delivery of notices of Tribal meetings and other correspondence to occur. We also suggested that Mr. Dixie inform the Tribe of any circumstances which may limit his ability to participate in Tribal affairs, such as a lack of access to transportation or an inability to pay out-of-pocket costs of transportation. If Mr. Dixie believes such circumstances exist, he should request financial assistance from the Tribe or suggest alternatives he believes may reduce or eliminate potential barriers to his participation in Tribal affairs. We also suggested that Mr. Dixie provide the Agency with a courtesy copy of such a notice. To date, no such courtesy copy has been received at the Agency.

Ability of Rocky McKay to Participate

During the meeting, Rocky McKay presented us with an original affidavit from his mother, Wanda Lewis, wherein she states that Yakima Dixie is the true father of Mr. McKay. We briefly reviewed the document. We then expressed our view that Mr. McKay may be entitled to participate in the organization of the Tribe, if he can establish that he is a lineal descendant of Yakima Dixie, one of the heirs now living listed in the Order of Determination of Heirs issued on November 1, 1971, as reaffirmed by subsequent Order issued on April 14, 1993. Further, we informed Mr. McKay that the subject of what evidence is acceptable for establishing his lineal descendancy is an internal matter to be determined by the Tribe. Thus, Mr. McKay's ability to participate in the organization of the Tribe also depends upon whether he can provide that type of evidence determined by the Tribe to be acceptable for purposes of establishing lineal descendancy.

We then recommended that Rocky McKay provide to the Tribe a written request to be enrolled as a member of the Tribe. We also recommended that Mr. McKay enclose with his request any documents and other evidence he believed to be acceptable for establishing his lineal descendancy.

By way of a letter dated February 25, 2000, we informed Rocky McKay that the Tribe would likely view the affidavit from Wanda Lewis as insufficient evidence of Yakima Dixie's paternity. In general, where the Bureau of Indian Affairs is performing enrollment functions, a valid affidavit from the purported father is acceptable evidence of paternity. However, as stated previously, the subject of what evidence is acceptable for establishing paternity is an internal matter to be determined by the Tribe. Thus, we recommended that Mr. McKay obtain from Yakima Dixie a notarized affidavit asserting his paternity. We also recommended that Mr. McKay seek an amendment to his birth certificate, since Yakima Dixie is not named therein as the father. We further recommended that Mr. McKay request financial and technical assistance from the Tribe in obtaining an affidavit or any other evidence the Tribe may determine to be necessary to establish his eligibility for enrollment and membership in the Tribe.

In our February 25, 2000, letter to Rocky McKay, we expressed the view that the letter accompanying his correspondence dated November 22, 1999, from Yakima Dixie declaring his adoption of Mr. McKay as a member of the Tribe would likely be viewed by the Tribe as ineffective. Copies of these documents were faxed by the Agency to you on December 7, 1999. We also informed Mr. McKay that in general, only the Tribe, acting at a duly noticed, called, and convened meeting at which a quorum is present, is the proper body to consider and effect his enrollment in the Tribe.

Ability of Melvin Dixie to Participate

Also during the February 15, 2000, meeting, we discussed the right of Melvin Dixie to participate in the organization of the Tribe. We advised Melvin Dixie that he is entitled to participate in the organization of the Tribe because he is one of the heirs now living listed in the Order of Determination of Heirs issued on November 1, 1971, as reaffirmed by subsequent Order issued on April 14, 1993. We then recommended Mr. Dixie provide to the Tribe written notice of his present address and telephone number, as the present leadership and administration of the Tribe must have such information in order to deliver proper and timely notice of Tribal meetings. We further advised Mr. Dixie to inform the Tribe of any circumstances which may limit his ability to participate in Tribal affairs, such as a lack of access to transportation or an inability to pay out-of-pocket costs of transportation. If Mr. Dixie believes such circumstances exist, he should request financial assistance from the Tribe or suggest alternatives he believes may reduce or eliminate potential barriers to his participation in Tribal affairs.

In connection with Melvin Dixie's right to participate in the organization of the Tribe, we expressed the view that he would likely be requested to provide to the Tribe proof of his identity. We explained that the subject of what evidence is acceptable for establishing identity is an internal matter to be determined by the Tribe. Therefore, we suggested that Mr. Dixie provide written notice to the Tribe of his assertion of entitlement to participate in the organization of the Tribe, and to enclose documents and other evidence he believed to be acceptable for establishing his identity.

In a subsequent letter dated February 25, 2000, we further recommended that Melvin Dixie request financial and technical assistance from the Tribe in obtaining any other evidence the Tribe might determine to be necessary.

In the aforementioned letter, we also discussed our views related to an affidavit by Melvin Dixie. The affidavit was received at the Agency on February 1, 2000. In the affidavit, among other assertions, Melvin Dixie stated that he is the father of a son. In our letter, we recommended that Melvin Dixie provide to the Tribe a written request that his son be enrolled as a member of the Tribe. We suggested Mr. Dixie enclose with his request a photocopy of the birth certificate or provide other evidence establishing that he is the father of his son. We further suggested that Mr. Dixie obtain, if not already in his possession, a certified copy of the birth certificate naming Mr. Dixie as the father of his son. Moreover, we recommended that Melvin Dixie, should he not be named in the birth certificate, complete an affidavit asserting his paternity of his son, and have the affidavit notarized. We also suggested that Melvin Dixie seek an amendment to the birth certificate if he is not named as the father in the birth certificate. We then recommended that Melvin Dixie request assistance from the Tribe in obtaining a certified birth certificate, an affidavit, or any other evidence the Tribe might determine to be necessary to establish his son's eligibility for enrollment and membership in the Tribe.

Your Letter of February 15, 2000

As for your concern expressed in your letter of February 15, 2000, that the meeting of the same day with Yakima and Melvin Dixie and other interested parties was improper, we assure you that the meeting was completely proper. First and foremost, we agreed to meet, at the request of an officer of the Tribe's governing body, for the limited purpose of addressing general questions arising from our letter of February 4, 2000. Moreover, we reiterated to the parties present our position as expressed in our letter of February 4, 2000, that these issues are internal matters to be considered and acted upon by the appropriate Tribal forum. Thus, we believe that our actions were consistent with our responsibility to provide technical assistance, and with established policies of non-interference, deference to Tribal decision-making, and respect for Tribal self-determination and sovereignty.

Your Letter of February 24, 2000

In your letter of February 24, 2000, you requested copies of the "sworn affidavits" submitted to the Agency by Yakima Dixie "alleging fraud on the part of the Tribal Council and that Rocky McKay is his son." Unfortunately, we cannot fulfill your request, as no such documents by Mr. Dixie are maintained within the records of the Agency.

As to your statement that the Agency "refused" to provide the Tribe with information as to the address and location of Melvin Dixie, we have no record of a Tribal request for such information. Further, such information is contained in a system of records covered by the Privacy Act (5 USC § 552a). As such, we are unable to release this information to you without the express consent of Melvin Dixie. As stated above, we also suggested in our letter of February 25, 2000, that Mr. Dixie provide this information to the Tribe.

Your Letter Postmarked February 2, 2000

As for your undated letter, postmarked February 2, 2000, requesting that we forward a letter to Yakima Dixie regarding the Regular Tribal Meeting scheduled for February 7, 2000, we were unable to fulfill your request. The letter was received at the Agency on Thursday afternoon, February 3, 2000. Even if the Agency, within a twenty-four hour period, had processed and forwarded the letter via overnight mail, the meeting day of Monday, February 7, 2000, would likely be the earliest Yakima Dixie would have received the letter. Thus, we return to you the enclosed sealed envelope addressed to Yakima Dixie.

Conclusion

The issues surrounding the present leadership and membership of the Tribe are internal matters to be resolved within the appropriate Tribal forum. As a matter of policy, the Agency will not interfere in the internal matters of the Tribe. However, if in time a dispute regarding the composition of the governing body of the Tribe continues without resolution, the government-to-government relationship between the Tribe and the United States may be compromised. In such situations, the Agency will advise the Tribe to resolve the dispute internally within a reasonable period of time. The Agency will also inform the Tribe that its failure to do so may result in sanctions against the Tribe, up to and including the suspension of the government-to-government.

The Tribe, in the letter dated February 9, 2000, granted a thirty-day period of time to Yakima Dixie within which to raise his concerns and present his issues to the Tribe. This fact demonstrates that the Tribe is attempting to resolve this internal matter. We respectfully request that the Tribe inform us in writing of the action taken by the appropriate Tribal forum to resolve the dispute. We further request the Tribe's written response clearly explain what action was taken to resolve the dispute, the legal authority in Tribal law for the action, and the rationale for the action.

As always, Agency staff is available to the extent resources permit to provide the Tribe with technical assistance, upon your written request.

Should you have any questions with regard to this matter, please contact Mr. Raymond Fry, Tribal Operations Officer, at (916) 566-7124.

Sincerely,


Dale Risling, Sr.
Superintendent

Enclosure