

**Verbal testimony: Chairman John Berrey, Quapaw Tribe
DOI Current Reorganization 5/21/03
Senate Indian Affairs**

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee thank you for the invitation to speak to you today. My name is John Berrey, I am the Chairman of the Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma and Vice-Chairman of The Inter-Tribal Monitoring Association. I believe that my role today is to provide a perspective of the current reorganization in light of my very active collaborative involvement in the “As Is” and “To Be” reengineering phases of Trust Reform. I want to make it clear that I have a positive outlook, I am also engaged and I have committed much of my life to creating a better system. I am not a rock thrower; I am not negative, I don't always agree but I have been taught by my folks to help guide change with positive input and hard work. I believe that Indian Country is married for life with the DOI and the only way to make it work is to work together.

What is “As Is”? The “As Is” project was last year's documentation of current Trust management business practices. I was on a team of dedicated folks that traveled throughout Indian Country interviewing over one thousand hard working people who provide Trust services to Native Americans and Tribes at every level, every day. We basically took a snapshot of how the DOI and some Tribes are currently performing Trust

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services. We identified in detail how they do their jobs and how the business processes vary from region to region and agency to agency. That was tough work; I was away from my family and Tribe for 204 days but I met so many people who are dedicated to the Native people that they serve. This detailed “As Is” work product has provided us with a map and basis for the “To Be” Trust reengineering project.

What is the “To Be” reengineering? This current project will be the redesign of the processes and workflows that make up much of the services provided by the United States to Native Americans. This reengineering will create a massive change and I believe requires Congressional oversight at each phase ensuring that the Trustee delegate, the DOI fulfills the Trust responsibility of the United States to the Native American Tribes and individuals. I am the leader of the Tribal representatives of which we have five members to this reengineering team. We have a great responsibility to not only participate in the development of these new processes giving our perspective, expertise and input but we have the added responsibility to inform Indian Country of our progress and any impact these massive management changes may have on daily life for the beneficiary. To date we

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have had several meetings and we have really just begun the task.

Reengineering is not just duct taping or cobbling a system together with baling wire; it is total analysis and rebuilding where needed. It requires that we use our imagination to create as well as an ability to extract the best practices identified in the “As Is” model and implement those practices in a redesigned beneficiary centric service delivery model.

Beneficiary centric Trust service is the mission of the Tribal representatives and the “To Be” team. I believe that Beneficiary focus is a mission shared by Tribes, Individuals as well as Secretary Norton, Deputy Secretary Griles, The Special Trustee Chief Swimmer and his deputy Donna Erwin including all their respective employees. The definition of Beneficiary in this context is: Tribes and Individuals, and not just Individual Indian Money Account holders (IIM) but also the families that stand behind those folks and the unborn future beneficiaries.

So why reorganize before reengineering? That is a question that many people have asked me and I believe my answer may shed some light. Last year while documenting the current DOI management it was very clear that the DOI had a systemic problem causing much of the delays in: Trust service

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delivery. A single decision or individual did not create the problem but it was the result of a long evolutionary process developed over time. The problem we identified was that the DOI wears so many different hats and has so many conflicting responsibilities it often has problems making critical and final decisions on a timely basis. The regional directors had developed over time a sort of autonomy that resembled small fiefdoms and the central office was extremely disconnected with the needs of the regional staffs as well as the Beneficiary. So, after a year of time consuming and difficult but partially fruitful discussions with the Tribal Task Force, I believe that the DOI decided to implement some necessary changes. Are the changes described and implemented in the recently signed Department Manual going to help? I think in some ways the answer is yes but I am not yet sure; there are so many issues that concern me. What are the effects on the promotion of self-governance and self-determination? What are the effects at my agency that desperately needs resources? When is the issue of lease compliance and enforcement going to result in action at the local level? When can I get the backlogs in probates for my people caught up? When are my fee-to-trust applications going to be signed? Without new Trust land my Tribe is

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condemned to live in America's largest EPA superfund site. When is the DOI going to replace the old and worn LRIS system with TAAMS 1.49 so we can have a consistent platform that we can transition from to a better systems architecture? These are just a few concerns that I have and I commit to you that I will engage with and work diligently with Tribes, Individuals and the Department of the Interior to address these issues and I will not throw rocks. We, Tribal leaders, Individuals, Congressional Representatives and the DOI must work together to not only create a better system but to provide opportunities for our young people who may have an interest in participation in the stewardship of Native America.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input and I also offer myself to the committee and its members my help whenever asked.