

COEUR D'ALENE TRIBE

NEWS RELEASE

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CHAIRMAN ALLAN TO MEET WITH PRESIDENT OBAMA

PLUMMER – Coeur d'Alene Tribe Chairman Chief Allan will meet with President Barack Obama on Thursday to discuss a variety of issues facing Indian tribes across the country.

Leaders of the 564 federally recognized tribes have been issued invitations to attend the White House Tribal Nations Conference.

“All of the tribes are really excited about this opportunity,” said Allan. “We feel like somebody is listening to our issues. There is a backlog of problems, not only for tribes, but across the country.”

Thursday's summit is the first time all nationally recognized tribes have been invited to meet with the president in a nation to nation format. Allan will have the opportunity to interact personally with President Obama and other key administration officials.

“I look forward to hearing directly from the leaders in Indian Country about what my Administration can do to not only meet their needs, but help improve their lives and the lives of their peoples,” Obama said in a statement. “This conference will serve as part of the ongoing and important consultation process that I value, and further strengthen the Nation-to-Nation relationship.”

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, Commerce Secretary Gary Locke, Labor Secretary Hilda Solis and other administration officials are expected to attend.

Tribal leaders are expected to discuss a myriad of issues facing Indian Country, including increasing funding for health care on reservations and reforming the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

“Funding for Indian health care has been at a standstill for quite some time,” Allan said. “The land to trust process with the BIA needs to be streamlined and made more efficient.”

President Obama promised to work closely with tribes during his campaign last year and to deliver more than empty promises to Native Americans.

“Few have been ignored by Washington for as long as Native Americans, the first Americans,” Obama said during a campaign visit to the Crow Tribe in Montana.

Allan said the nation-to-nation conferences will happen annually and that Obama is on the right track.

“I’d like to hear truth and honesty,” Allan said. “If they can’t do something, just let us know so that we’re not waiting forever.”

The White House Tribal Nations Conference will be streamed live at www.whitehouse.gov/live.