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Subject: Update on Congressman Ryan Zinke's List of Works on behalf of Tribes

Hi Folks, you may want to share this widely with your email lists and on websites..."Indian Country" is very pleased with Congressman Ryan Zinke as the new Secretary of Interior...Check out the article below. The article below is from www.indianz.com - a major Indian Country News website:

Republican lawmaker with a better tribal record tapped for Interior Secretary

Thursday, December 15, 2016

This time it's official -- Republican president-elect [Donald Trump](#) has tapped a lawmaker with a more favorable record on tribal issues to head up the [Interior Department](#). Since joining Congress in 2015, [Rep. Ryan Zinke](#) (R-Montana) has supported tribes on water, taxation, [health care](#), federal recognition, [economic development](#), energy, [violence against Native women](#), and [sovereignty](#) matters.

If he is confirmed as [Secretary of the Interior](#), he would be the key person in the incoming administration that deals with Indian issues. But Trump didn't mention tribes at all as his [transition team made the official announcement on Wednesday](#). Instead he indicated that other issues on Interior's plate, including public lands management and exploitation of natural resources, were his priorities.

Zinke, however, didn't leave Indian Country out. The announcement noted that he is an adopted member of the [Fort Peck Tribes](#) in Montana. "Most important, our sovereign Indian Nations and territories must have the respect and freedom they deserve," Zinke said. As Montana's sole representative in the [House](#), Zinke has championed a number of causes for tribes in his state. The very first bill he introduced after taking office in January 2015 was [H.R.286](#) to extend federal recognition to the [Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians](#). While the bill did not become law after it was [added to a controversial recognition reform measure](#), Chairman Gerald Gray counted Zinke among the tribe's "allies and friends" in a [statement posted on Facebook](#) on Tuesday. And that support could prove crucial because the [Bureau of Indian Affairs](#), an agency at Interior, is still considering whether to [grant federal status](#) to the descendants of Chief Little Shell.

Another one of Zinke's initiatives was more successful. He helped secure passage of a long-delayed water rights settlement for the [Blackfeet Nation](#). [H.R.5633](#), the Blackfeet Water Rights Settlement Act, was included in [S.612](#), a [national water bill](#) that awaits signature from [President Barack Obama](#). "Water is more than a drinking source to the Blackfeet, it's their life source and we must respect and honor their culture and rights," Zinke said in a [press release](#) on Tuesday in

which Chairman Harry Barnes offered praise for the lawmaker. Zinke's experience with water rights will prove crucial should he be confirmed to the Interior post.

The BIA and the [Bureau of Reclamation](#), another agency at the department, play critical roles in negotiating and implementing settlements across Indian Country. And in yet another area of interest, Zinke would have the authority to make changes at Interior that he wasn't able to achieve through legislation. He could [revive a committee of tribal and state officials that deals with mineral resource issues](#), something he tried to do with [H.R.5259](#), the Certainty for States and Tribes Act.

Zinke's pro-energy stance could turn out to be helpful for some within Indian Country. He has repeatedly accused the Obama administration of engaging in a "war on coal" which he said hindered economic development opportunities for the [Crow Tribe](#). But his push for a coal export terminal that would have benefited the tribe came at the expense of another. During his re-election campaign, he accused his Democratic rival of [taking "blood money"](#) from the [Lummi Nation](#), whose leaders opposed the project.

Zinke derided the Lummi as a "wealthy tribe" but did not explain that they opposed the terminal because it would infringe on their treaty-protected fishing rights. The Obama administration halted the project in May in [direct response to those concerns](#). But now that Zinke has been tapped for the [president's Cabinet](#), his departure from Congress could open the door for [Denise Juneau](#), a member of the [Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation](#) who was his rival in the race.

Federal law [requires an election to fill a vacancy](#) in the U.S. House although she hasn't committed to running again. "I look forward to a little time off to re-adjust the sails and think about what it is I want to do and accomplish," Juneau, who was hoping to become the first Native woman in Congress, told [Montana Public Radio](#) on Monday. Confirmation hearings for Zinke are expected to take place early next year, after the 115th Congress convenes. He would go before the [Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources](#). "As a westerner, Ryan understands the challenges of having the federal government as your largest neighbor and I couldn't think of a better fit for Secretary of the Interior," [Sen. Steve Daines](#) (R-Montana), who serves on the committee, said in a [press release](#) on Tuesday, before the official announcement.

Trump had been considering another [Republican lawmaker with a less favorable tribal record](#) for the Interior job. But [Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers](#) (R-Washington) basically withdrew herself from the running as Zinke's stock rose. "It was an honor to be invited to spend time with the President-elect, and I'm energized more than ever to continue leading in Congress as we think big, reimagine this government, and put people back at the center of it," [McMorris Rodgers said on Facebook](#) on Tuesday.