



CENTRAL COUNCIL

Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Edward K. Thomas to Meet with President Barack Obama



Edward K. Thomas

Edward K. Thomas, President of the Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, is one of 12 tribal leaders from across the nation that will meet at the White House with President Barack Obama on Wednesday, December 15, 2010. These tribal leaders, one from each Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Region, will speak on behalf of the 565 federally recognized tribes in the United States on issues vital to Native Americans.

President Thomas was selected by the White House to represent the 229 federally recognized tribes in Alaska. He will stress how important it is for the federal government to continue providing a safety net of services to tribal people in rural areas of Alaska. Rural economies are weak and the cost of energy is the highest in the nation, which drives up the cost of everything else. There is an absence of quality healthcare in rural communities, and constant challenges to the subsistence way of life that Alaska's Native people have sustained themselves on since the beginning of time.

"I was elated when the Department of the Interior Secretary pledged one year ago that he was going to fix the subsistence problem in Alaska," said Thomas. "Here it is a year later and very little has been done to improve federal management of subsistence on federal lands in Alaska. I know that there will be tremendous pressure from Congress to cut spending across the board, but our rural people cannot afford further cuts at a time when the cost of everything is increasing so rapidly."

"We all have heard of Sarah Palin's Alaska," said Thomas. "I will attempt to educate the President about the Alaska Sarah Palin left behind to attain personal wealth and recognition. Alaska has serious challenges that need federal and state attention and resources to address in a positive way."

President Thomas will also join representatives from each tribe across the nation on Thursday, December 16, 2010, at the White House Tribal Nations Conference that President Obama is hosting. The conference will take place at the Department of the Interior's Sidney R. Yates Auditorium, and will provide tribal leaders the opportunity to interact with the President and representatives from the highest levels of his Administration.

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