



CHEROKEE NATION

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Chad "Cornstace" Smith
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July 14, 2003

The Honorable Gale A. Norton
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C St NW
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Stephen Griles
Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C St NW
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Aurne Martin
Acting Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs
1849 C St NW
Washington, DC 20240

Re: **Urgent Request to discuss the Constitution of the Cherokee Nation and the Recognition of recent Cherokee Nation elections**

Dear Secretary Norton, Deputy Secretary Griles, and Acting Assistant Secretary Martin:

I write to request your personal attention to a matter of great concern and highest priority to the Cherokee Nation, and request an immediate conference to discuss this matter directly with you, without lawyers, later this week or early next. The purpose of this meeting will be to attempt to resolve this matter before it escalates and results in costly and unnecessary litigation.

I have organized a small delegation from the Cherokee Nation to travel to Washington to meet with you. The delegation will consist of former Principal Chief Wilma Mankiller, Secretary-Treasurer Jay Hanna, Director of Government Resources Pat Ragsdale, a Tribal Council Member, and me. I wish to discuss the pending approval of the Cherokee Nation's constitutional amendment that former Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs Neal McCaleb addressed and other matters involving the *Seminole v. Norton (2001)* case as that decision may apply to the Cherokee Nation.

In the spirit of the government-to-government relationship, I respectfully request that this conference be between the leaders of the Department and the Cherokee Nation and not our attorneys. If this matter is to be resolved quickly, it will rely upon our collective leadership and desire to avoid litigation and public controversy. I cannot emphasize enough that time is of the essence - the Cherokee people are to vote on a new constitution and two run-off seats on July 26.