

Thornton named new DOE director of Indian Affairs

Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham reaffirmed in a statement Aug. 21 that the Department of Energy's commitment to meeting its responsibilities in the government-to-government relationships between federally recognized American Indian tribes and the Department of Energy.

"In the past few months many tribal leaders have come to offer their assistance regarding our mutual energy concerns," said Abraham. "We must include tribal participation in the decision-making process where our action may impact their environmental and cultural interests." The Secretary directed his staff members to be responsive to the department's American Indian policy, develop implementation plans and ensure that all employees are fully aware of the intent of this policy.

Abraham also named Victoria Thornton as director of Indian Affairs in the DOE Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs. Thornton will serve as the principal liaison and advisor for tribal governments, American Indian organizations and associations on Native American issues and activities. She will establish and maintain points of contact for Indian issues in DOE operations offices, national laboratories and power marketing administrations.

"Victoria's many years of public service at the federal, state and local levels, as well as her experience here at the department, will assist us as we continue to implement the department's American Indian and Alaska Native policy," said Abraham. "Her thorough understanding of diverse cultures and issues is an asset to our team."

Thornton served in the former Bush administration as DOE director of Scheduling and Logistics. During the Reagan administration, She was a staff member of the Presidential Commission on Indian Reservation Economics and served on the Presidential Commission on the HIV Epidemic. She has a bachelor of science degree from California State University at Fullerton and teaching credentials from the University of California at Irvine. Her father served for nearly 20 years as tribal chairman of the San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians in Valley Center, Calif. ♦