

Sweeney is first female Native Alaskan nominated for top Indian Affairs post

WASHINGTON – Tara Mac Lean Sweeney, a prominent Alaska Native leader and acclaimed businesswoman with the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, was nominated as the next assistant secretary for Indian affairs on Oct. 17.

If confirmed by the U.S. Senate, Sweeney, a member of the Native Village of Barrow and the Iñupiat Community of the Arctic Slope, would be the first Native Alaskan and only the second woman to hold the position.

The assistant secretary for Indian affairs oversees the Department of Interior's manifold responsibilities to enhance the quality of life, promote economic opportunity and provide quality educational opportunities for American Indians, Indian Tribes and Alaska Natives, while protecting and improving their trust assets.

"Tara is a results-driven team leader and coalition builder who has an impressive combination of business acumen and service to her community," said Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke. "Her lifelong active engagement in Native American policy development and her outreach, advocacy and organization skills are the combination we need to carry out the president's reform initiative for Indian Country. I look forward to welcoming her to our leadership team."

"I am honored to be nominated to serve Indian Country in this capacity," Sweeney said. "My goal is to develop strong relationships with Tribes, Alaska Native corporations and Native Hawaiian organizations to work on innovative solutions for lifting up our communities. I am motivated to work with Indian Country to find efficiencies inside the Bureau of Indian Affairs, improve service delivery and culturally relevant curriculum in the Bureau of Indian Education and create a more effective voice for Tribes throughout the federal government. I am humbled by the confidence President Trump and Secretary Zinke have shown in me and ready to serve."

"Secretary Zinke's nomination of Tara Sweeney for assistant secretary of Indian affairs taps a strong advocate for Native American self-determination and Tribal self-government for this key leadership position," said John Tahsuda, acting

assistant secretary of Indian affairs. "Her extensive organizational knowledge and collaborative management experience will well serve Indian Country by reforming federal policies, empowering Tribal communities and removing barriers to their economic advancement."

Sweeney grew up in rural Alaska and has spent a lifetime actively engaged in state and national policy arenas focused on advocating for responsible Indian energy policy, rural broadband connectivity, Arctic growth and American Indian self-determination.

She has served her Arctic Slope Regional Corporation and its subsidiaries in a variety of capacities for nearly two decades. The \$2.6 billion corporation is the largest locally owned and operated business in Alaska, with about 13,000 Iñupiat Eskimo members and 12,000 employees worldwide. It is diversified in six major business sectors, including energy support services, industrial services, construction, petroleum refining and marketing, government services and resource development.

In her current role as the executive vice president of external affairs, she is responsible for all facets of government affairs and corporate communications. Her primary responsibilities include strategic policy and position development, implementation and execution; engagement with federal and state executive and legislative branches on improving policies affecting Indian energy, taxation, resource development, government contracting, broadband development and access to capital; as well as all facets of corporate communication as official company spokesperson, including stakeholder engagement and coalition building.

Sweeney also has served in leadership positions on numerous business and nonprofit boards at both the state and national level, including chair of the Arctic Economic Council in 2015-2017; co-chair of the Alaska Federation of Natives (2013); Coast Guard Foundation Board of Trustees; University of Alaska Foundation Board of Trustees; FCC Advisory Committee on Diversity for Communications in a Digital Age; Analytical Services Inc.; Kohanic Broadcast Corporation (parent to

the first American Indian-owned, publicly supported FM radio station); Cherokee Nation New Market Tax Credit Advisory Board (CNB Economic Development Company LLC, beneficiary); Breast Cancer Focus Inc.; and Arctic Power.

"I extend my congratulations and full support to Tara on her nomination to serve as assistant secretary," said Sen. Lisa Murkowski. "Tara has a very strong record of professionalism and accomplishment in Alaska, across the country and internationally, especially with the indigenous people of the circumpolar north. She has significant experience on Arctic issues and chaired the Arctic Economic Council. She is an expert on energy, infrastructure, broadband, economic development, Native self-determination and a wide range of policy issues that will come before her. Secretary Zinke could not have chosen a better leader to help him fulfill the federal government's trust responsibility and I know Tara has the heart and drive to excel in this position."

"I commend the secretary for his choice of Tara Sweeney for the position of assistant secretary," said Jacqueline Pata (Tlingit), executive director of the National Congress of American Indians. "Tara's diverse experience in the areas of energy, natural resources and Tribal governance will be a welcome addition to the Department of Interior and NCAI looks forward to working with Tara in her new capacity."

"In these critical times, Ms. Tara Sweeney will serve as a strong assistant secretary for Indian affairs," said Julie Kitka, president of the Alaska Federation of Natives. "Her experience with empowering Native Americans is unparalleled and she will help all Tribes achieve great self-determination. There is not a Tribe or Alaska Native corporation that she would not help. I have had the opportunity to work alongside Ms. Sweeney for over a decade, I've seen her in action and she is driven by results."

"Tara is a dedicated, hard-working and fearless leader focused on providing value and real results across local, national and international boundaries," said Gabriel Kompkoff, president of the ANCSA Regional Association, the membership association of Alaska Native Regional Corporation CEOs. "Her passion shows through in every challenge she faces."

Among her honors, Sweeney -- a lifetime member of the National Congress of American Indians -- was crowned Miss NCAI in 1993 and traveled the country as an ambassador for the organization. In 2003, Gov. Frank Murkowski recognized Sweeney's passion for rural Alaska, appointing her to his cabinet as special assistant for rural affairs and education.

In 2008 she was honored as a "Top Forty Under 40" business leader by the Alaska Journal of Commerce. In 2014 her team was honored by the Northwest Regional Emmy® Awards for its IAMINU-PIAQ commercial campaign 2014 and also served as co-chair for Sen. Dan Sullivan's (R-AK) successful senate campaign.

In 2017 she was inducted into the Anchorage ATHENA Society, a program of the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce that encourages the potential of women as valued members and leaders of the business community.

Born to Dr. Bryan Mac Lean and the late Rep. Eileen Panigeo Mac Lean, Sweeney is the granddaughter of the late May Ahmaogak Panigeo and the late Henry Panigeo of Barrow. She is the great-granddaughter of the late Bert and Nellie Panigeo and Isabel and Dr. Roy Ahmaogak.

She was raised, attended schools and lived most of her life in rural Alaska in villages from Noorvik to Wainwright, Barrow, Bethel and Unalakleet. She graduated from Barrow High School in 1991.

A 1998 graduate of Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations with a Bachelor of Science degree, Sweeney currently lives in Anchorage with her husband, Kevin, and their two children, Caitlin and Ahmaogak.

Siletz Community Dental Clinic

Contact the **Siletz Community Dental Clinic** if you experience dental pain or a dental emergency. Staff will do everything they can to see you as soon as possible.

Morning check-in time is Monday-Thursday from 8:30-9 a.m. and Friday from 10:30-11 a.m. Afternoon check-in time is Monday-Friday from 1:30-2 p.m.

Information about Agent Orange

For information about **Agent Orange**, possible health-related problems and VA benefits:

- Toll-free Helpline – 800-749-8387, press 3
- publichealth.va.gov/xposures/agentorange/

Reminder

The Siletz Clinic would like to remind parents and guardians that if you send your child to an appointment with someone other than yourself or other legal guardian, you will need to sign a Release of Information.

This gives permission for another person to bring your child to appointments and for your child's provider to discuss the child's care with them.

If you have any questions, please call 541-444-1030 or 800-648-0449.

Thank you!

Tribal children in need of foster parents for:
Permanent care,
temporary foster care or
short-term emergency care.

Contact,
Indian Child Welfare
541-444-8272