

Public Comments” or by using the search function. Please provide a copy of your comments to USGS, Information Collections Clearance Officer, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS 159, Reston, VA 20192 or by email to [gs-info\\_collections@usgs.gov](mailto:gs-info_collections@usgs.gov). Please reference OMB Control Number 1028–0126 in the subject line of your comments.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** To request additional information about this Information Collection Request (ICR), contact Melissa Thode, Program Analyst, CRU by email at [mthode@usgs.gov](mailto:mthode@usgs.gov), or by telephone at 703–648–4265. Individuals in the United States who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability may dial 711 (TTY, TDD, or TeleBraille) to access telecommunications relay services. Individuals outside the United States should use the relay services offered within their country to make international calls to the point-of-contact in the United States. You may also view the ICR at <http://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain>.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA, 44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*) and 5 CFR 1320.8(d)(1), we provide the general public and other federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on new, proposed, revised, and continuing collections of information. This helps us assess the impact of our information collection requirements and minimize the public’s reporting burden. It also helps the public understand our information collection requirements and provide the requested data in the desired format.

A **Federal Register** notice with a 60-day public comment period soliciting comments on this collection of information was published on October 6, 2023, (88 FR 69654). No comments were received.

As part of our continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burdens, we are again soliciting comments from the public and other Federal agencies on the proposed ICR that is described below. We are especially interested in public comment addressing the following:

(1) Whether or not the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether or not the information will have practical utility;

(2) The accuracy of our estimate of the burden for this collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

(3) Ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

(4) How might the agency minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, *e.g.*, permitting electronic submission of response.

Comments that you submit in response to this notice are a matter of public record. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personally identifiable information (PII) in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your PII—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your PII from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

**Abstract:** CRU Cooperating Universities submit applications for research work orders via [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov). The Statutory Authority used is the Cooperative Research Units Act (16 U.S.C. 753a–753b), Public Law 86–686, Sec. 1, Sept. 2, 1960, 74 Stat. 733, as amended by the Fish and Wildlife Improvement Act of 1978, Public Law 95–616, Sec. 2, Nov. 8, 1978, 92 Stat. 3110. Applications consist of project proposals, budgets and SF–424 forms. Information submitted includes project titles, schedules, scope of work, contact information (names, emails, addresses, position titles, telephone), and detailed budget breakdowns (salaries includes names, positions, rate of compensation) per Office of Acquisition requirements.

Only CRU Cooperating Universities (applicants/recipients) can apply to the Research Work Order (RWO) component of the CRU Program. All proposals & SF–424 forms (includes budgets) are submitted electronically through [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov). USGS/Office of Acquisition and Grants uses this information to process the RWO award.

**Title of Collection:** Cooperative Research Units.

**OMB Control Number:** 1028–0126.

**Form Number:** None.

**Type of Review:** Renewal.

**Respondents/Affected Public:** CRU Cooperating Universities.

**Total Estimated Number of Annual Respondents:** 43.

**Total Estimated Number of Annual Responses:** 428.

**Estimated Completion Time per Response:** Between 10 minutes and 40 hours, depending on activity.

**Total Estimated Number of Annual Burden Hours:** 2,325.

**Respondent’s Obligation:** Necessary to retain/obtain a benefit.

**Frequency of Collection:** Varies with research work order but at a minimum is responsible for initial applications, progress report and final report.

**Total Estimated Annual Nonhour Burden Cost:** None.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

The authority for this action is the PRA (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*).

**Donald Dennerline,**

*Acting Deputy Chief, U.S. Geological Survey, Cooperative Research Units.*

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**BILLING CODE 4388–11–P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Office of the Secretary

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### Proposed Appointments to the National Indian Gaming Commission

**AGENCY:** Office of the Secretary, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act provides for a three-person National Indian Gaming Commission. One member, the Chair, is appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate. Two associate members are appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. Before appointing members, the Secretary is required to provide public notice of a proposed appointment and allow a comment period. Notice is hereby given of the proposed appointment of Jean Hovland and Sharon Avery as associate members of the National Indian Gaming Commission for a term of 3 years.

**DATES:** Submit comments on or before April 25, 2024.

**ADDRESSES:** Send comments to the Director, Office of the Executive Secretariat and Regulatory Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street NW, Mail Stop 7328, Washington, DC 20240; or [DOIExecSec@ios.doi.gov](mailto:DOIExecSec@ios.doi.gov) with *NIGC Appointment Comment* in the subject line.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. Dustin Thomas, National Indian Gaming Commission, c/o Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street NW, Mail Stop 1621, Washington, DC 20240; telephone (202) 632–7003; facsimile (202) 632–7066.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, 25 U.S.C. 2701 *et seq.*, established the

National Indian Gaming Commission (Commission), composed of three full-time members. Commission members serve for a term of 3 years. The Chair is appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate. The two associate members are appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. Before appointing an associate member to the Commission, the Secretary is required to “publish in the **Federal Register** the name and other information the Secretary deems pertinent regarding a nominee for membership on the Commission and . . . allow a period of not less than thirty days for receipt of public comments.” See 25 U.S.C. 2704(b)(2)(B).

The Secretary proposes to appoint Jean Hovland and Sharon Avery as associate members of the Commission for terms of 3 years. Ms. Hovland and Ms. Avery are well qualified to be members of the National Indian Gaming Commission by virtue of their extensive background and experience in a broad spectrum of Native American issues.

Ms. Hovland is an enrolled member of the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe of South Dakota. She currently serves as Vice Chair of the National Indian Gaming Commission. Hovland began her three-year term at the agency on January 17, 2021, after being appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. Since joining the Commission, she has worked collaboratively with the Commission to consult with tribes for the promulgation of regulations and to coordinate the agency’s regulatory responsibilities with tribal regulatory authorities. She also served as the Director of the NIGC Office of Self-Regulation from May 2021 through July 2023. Ms. Hovland has provided extensive outreach and education about combating human trafficking in the Indian Gaming industry and has devoted much of her time to outreach efforts, meeting with tribal leaders, regulatory authorities, and gaming operations on Indian Lands on the effective regulation of Indian Gaming.

Ms. Hovland served as Commissioner of the Administration for Native Americans and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Native American Affairs at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). As Commissioner, Ms. Hovland provides effective oversight of a \$57 million annual operating budget to promote self-sufficiency for Native Americans. She provides executive leadership of a diverse staff of 30 employees and four regional training and technical assistant centers. During her time at HHS, Ms. Hovland created a \$1 million funding opportunity designed to strengthen internal

governance structures and capacity for tribes and tribal organizations. She also reestablished and Chairs the HHS Secretary’s Intradepartmental Council on Native American Affairs, comprised of leadership across the Department.

In her role as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Native American Affairs for the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), a large and diverse program office with an \$8 billion annual operating budget, over 1700 employees, and 10 regional offices, Ms. Hovland provides expert and culturally appropriate advice to the Assistant Secretary in the formulation of policy views, positions, and strategies affecting Native Americans. She serves as the key liaison and representative of all ACF program and staff offices on behalf of the Assistant Secretary related to tribal and Native American Affairs.

Prior to her appointment at HHS, Ms. Hovland served as senior advisor to the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs at the Department of the Interior. Ms. Hovland has also served as the tribal affairs advisor to Senator John Thune for more than 12 years. She played a key role in advocating for legislation at the request of Indian tribes on such issues as agriculture, services for law enforcement and veterans, and quality access to healthcare. She worked to develop legislation, such as the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 and the Code Talker Recognition Act of 2008.

Prior to her time in public service, Hovland was CEO of Wanji Native Nations Consultants, which offered training services for Tribal programs and Tribal governments.

Ms. Hovland does not have any financial interests that would make her ineligible to serve on the Commission under 25 U.S.C. 2704(b)(5)(B) or (C).

Ms. Sharon Avery is an enrolled member of the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe of Michigan. She graduated from Michigan State University College of Law with a Juris Doctor degree and a certificate from the Indigenous Law and Policy Center. She has intimate familiarity with issues that impact tribal communities and the desire and willingness to learn more about those issues from those who are directly impacted by them.

Ms. Avery is currently serving as an Associate General Counsel for the National Indian Gaming Commission’s Office of General Counsel and has served in this capacity since January 2020. In this role she has gained familiarity with the agency’s structure and the important role the agency plays within the tribal gaming industry. She has worked extensively reviewing gaming ordinances, financing

agreements, sportsbook agreements, participated in tribal consultations for regulatory changes and worked on management contract reviews.

Prior to joining the National Indian Gaming Commission, Ms. Avery worked in the Legal Department of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan for 10 years. Ms. Avery held several roles while working for the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan. She began as an Associate General Counsel, worked her way up to Senior Associate General Counsel and then held the position of General Counsel for Tribal Operations.

During her time working as in-house counsel, she worked on many projects and gained valuable perspective from working for a tribal government. As Associate General Counsel and Senior Associate General Counsel, she reviewed gaming and entertainment contracts, worked with the Department of Justice and tribal departments to implement the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act requirements, reviewed tribal grants, worked extensively on personnel policies and procedures, reviewed various types of agreements for both the Tribe and the Tribe’s enterprises, and drafted and amended tribal codes.

As General Counsel for Tribal Operations, Ms. Avery managed the Tribe’s in-house legal department which included developing and overseeing the annual departmental budget, assigning and supervising work product, providing regular updates to the Tribal Council and represented the Tribe on many long-term projects.

In serving the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan and the National Indian Gaming Commission, Ms. Avery is most proud of the teamwork she has been a part of and assisting in building the teams that support both organizations.

Ms. Avery does not have any financial interests that would make her ineligible to serve on the Commission under 25 U.S.C. 2704(b)(5)(B) or (C).

Any person wishing to submit comments on the proposed appointments of Jean Hovland and Sharon Avery may submit written comments to the address listed above. Comments must be received by April 25, 2024.

(Authority: 25 U.S.C. 2704(b)(2)(B))

**Deb Haaland,**  
*Secretary of the Interior.*

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