

## Secretary of Interior Zinke resigns amid investigations

Written by Staff Reports

Friday, 21 December 2018 05:03

---



### Begaye urges quick replacement

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — As Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke resigned from his position Dec. 15 amid multiple ethics investigations, President Russell Begaye called upon the Trump Administration for a timely replacement.

“Indian Country needs a secretary of the Interior who is knowledgeable of issues that face Native American tribes and who has substantial knowledge of federal Indian policy,” Begaye said. “With so many threats to Native American sovereignty and federal cuts to programs our people depend on, we need a secretary who will truly advocate for our people.”

Zinke is the fourth member of the Trump Administration to relinquish his post while under the scrutiny of alleged ethics violations.

Last year, the Department of the Interior came under fire from Native American tribes when the Bureau of Indian Affairs was subject to reorganization per an executive order signed by President Trump. Tribes felt the decision was rushed as there had been little to no tribal consultation on the matter.

Zinke spoke at the 75<sup>th</sup> annual convention of the National Congress of the American Indians and told tribal leaders that the decision to reorganize the BIA rests in the hands of Native Americans.

## Secretary of Interior Zinke resigns amid investigations

Written by Staff Reports

Friday, 21 December 2018 05:03

---

“One of the principal complaints I hear from Indian Country is that tribes are not consulted but instead told about permitting, conservation and recreation. What happens off of Indian Country affects what happens on Indian Country and tribes need to be at the table from the start when it comes to the BIA reorganization,” Zinke said. “I will not reorganize the BIA unless we do it together and you agree.”

Begaye sits on the Interior Department’s Royalty Policy Committee, established by Secretary Zinke. He has consistently advocated on behalf of federal energy regulations that promote tribal self-determination and increase tribal presence in the energy market.

“Tribes face so many obstacles in trying to gain full authority over their minerals and natural resources. Consistency in federal leadership and consultation with tribes is key to making progress. With a new secretary of the Interior comes re-education on the issues we face,” Begaye said. “We shouldn’t have to start from square one. We need a secretary that will roll up their sleeves and work on behalf of all Native Americans.”