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For Immediate Release, September 12, 2014

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NNABA PASSES RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT CHANGES TO FEDERAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT PROCESS

PHOENIX—The National Native American Bar Association (NNABA) has passed a resolution to support changes to the Federal Acknowledgement Process and has submitted this resolution as a comment to the Federal Acknowledgement proposed rule that was issued by the Department of the Interior on May 22, 2014. The proposed regulations would reform the 35-year old process by which the Department of the Interior officially recognizes Indian tribes. After federal acknowledgement, the U.S. Government serves as the trustee for tribal lands and resources, and tribal members and governments are then eligible for federal budget assistance and program services.

A copy of NNABA's resolution is available at <http://www.nativeamericanbar.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/2014-09-10-2014-NNABA-Fed-Rec-Resolution.pdf>.

NNABA applauds the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) for taking on the task of improving the Federal Acknowledgment Process, a process that has often been described as “broken,” “slow,” and “inconsistent.” “An improved and fair process for federal acknowledgment is needed to address decades of neglect and inefficiency and to ensure that the rights to self-government and self-determination of all Tribes indigenous to the United States are respected,” said Mary Smith, NNABA president. “NNABA calls upon the BIAs to ensure that the reform of the Federal Acknowledgment Process results in a fair and just process for the acknowledgment of Indian tribes unjustly left off of the list of federally recognized tribes.”

“As a matter of long overdue justice and fairness, NNABA supports changes to the current regulations that have served as an obstacle for tribes seeking to clarify their status with the federal government. Fixing this process requires a commitment to

improve transparency; clarify the legal standard; reduce the administrative and documentary burden; and reduce the time period to complete and process a petition.” said Patty Ferguson-Bohnee, NNABA immediate past president.

Founded in 1973, NNABA serves as the national association for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian attorneys, judges, law professors and law students. NNABA strives for justice and effective legal representation for all American indigenous peoples; fosters the development of Native American lawyers and judges; and addresses social, cultural and legal issues affecting American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.

For more information contact 480-727-0420 or visit www.nativeamericanbar.org.

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