



## Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service

December 16, 2019

Kevin Gover, Director  
Museum of the American Indian  
4<sup>th</sup> Street SW and Constitution Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20560

Dear Director Gover:

Re. Your letter to me dated 6 December 2019. The conclusions in your letter about who is to be honored in the Native American Veterans memorial are self-contradictory and are further contradicted by the words of the *Consultation Report*.

In your letter you state that “our colleagues at Veterans Affairs [state] that the Commissioned Corps are included within the Armed Forces.” We totally agree with the Veterans Affairs Committee, which is why we have been saying that the USPHS logo should be included in the memorial design. What few people understand is that members of both the USPHS and NOAA have routinely served in combat situations alongside individuals from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. Thousands of them served during World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq and Afghanistan.

The *Consultation Report* does not specifically mention the officers of the USPHS anywhere in it. It does say, however, on page 7, “The memorial must be inclusive, honoring all Native American veterans, including American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, both men and women, from all eras and branches of service.” This language is totally clear and means that those men and women who earned their status as veterans by serving in the US Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration should be honored in the memorial design. We have been suggesting inclusivity since we first approached you with our concerns about the memorial design back in June 2018. That’s what we want and what we will continue fighting for.

Sincerely,

Col. James T. Currie, USA (ret.)  
Executive Director