Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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The Bureau of Indian Affairs has requested an increase of $64.4 million in appropriated funds for fiscal year 1978. The Bureau's request submitted January 17 to Congress as part of the President's budget, asks for $842.3 million. This includes $654.7 for the operation of Indian programs: $87.2 million for the construction of irrigation systems, buildings and utilities; $70.3 for road construction, and $30 million for payments under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

Federal funding for these purposes in fiscal year 1977 was $777.9 million. The 1978 fiscal year begins October 1, 1977 and ends September 30, 1976.

For Indian Education programs a total of $245.5 million. -- an $8.8 million increase --was requested. This includes $36.5 million for higher education assistance grants for some 17,400 Indian college students.

The request for $173. million for Indian services provides for increases in funding for grants under the Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, assistant to tribal governments and social services. An apparent reduction in law enforcement funding was caused by the transfer of about $3 million in program costs for tribal judicial services to the tribal government services category.

The expiration of funding authorization for the Indian Business Development program under the Indian Financing Act of 1974, is reflected in the drop in funding of about 6.8 million requested for economic development and manpower programs. This Act provided for funding only through 1977. There will also be a reduction in funding of the Indian Action Team programs, for which a $6 million Congressional add-on was received in 1977.

Almost $50 million, an increase of more than $10 million, was requested for Natural Resources Development. About $7.6 million of this increase will be used for mineral inventories and development planning of reservations with high energy resources development potential. Increases of $2.6 million are proposed to strengthen other conservation and development programs in accordance with tribal priorities.

The $30.8 million requested for programs to carry out the Federal trust responsibility to Indian tribes includes funds for activities to implement the Judge Boldt fishing rights decision in the Northwest. A total of $4.1 million has been requested or this purpose.

A major new thrust in this year’s budget request for Indians is a significant acceleration in constructing and rehabilitating Indian irrigation projects. An increase of: $14.4 million is requested for this purpose. Of the $44.4 million total, $25 million is for continuing construction on the Navajo Indian Irrigation Project.

Other construction projects for which $25.3 million will be required are Sherman Indian Boarding School, California; Standing Rock Boarding School, North Dakota; Jemez School, New Mexico; Haskell Indian Junior College, Kansas; Lower Brule School, South Dakota; Napakiak School, Alaska; Pine Ridge

Rehabilitation enter, South Dakota and an Administration Building at the Fort Hall Agency, Idaho.

Funds in the amount of $11.3 million have been requested for public school construction needs under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act.