Budget priorities include Operation Lady Justice to address the missing and murdered crisis, investing in tribal energy production and broadband development, full funding for Contract Support Costs and a new account for Payments for Tribal Leases

Media Contact: NewsMedia@bia.gov
For Immediate Release: February 10, 2020
Print PDF

WASHINGTON – President Trump today proposed a $1.9 billion Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 budget for Indian Affairs, which includes the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs.

“President Trump’s 2021 budget request for the Department is about investing in our people and public lands and waters," **said Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt.** "He is committed to the mission of conservation and creating more public access for Americans to fully enjoy our national treasures and landscapes. This budget is a critical step in the right direction and provides a path to restore commonsense in our budgeting process.”

“The President’s request strengthens tribal communities through strategic investments in public safety, energy and broadband development, while implementing management efficiencies to improve Indian Affairs’ operations and fully funding contract support costs and a new account for Payments for Tribal Leases,” said Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Tara Sweeney. “I am thankful that the FY 2021 budget provides support for the Operation Lady Justice and BIA law enforcement to meet head-on the factors that contribute to and exacerbate the nation’s crisis of missing and murdered Native Americans.”

The FY 2021 budget supports DOI’s continuing efforts to advance tribal self-governance and self-determination, foster strong tribal economies, and support safe tribal communities through a range of activities. The BIA funds programs for tribal government, social services, law enforcement, infrastructure, and stewardship of trust lands, water and other natural resources in Indian Country.

Operation of Indian Programs: The FY 2021 budget proposal for the BIA Operation of Indian Programs account is $1.4 billion. The budget prioritizes operations and program assistance to American Indian and Alaska Native service populations.

Promoting Tribal Self-Determination – The Department supports tribal sovereignty by aiding federally recognized Tribes work to strengthen and sustain their governmental systems. The FY 2021 requests $337.4 million for Tribal Government programs:

- $178.2 million for activities conducted by self-governance Tribes.
- $81.7 million to support *Consolidated Tribal Government* programs, which also promote tribal self-determination by giving approximately 275 Tribes the flexibility to combine and manage

contracted programs and grants that are similar or compatible to simplify contracting.
- $1.5 million for the *New Tribes* account, which includes $320,000 for the newly recognized *Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians* in Montana to support its work establishing and administering its government.

Protecting Indian Country – The BIA Office of Justice Services (OJS) funds public safety and justice programs in tribal communities. These programs safeguard life and property, enforce laws, maintain justice and order, and ensure offenders detained in OJS-operated or funded facilities are held in safe, secure and human environments. The OJS operates the Indian Police Academy for tribal law enforcement and corrections officer training for both direct-service and tribally operated programs.

The FY 2021 budget request of $423.7 million for Public Safety and Justice activities includes:

- $390.4 million to directly support 191 law enforcement programs and 96 corrections programs run either by Tribes themselves or by OJS as direct services. Within this amount:
    - $20.0 million for drug enforcement efforts to help strengthen the federal response to an observed increase in drug activity on Indian lands.
    - $22.3 million for Tribal Justice Support programs that include tribal courts assessments and support, technical assistance for tribal legal codes, and implementing strategies critical to the protection of women in tribal communities, including Violence Against Women Act training.
    - $3.0 million for a law enforcement special initiative to support the Operation Lady Justice Task Force on Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives established by President Trump's November 2019 Executive Order 13898. The Task Force will bring together multiple agencies and tribal representatives to develop and deploy new investigative teams focused on missing persons, domestic violence and other violent crime cold cases in Indian Country within tribal jurisdiction.

To further OJS's ability to collaborate with its federal, state and tribal counterparts when developing and implementing strategies to increase public safety in Indian Country, the FY 2021 budget proposes to realign management oversight of certain OJS activities – Criminal Investigations and Police Services, Detentions and Corrections, the Law Enforcement Special Initiatives Program, and the Indian Policy Academy – from the BIA to the Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs. The change will not affect the current budget structure. The OJS activities to remain with the BIA are Emergency Management, the Office of Tribal Justice Support, Tribal Courts and the Fire Protection Program.

Supporting Indian Communities – Because sustaining American Indian and Alaska Native families is critical to thriving tribal communities, BIA Indian Services (OIS) supports a community-based approach to child welfare, family stability and strengthening tribal communities. The FY 2021 budget request $87.5 million for Human Services activities which support programs providing social services and Indian Child Welfare Act protections.

Managing Trust Resources and Lands – The BIA Trust Services (OTS) activity supports DOI's stewardship and development of energy resources on Indian trust lands and assists tribal governments in managing, developing and protecting 56 million surface acres of trust lands and 59 million acres of subsurface trust mineral estates. These programs enable tribal landowners to optimize the conservation or use of their trust resources to produce revenues and jobs and to protect those with cultural, spiritual and traditional significance.

The FY 2021 budget includes $209.7 million for natural resource management programs:

- $54.1 million for Forestry programs supporting active forest management on Indian forest lands managed by 300 Tribes across 18.7 million acres.
- $14.4 million for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks for tribal activities in fisheries operations and maintenance, outdoor recreation, public access, and conservation enforcement.
- $10.7 million for Water Resources management activities.
- $14.1 million for the Irrigation Operation and Maintenance program for operation and maintenance of Indian irrigation project infrastructure, that includes payments required by legal directives, reimbursement to the Bureau of Reclamation for water storage, and costs for continued delivery of water by and to irrigation systems.

Minerals and Mining Activities – Energy and mineral production proved to be the largest source of revenue from natural resources on trust lands with over $1.1 billion in revenues paid to tribal governments and individual mineral rights owners in 2019. In Secretarial Order 3377, Secretary Bernhardt demonstrated the commitment to tribal self-determination by improving the energy development process on Indian lands.

The FY 2021 request funds Minerals and Mining activities at $25.7 million to support the Administration's priority for domestic energy abundance and economic development. The budget supports the management and development of energy resources on tribal lands, through programs such as the Indian Energy Service Center (IESC), a one-stop-shop that facilitates coordinating Indian energy development activities across Interior's bureaus and provides a full suite of energy development-related services to tribal governments throughout Indian Country. The FY 2021 budget proposes to realign the Division of Energy and Mineral Development from Indian Affairs' Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development, where it is currently, to the Office of Trust Services. This will improve communication and coordination, reduce redundancies, streamline processes, offer cross-staffing opportunities, and lead to increased performance and delivery of energy-related services to Tribes.

Maintaining Fiduciary Trust Responsibilities – The Trust-Real Estate Services activity advances Indian trust ownership and improves Indian trust-related information. The FY 2021 budget proposes $124.2 million for BIA Real Estate Services program activities, which include processing Indian trust-related documents, such as land titles and records and geospatial data, supporting land and water resources use, energy development, and protecting and restoring ecosystems and important lands. The request includes $13.0 for probate services to determine ownership of trust assets essential to economic development and accurate payments to beneficiaries.

Supporting Economic Opportunities – The FY 2021 budget funds the Community and Economic Development activity at $27.5 million. This includes $10.3 million for Economic Development, which contains $8.5 million to promote broadband deployment in Indian Country with most of it in the form of direct funding opportunities for Tribes and technical assistance for broadband development, and $12.5 million for Job Placement and Training to assist individuals in securing jobs at livable wages.

Tribal Priority Allocations – The FY 2021 budget request is $625.3 million for this activity.

Contract Support Costs: The FY 2021 budget request maintains the Administration's support for tribal self-determination and strengthening tribal communities. CSCs enable tribal governments to administer federal programs themselves by covering their associated operating costs. The request funds the CSC account at $285.5 million, which fully supports estimated needs assuming BIA program funding

at the FY 2021 request level. The CSC funding request is in a separate indefinite current account to ensure full funding for this priority.

Payments for Tribal Leases: The budget proposes $21.6 million in a new indefinite discretionary appropriation account for Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act section 105(l) facility lease agreements in support of tribal self-determination. The budget also proposes legislative language to improve the management of these leases through the establishment of standardized procedures for receiving and processing lease requests from Tribes and tribal organizations.

Funding from the Payments for Tribal Leases account could be used for either Bureau of Indian Affairs or Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) 105(l) facility lease costs. The indefinite appropriation addresses the difficulty of predicting actual costs for these leases far enough in advance to meet budget formulation schedules.

Construction: The FY 2021 budget request of $59.8 million for *Construction* activities includes:

- $36.2 million for the rehabilitation of dams, irrigation projects and irrigation systems that deliver and store water to aid tribal economic development, including $19.9 million for the *Safety of Dams* program, which is currently responsible for 139 high- or significant-hazard dams on 41 Indian reservations, and $13.1 million for *Irrigation Project Construction*, which addresses critical deferred maintenance and construction work on BIA-owned-and-operated irrigation facilities, including 17 irrigation projects, with a focus on health and safety concerns;
- $13.1 million for other construction-related programs, including $2.9 million for facilities improvement and repair at regional and agency offices, $1.1 million for telecommunications projects, and $5.6 million for construction program management; and $3.3 million for operations and maintenance of completed sections of the Fort Peck Water System in Montana, as required by law; and
- $10.4 million for public safety and justice construction, including $4.1 million for facilities improvement and repair and $3.1 million for employee housing.

Land and Water Claims Settlements: The FY 2021 request includes $43.9 million for Federal commitments to Settlements, which resolve tribal land and water rights claims and ensure Tribes have access to land and water for their domestic, economic and cultural needs. The infrastructure projects supported by these agreements improve the health and well-being of tribal members, preserve communities, and bring potential for economic development.

The BIE budget request of $944.5 million is presented separately.

The Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs advises the Secretary of the Interior on Indian Affairs policy issues, communicates policy to and oversees the programs of the BIA and the BIE, provides leadership in consultations with Tribes, and serves as the DOI official for intra- and inter- departmental coordination and liaison within the Executive Branch on Indian matters.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs' mission includes developing and protecting Indian trust lands and natural and energy resources; supporting social welfare, public safety and justice in tribal communities; and promoting tribal self-determination and self-governance.

####