Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

**Media Contact:**
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**WASHINGTON** – The CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund for Tribal Governments provides payments to state, local, and tribal governments navigating the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. Payments to tribal governments are to be determined by the Secretary of the Treasury in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior and American Indian and Alaska Native tribes.

*"Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Tara Sweeney is committed to supporting all American Indians and Alaska Natives, and to suggest she has personal motives or that she is attempting to divert funds away from American Indians is completely false. Her approach has always been focused on inclusiveness, transparency and partnerships. It is unfortunate that during a time all should be united, there are those who are seeking to divide the American Indian and Alaska Native community and are suggesting to ignore the mandate of Congress and exclude eligible entities as defined by law.*

*Since day one of the Trump Administration and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Indian Affairs continues to work tirelessly with the Tribes to assist their communities, provide critical resources to combat this virus and ensure all of their voices are heard. One example of Assistant Secretary Sweeney's commitment to inclusiveness and building partnerships is a call she held with Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's Association Inc. leaders on Monday, April 13th, as a courtesy, to help the leaders from that region understand the CARES Act process, listen to their concerns and address any of their questions."* **– DOI Spokesperson**

The Department of the Treasury is the lead federal agency, and they are required to consult with the Department of the Interior and Tribes. Treasury must follow the law and provisions that were prescribed and passed by Congress and mandated to the Administration. The CARES Act, passed by an overwhelming bi-partisan majority, provides $8 billion in financial assistance to tribal governments.

Treasury hosted in-depth Tribal consultations as required by the CARES Act along with the Department of the Interior on April 2nd and 9th with nearly 3,000 participants representing Indian Country and Alaska Native villages. Treasury and Indian Affairs accepted written comments through April 13th, and 439 comments were received from this process.

US. Department of Treasury is requesting data from tribal governments to assist in the funding determination. The web portal and additional information is located on https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/cares/state-and-local-governments. Tribes are required to provide all information to receive a distribution. The window of opportunity to submit required information is short due to a compressed congressionally mandated timeframe. All information must be received by Treasury no later than 11:59 PM Eastern, April 17, 2020.

Eligible tribal governments must provide payment information and required supporting documentation using the Eligible Units: Submission Required for Receipt of Coronavirus Relief Fund Payments" Web portal. To ensure payments are made within the 30-day period specified by the CARES Act, governments must submit completed payment materials no later than 11:59 p.m. EDT on April 17, 2020. Eligible tribal governments that do not provide the required certification by that time may not receive

any payment from the Fund.

Qualified expenditure guidance and other relevant tribal information will be posted as it becomes available. More information can also be found on www.bia.gov/covid-19/cares-act.

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