Budget prioritizes tribal self-determination, economic development, infrastructure projects and law enforcement across Indian Country

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WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump today proposed a $2.4 billion Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 budget for Indian Affairs, which includes the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) led by the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs.

The budget request includes proposed legislation to establish a Public Lands Infrastructure Fund that would take new revenue from federal energy leasing and development to provide up to $18 billion to help pay for repairs and improvements at Bureau of Indian Education funded schools, national wildlife refuges and national parks.

“President Trump is absolutely right to call for a robust infrastructure plan that rebuilds our national parks, refuges, and Indian schools, and I look forward to helping him deliver on that historic mission,” said U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke. “Our Parks and Refuges are being loved to death, but the real heart break is the condition of the schools in Indian Country. We can and must do better for these young scholars. This is not a republican or democrat issue, this is an American issue, and the President and I are ready to work with absolutely anyone in Congress who is willing to get the work done.”

“As our Indian schools are in desperate need of repair, it is reassuring that the President’s budget calls for a real way to fix them through the proposed Public Lands Infrastructure Fund,” said Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs John Tahsuda. “This budget prioritizes improving the infrastructure that will create a stronger foundation from which we deliver our programs to tribal communities. This will allow us to continue to restore trust with them and ensure that sovereignty regains its meaning.”

Indian Affairs plays an important role in carrying out the Federal government’s trust, treaty and other responsibilities to the nation’s 573 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes, which have, in total, a service population of nearly two million American Indians and Alaska Natives in tribal communities nationwide. The FY 2019 Indian Affairs budget proposal supports continuing efforts to advance self-governance and self-determination, fosters stronger economies and self-sufficiency, and supports safe Indian communities through a wide range of activities.

Budget Overview – The 2019 President’s budget for Indian Affairs is $2.4 billion in current appropriations.

Public Lands Infrastructure Fund – The BIE manages a school system of 169 elementary and secondary schools and 14 dormitories providing educational services to 47,000 individual students in 23 States. Although many of the schools are tribally controlled and operated by the Tribes, BIE is

responsible for oversight and the maintenance of the school facilities. The estimated deferred maintenance backlog for BIE schools is $634 million, which does not include the cost of replacement for the schools in the worst condition. The Administration proposes legislation in the FY 2019 budget to establish the Public Lands Infrastructure Fund to provide up to $18.0 billion to address needed repairs and improvements in the BIE schools, as well as the national parks and national wildlife refuges.

Construction – The FY 2019 budget prioritizes rehabilitation of dams, irrigation projects, and irrigation systems which deliver water to aid tribal economic development as well as protect lives, resources, and property. The Safety of Dams program is currently responsible for 138 high or significant-hazard dams located on 43 Indian reservations. The irrigation rehabilitation program addresses critical deferred maintenance and construction work on BIA-owned and operated irrigation facilities, including 17 irrigation projects.

The request also prioritizes construction related to regional and agency offices serving tribal programs and operations in Indian Country including the upgrade and repair of telecommunications infrastructure and facilities housing BIA and tribal employees providing services to Indian Communities.

In addition to support through the Public Lands Infrastructure Fund, the budget proposes funding for Education Construction focusing on facility improvement and repair at existing schools. Available funding from prior years will continue work to complete school construction on the 2004 school replacement list and proceed with design and construction for schools on the 2016 school replacement list.

Contract Support Costs – The FY 2019 budget maintains the Administration's support for the principles of tribal self-determination and strengthening tribal communities across Indian Country. The request fully supports the estimated need for Contract Support assuming BIA program funding at the FY 2019 request. The FY 2019 budget continues to request funding for Contract Support Costs in a separate indefinite current account to ensure full funding for this priority.

Land and Water Claims Settlements – The FY 2019 budget prioritizes funding to meet Indian Settlement commitments and enables the Department to meet Federal responsibilities outlined in enacted settlements with Indian Tribes. Settlements resolve tribal land and water rights claims and ensure Tribes have access to land and water to meet domestic, economic, and cultural needs. Many of the infrastructure projects supported in these agreements improve the health and well-being of tribal members and preserve existing economies and, over the long-term, bring the potential for jobs and economic development. The FY 2019 budget includes $45.6 million, including sufficient funding to complete payments for the Navajo Trust Fund and the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project, both of which have enforceability dates in 2019.

Operation of Indian Programs – The FY 2019 budget requests $2.0 billion for the Operation of Indian Programs giving priority to base program funding serving tribal communities across Indian Country. The budget reflects Department-wide efforts to identify administrative savings and identifies $8.3 million in administrative savings attained by consolidating and sharing administrative services such as procurement, information technology, human resources, and by shifting acquisition spending to less costly contracts. The budget also includes $900,000 to support the Department's migration to common regional boundaries to improve service and efficiency. The Department will hold a robust consultation process with tribal nations before actions are taken with respect to Indian Affairs regions.

Promote Tribal Self-Determination – The BIA Tribal Government activity supports assistance to

Tribes and Alaska Native entities to strengthen and sustain tribal government systems and support tribal self-governance through the Public Law 93-638 contracting and compacting process.

The FY 2019 budget requests $291.5 million for programs that support Tribal Government activities. Within this, the budget includes:

- $157.8 million for self-governance compact activities for self-governance Tribes.
- $72.6 million to support Consolidated Tribal Government programs which also promote Indian self-determination, giving approximately 275 Tribes the flexibility to combine and manage contracted programs and grants.
- Funding to provide initial Federal support for six Virginia Tribes federally-recognized by a 2018 Act of Congress, including the Chickahominy, the Eastern Chickahominy, the Upper Mattaponi, the Rappahannock, the Monacan, and the Nansemond. Each tribe in the request would receive $160,000 to begin establishing and carrying out the day-to-day responsibilities of a tribal government.
- $28.3 million for Road Maintenance to support pavement and gravel maintenance, remedial work on improved earth roads, bridge maintenance, and snow and ice control. The BIA maintains nearly 29,000 miles of paved, gravel and earth surface roads; and more than 900 bridges.

Protect Indian Country – The BIA's Office of Justice Services (OJS) funds law enforcement, corrections and court services to support safe tribal communities. These programs safeguard life and property, enforce laws, maintain justice and order, and ensure detained American Indian offenders are held in safe, secure, and humane environments. The 2019 budget prioritizes funding for the primary law enforcement and corrections programs, and identifies savings to minimize impacts on these critical programs.

The FY 2019 budget requests $350.1 million for Public Safety and Justice activities:

- $326.7 million supports 190 law enforcement programs and 96 corrections programs run both by Tribes and as direct services.
- $2.5 million targeted to address the opioid crisis which has been particularly devastating in Indian Country.
- $22.1 million for Tribal Courts.

Support Indian Communities – Sustaining families is critical to fostering thriving Indian communities. The BIA Office of Indian Services supports a community-based approach to child welfare, family stability, and strengthening tribal communities as a whole.

The FY 2019 budget requests $115.4 million for Human Services programs:

- $46.6 million for Social Services and Indian Child Welfare Act programs.
- $65.8 million for Welfare Assistance.

Manage Trust Resources and Lands – The BIA Trust-Natural Resources Management activity supports the stewardship of trust lands in Indian Country. Natural resource programs assist Tribes in the management, development, and protection of Indian trust land and natural resources on 56 million surface acres and 59 million acres of subsurface mineral estates. These programs enable tribal trust landowners to optimize use and conservation of resources, providing benefits such as revenue, jobs, and the protection of cultural, spiritual, and traditional resources.

The FY 2019 budget requests $153.4 million for natural resource management programs which includes agriculture, forestry, water resources, and fish, wildlife and parks activities, including:

- $48.9 million for BIA Forestry programs to support development, maintenance, and enhancement of forest resources in accordance with sustained yield principles included in forest management plans; and
- $28.0 million for BIA's Agriculture and Range program to continue support for multiple use and sustained yield management on over 46 million acres of Indian trust land dedicated to crop and livestock agriculture; and
- $11.4 million for Fish, Wildlife and Parks and $8.6 million for Water Resources management activities.

Keep Fiduciary Trust Responsibilities – The Trust-Real Estate Services activity manages Indian trust-related information to optimize the efficacy of Indian trust assets. The 2019 budget proposes $105.5 million for real estate services programs. The budget supports the processing of Indian trust-related documents such as land title and records and geospatial data to support land and water resources use, energy development, and protection and restoration of ecosystems and important lands. The budget also funds probate services to determine ownership of Indian trust assets essential to economic development and accurate payments to beneficiaries.

Support Economic Opportunities – The FY 2019 budget requests $35.8 million for the Community and Economic Development activity, and features investments in Indian energy activities. The FY 2019 budget supports the Administration's priority for domestic energy dominance and economic development, including development on tribal lands. Income from energy and minerals production is the largest source of revenue generated from natural resources on trust lands, with royalty income of $676.0 million in 2017 payable to tribal governments and individual mineral rights owners. The FY 2019 budget continues the commitment to the Indian Energy Service Center which coordinates Indian energy development activities across Interior's bureaus.

Foster Tribal Student Success – The FY 2019 budget prioritizes funding for core mission programs at BIE-funded elementary and secondary school operations and Post-Secondary tribal colleges and universities. The budget focuses on direct school operations including classroom instruction, student transportation, native language development programs, cultural awareness and enrichment, and school maintenance. In some remotely located schools, funding also supports residential costs.

The FY 2019 budget requests $741.9 million for Bureau of Indian Education programs:

- $625.9 million for Elementary and Secondary programs, including $74.0 million for Tribal Grant Support Costs for Tribes which choose to operate BIE-funded schools. This level will support 100 percent of the estimated requirement.
- $92.7 million for Post-Secondary programs.
- $23.3 million for Education Management.

Tribal Priority Allocations – The 2019 budget proposes Tribal Priority Allocation funding of $578.7 million.

Indian Guaranteed Loan Program – In order to make Indian business financing more readily available, this program offers loan guarantees and insurance covering up to 90 percent of outstanding loan principal to Indian tribes, tribal members, or for profit and not-for-profit businesses at least 51

percent Indian owned. The FY 2019 budget requests $6.7 million to guarantee or insure $108.6 million in loan principal to support Indian economic development.

Fixed Costs – Fixed costs of $9.7 million are fully funded.

The Assistant Secretary–Indian Affairs advises the Secretary of the Interior on Indian Affairs policy issues, communicates policy to and oversee 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.

The Bureau of Indian Education implements federal Indian education programs and funds 183 elementary and secondary day and boarding schools (of which two-thirds are tribally operated) located on 64 reservations in 23 states and peripheral dormitories serving over 47,000 individual students. The BIE also operates two post-secondary schools and administers grants for 29 tribally controlled colleges and universities and two tribal technical colleges.

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