Request focuses on strengthening tribal nations while achieving better results at a lower cost

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WASHINGTON – President Obama's Fiscal Year 2013 budget request for Indian Affairs, which includes the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), is $2.5 billion – a $4.6 million decrease below the FY 2012 enacted level. The proposed budget maintains the President's commitment to meeting the government's responsibilities to the 566 Federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes, while holding the line on fiscal responsibility and improving government efficiency.

"The budget request maintains President Obama's commitment to strengthening tribal nations by making targeted increases in Indian Affairs programs that support tribal self-determination in managing BIA-funded programs, increase public safety in tribal communities by strengthening police capabilities, improve the administration of tribal land, mineral, timber and other trust resources and advance Indian education," said Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Larry Echo Hawk. "Indian Affairs is sensitive to the need for achieving greater results at a lower cost, and the proposed budget reflects the tough choices that will make us more cost efficient in carrying out our missions."

Strengthening Tribal Nations Initiative

The Strengthening Tribal Nations Initiative is a comprehensive, multi-year effort to advance the President's commitments to American Indians and Alaska Natives to improve conditions throughout Indian Country. The FY 2013 budget request continues the initiative, which was the result of meetings with tribal leaders in 2009, 2010, and 2011. The request includes $43.8 million in targeted program increases for this initiative in the areas of Advancing Nation-to-Nation Relationships (+$12.3 million), Protecting Indian Country (+$11.0 million), Improving Trust Land Management (+$15.4 million) and Advancing Indian Education (+$5.2 million).

Advancing Nation-to-Nation Relationships

Under Advancing Nation-to-Nation Relationships, the FY 2013 budget request for Contract Support is $228.0 million – an $8.8 million increase over the FY 2012 enacted level. Contract Support enables a Tribe operating BIA-funded programs to meet administrative costs without decreasing program funds. It is a key factor in the decision a Tribe makes to assume responsibility for operating a Federal program, and is considered by many Tribes as their top priority. The budget includes an increase of $3.5 million for Indian Land and Water Claim Settlements including funds to continue work on the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project.

Protecting Indian Country

The FY 2013 budget request for BIA Law Enforcement is $353.9 million with targeted increases of $11.0 million over the 2012 enacted level for Law Enforcement Operations, Detention Center Operations and Tribal Courts. The 2013 budget request for Law Enforcement Operations builds on increases from previous years with a $3.5 million increase from 2012, for a total of $189.7 million, for Criminal Investigations and Police Services to enable the BIA to continue improving its recruitment and hiring efforts for law enforcement officers and detention center staff, including veterans.

The request includes $88.2 million for Detention Center Operations, a program increase of $6.5 million, for staffing, training and equipment to increase capacity to hold and process detainees and to fund operations at newly constructed detention facilities opening in 2012 and 2013. The request includes $24.6 million for Tribal Courts, an increase of $1.0 million above the 2012 enacted level, to support the enhanced capabilities given to tribal courts in the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2009.

The funding also supports the expansion of a successful pilot program launched in 2010 to reduce crime on four reservations with high violent crime rates. The targeted, intense community-safety pilot program resulted in a combined reduction in violent crime of 35 percent – far exceeding goals and expectations. Two additional reservations with high crime rates will be added to this initiative in 2012.

Improving Trust Land Management

The BIA's trust programs assist Federally recognized Tribes in the management, development and protection of Indian trust land and natural resources on 56 million surface acres and 57 million acres of subsurface mineral estates. As part of Interior's commitment to breaking the logjam on taking land into trust to restore tribal homelands, the Department has undertaken the most substantial overhaul of the Federal fee-to-trust process in 50 years. As a result, between 2009 and 2011 the Department has processed 697 applications, resulting in the acquisition of more than 157,000 acres of land into trust on behalf of tribes and individual Indians.

The FY 2013 budget request supports Improving Trust Land Management through a program increase of $15.4 million for:

- Rights Protection Implementation (+$3.5 million) to support the implementation of Federal court orders resulting from decisions in off-reservation treaty rights litigation.
- Tribal Management Development Program (+$2.0 million) to support Tribes in the management of their on-reservation fish and game programs.
- Cooperative Landscape Development (+800,000) to support greater participation for the bureau and Tribes in the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives for a total program of $1.0 million.
- Invasive Species (+$500,000) to support tribal programs that control, manage, and eradicate harmful plant and animal species from reservations.
- Forestry Programs (+$1.0 million) that develop, maintain, and enhance tribal forest resources.
- Trust Services (+$5.5 million) to support the BIA's responsibilities in the areas of trust services, probate and land titles and records as well as the Department's trust reform improvement efforts, and to support the objectives of the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement signed in February 2010.
- Litigation Support/Attorney Fees (+$1.5 million) to assist Tribes in protecting their tribal trust resources.
- Other Program Management Construction (+$550,000) for the Fort Peck Water System as a new water treatment plant facility is expected to become fully operational in 2012.

Advancing Indian Education

This initiative addresses the full spectrum of educational needs in Indian Country from elementary through post secondary and adult education, including a focus on critical safety and security issues at school facilities to ensure instructional environments are safe and nurturing for students, and an educational reform effort to increase student academic achievement in Bureau of Indian Education funded schools. The FY 2013 budget request for the Bureau of Indian Education is $796.1 million, an increase of $653,000 above the 2012 enacted level, with targeted increases for:

- Tribal Grant Support Costs (+$2.0 million) to help Tribes operating BIE-funded schools cover administrative and indirect costs. As with Contract Support, to which this is comparable, funding for this program is a top priority for Tribes.
- Tribal Colleges and Universities (+2.5 million) to support efforts to assist in the economic development of tribal communities as they offer resources and facilities to teach community members workplace skills and to support tribal plans for development.
- Scholarships (+$710,000) for the BIE's Scholarships and Adult Education program and Special Higher Education Scholarships program to help adults obtain a GED, provide job skills training, and provide financial aid for Indian post secondary and graduate students pursuing degrees in professions that meet the needs of tribal communities.

Indian Land and Water Claim Settlements

The FY 2013 budget request of $36.3 million for BIA Land and Water Claim Settlements will fund ongoing settlements to help deliver clean drinking water to Indian communities and provide certainty to water users across the West. The investments include:

- The seventh and final payment for the Nez Perce/Snake River Water Rights Settlement ($9.5 million).
- The fourth of five payments for the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Reservation Settlement ($12.0 million).
- The fourth payment for the Navajo Nation Water Resources Development Trust Fund ($6.0 million).

The request also includes $7.8 million, a program increase of $3.4 million, for the Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project and $1.0 million for other smaller Indian land and water settlements.

Achieving Better Results at a Lower Cost

In accordance with President Obama's February 2011 memorandum to Federal agencies entitled "Administrative Flexibility, Lower Costs, and Better Results for State, Local and Tribal Governments," the FY 2013 budget request includes reductions and identifies efficiencies that can be achieved through horizontal consolidation, cost-cutting, realignments and program decreases. The request proposes to Achieve Better Results at a Lower Cost through: Improved Management (-$19.7 million) includes measures taken, and those anticipated in consultation with Tribes to ensure that their needs and priorities are addressed, to significantly reduce Indian Affairs program administrative costs. Realignment (+$1.3 million) includes an increase to reflect the transfer of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board from the Office of the Secretary to Indian Affairs, which would oversee the implementation of the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990, as amended. Program Reductions in funding for:

- Law Enforcement Special Initiatives (-$2.6 million) reflecting reduced participation on collaborative activities such as intelligence sharing. • Information Resources Technology (-$6.1 million) due to standardization and consolidation of IT infrastructure.
- The Indian Student Equalization Program (ISEP) (-$4.5 million) to reflect a slight decline in student population.
- Replacement School Construction (-$17.8 million) as the program focuses on addressing improving conditions of existing school facilities.
- The Indian Guaranteed Loan Program (-$2.1 million) while being evaluated for effectiveness.

Indian Affairs' responsibility to the Federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes is rooted in Article I, Section 8, of the United States Constitution, treaties and Federal law. It is responsible for the management, development and protection of Indian trust land and natural resources, providing for public safety and justice in Indian Country, and promoting tribal self-determination and self-governance. Through the Bureau of Indian Education, it funds 183 elementary and secondary day and boarding schools, of which two-thirds are tribally operated, located on 64 reservations in 23 states serving 41,000 students. It also provides funding to 27 tribal colleges and universities and two tribal technical colleges, operates two post-secondary institutions of higher learning and provides higher education scholarships.

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