Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
For Immediate Release: February 6, 2006
Print PDF

WASHINGTON – President Bush has proposed a $2.2 billion budget for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) for Fiscal Year 2007. The budget reflects the President's emphasis on fiscal discipline while continuing the Interior Department's commitment to trust reform, greater accountability at BIA-funded schools, economic development, public safety and tribal self-determination. The President's proposal increases funding for trust management, education management, tribal energy development, law enforcement programs and support costs for contracting Tribes.

"The President's 2007 budget request focuses on the BIA's core mission areas – trust and education – while continuing to support tribal self-determination," said Interior Associate Deputy Secretary James E. Cason. "We have worked in consultation with tribal leaders to develop a BIA budget that more accurately reflects their needs and priorities."

The Fiscal Year 2007 budget request for Operation of Indian Programs (OIP) is $1.97 billion, an increase of $4.4 million over the Fiscal Year 2006 enacted amount.

To improve trust management, the Fiscal Year 2007 budget request includes an increase of $11.5 million for BIA to meet the requirements outlined in the Department's Fiduciary Trust Model (FTM) while continuing to implement trust reform initiatives. The increase includes $3.0 million critical to reducing the probate caseload of just over 24,000 cases and $6.5 million to implement recommendations of the FTM to eliminate cadastral survey backlogs and reduce survey costs. Funding will support a Certified Federal Surveyor program to train BIA employees to become certified surveyors and maintain the Public Lands Survey system.

This also includes $2.0 million for Indian energy resource development as outlined in the Energy Policy Act of 2005 comprised of $1.4 million for grants to Indian Tribes for energy development activities, such as inventorying energy resources, conducting development feasibility studies, establishing tribal energy resource agreements, providing training and developing tribal energy codes and $600,000 for BIA oversight in approving tribal energy resource agreements and providing technical assistance.

As part of the on-going effort to implement trust reform, the Department will consult with Tribes this spring and propose regulations and legislation addressing needed technical corrections and administrative improvements for implementing trust reform, which will continue to improve services to Indian trust beneficiaries.

The Fiscal Year 2007 budget request proposes an increase of $19.0 million to fully fund indirect support costs for contracting Tribes to encourage tribal contracting and promote progress in achieving Indian self-determination.

The request for elementary and secondary school operations for Fiscal Year 2007 is $536.0 million to support 184 BIA-funded schools and dormitories serving almost 48,000 students and resident-only boarders. The request represents a continued commitment to the future of American Indian youth and supports the President's commitment to "leave no child behind."

Included is an increase of $2.5 million to meet the objectives of a program improvement and accountability plan developed by the BIA with Tribes and tribal school boards to improve the effectiveness of the education services provided by the BIA school system. This plan is designed to help schools meet their adequate yearly progress requirements under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The increase will support the realignment of education offices in the field and in headquarters to a more centrally coordinated organization to provide the oversight capacity necessary to promote progress in student achievement and strengthen accountability in all schools.

The budget request also includes an increase of $630,000 for education programs for juveniles temporarily detained in BIA-funded juvenile detention centers to reduce recidivism by enabling them to stay current with their academic instruction.

The Fiscal Year 2007 budget request for post-secondary education totals $103.2 million and includes funding for grants to 24 tribal colleges and universities and two BIA owned and operated institutions – Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kan., and the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute in Albuquerque, N.M. The request continues funding for tribal and BIA scholarships and for operating grants to 24 tribally operated colleges and universities at the 2006 enacted levels.

The OIP request includes $213.7 million for public safety and justice in Indian country, including increases of $1.8 million to expand law enforcement programs in areas where violent crime is most severe and $2.7 million for operating costs at detention facilities built with U.S. Department of Justice funds which will be certified for occupancy in 2007.

The Fiscal Year 2007 budget request for Construction is $215.0 million.

The 2007 budget request for school construction and repair is $157.4 million. While $49.3 million below the 2006 enacted level, the budget funds new projects while allowing the program to focus on completion of schools already funded. The request proposes $36.5 million for replacement school construction to complete funding for the Muckleshoot Tribal School in Washington State and fully fund the Dennehotso Boarding School in Arizona, schools next in priority on the Replacement School Construction Priority List.

In addition, the 2007 budget request proposes $26.9 million for a new budget subactivity, Replacement Facility Construction, to fund replacement of individual buildings on school campuses when entire new school facilities are not needed. This new subactivity is established in response to the recommendations of the Interior Department Inspector General’s report on the use of Facility Improvement and Repair (FI&R) funds. The 2007 request will fund the replacement of four buildings.

In September 2004, the Inspector General issued its report documenting poor conditions at BIA owned detention facilities. The Bureau responded to the IG’s report by expanding its detention center construction program. The Fiscal Year 2007 budget request continues improvement of detention facility conditions by maintaining a budget of $8.1 million for detention center facility and repair. This will fund four major and several smaller FI&R projects to bring Indian detention centers up to national standards.

The 2007 budget request for Indian Land and Water Claim Settlements is $33.9 million and includes $22.3 million for two new settlements. The Snake River Water Rights Act of 2004 requires that the Interior Department provide the Nez Perce Tribe and the State of Idaho $170.9 million over seven years to fund water supply, habitat restoration and other purposes. The BIA portion of the settlement is $95.8

million over seven years. The 2007 BIA budget request includes $14.8 million for payments to the Nez Perce Tribe Water and Fisheries Fund, Nez Perce Tribe Salmon and Clearwater River Basins Habitat Account and Nez Perce Tribe Domestic Water Supply Fund.

The settlement request also includes $7.5 million for the first of two payments for the Rocky Boy's Water Systems Operation, Maintenance, and Replacement Trust Fund. The total authorization of the trust fund is $15.0 million. Reductions for the Colorado Ute, Zuni, and Quinault Indian Nation land and water settlements, which will be completed or almost completed in 2006, total $23.1 million, offsetting the increase requested for the new settlements.

The BIA 2007 budget request reflects the President's commitment to fiscal discipline by including reductions in programs in consideration of several critical factors, such as a lack of performance accountability, duplication of other Federal or State programs and implementation of management efficiencies or program priority reassessments. These reductions include the endangered species program ($984,000), agriculture-noxious weeds program ($1.1 million), Johnson-O'Malley grants ($16.4 million), welfare assistance ($11.0 million), road maintenance ($2.6 million), community fire protection ($1.2 million) and water management and planning ($1.9 million).

-DOI-
