Funding will impact more than 300 tribes through cooperative planning, shared information and other tools

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WASHINGTON – Lawrence S. Roberts, who is leading the Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs, announced today awards of $8.7 million to 63 federally recognized tribes and tribally chartered organizations under the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Tribal Climate Resilience Program. The awards will support tribally based efforts to address climate change and its effects on tribal lands and resources.

“Through the BIA’s Tribal Climate Resilience Program, we’re aiding tribes in their struggles to address the ways climate change is affecting them now and in the future,” Roberts said. “In addition to the funds and resources the program provides, its positive effects are magnified across many tribal communities because award recipients are encouraged to share their insights, experiences and knowledge about confronting and building resilience to the effects of climate change.”

Along with their recipients, the 85 awards announced today will also directly support about 200 additional tribes through cooperative planning and shared information and tools. At least another 100 tribes are expected to be reached through tribally designed and delivered training awards.

The BIA established the Tribal Climate Resilience Program in Fiscal Year 2013 to fund tribal climate change adaptation planning, ocean and coastal management planning, youth internships, and climate change activities. The program supports tribal and trust resource managers by providing funds for adaptation planning, vulnerability assessment, training, and access to data and tools. Awards are available annually, subject to funding availability.

These funds enable tribal resource managers to mitigate climate risk for valued and vulnerable tribal resources during a project’s design phase, and to build infrastructure resilience to climate change within natural and human systems.

Between FY 2013 and FY 2015, the BIA awarded over $16 million in Tribal Climate Resilience Program (then known as the Tribal Cooperative Landscape Conservation program) funding to 108 tribes and intertribal organizations through 145 awards out of a total tribal request of over $48 million. The FY 2016 solicitation generated 221 tribal proposals requesting more than $26.5 million. The BIA was able to provide about one-third of the FY 2016 requested funding, reaching approximately half of the applicants.

“The year-over-year increases in the number of proposals the BIA receives indicates a growing unmet need as more tribes emerge as leaders in adaptation planning, and as the recognition and local impact of climate risks inspire still more tribes to engage in adaptation planning to protect their people, lands and resources,” Roberts said. In addition to direct support for adaptation planning, the BIA also

provides tribal managers with access to climate change adaptation information and tools, such as:

- The Tribal Climate Resilience Resource Guide, an accessible compendium of federal government-wide resources for tribes released by White House Council on Native American Affairs' (WHCNAA) Climate Subgroup in 2016; and
- The Guide's Tribal Climate Resilience Fact Sheet, tailored to each tribe, that can help in navigating federal programs and lists funded projects, adaptation plans and other work products, including stories and tools, in the U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit Tribal Nations topic.

Along with the Tribal Nations theme in the Climate Data Initiative, these online publications form an interconnected resource network that provides tribal leaders and resource managers with access to the best available science, tools and examples of climate adaptation management. These resources can aid tribes in improving their resilience to accelerating climate change, which currently affects a growing number of critical tribal assets, irrevocably altering tribes' long-held cultural patrimony.

A Summary of FY16 Climate Awards by tribe, title, funded amount, project description, and total requested but unfunded amount is provided on the FY 2016 BIA Tribal Climate Resilience Program homepage.

The Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs oversees the BIA, which is headed by a director who is responsible for managing day-to-day operations through four offices – Indian Services, Justice Services, Trust Services and Field Operations – that administer or fund tribally based infrastructure, law enforcement, social services, tribal governance, natural and energy resources, and trust management programs for the nation's federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and villages through 12 regional offices and 85 agencies.
