Jewell, Tester Make Announcement During Tour of Crow Nation Hydro Project in Montana - One of the Projects to Receive Funding

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CROW AGENCY, Montana -- As part of President Obama's commitment to work with Indian Country leaders to promote strong, prosperous and resilient tribal economies and communities, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell today announced that $3.2 million has been awarded to 21 tribal projects to assist in developing energy and mineral resources, including $655,000 to the Crow Tribe to advance a hydroelectric project that will provide low-cost clean power to tribal members and encourage business on Crow lands.

Secretary Jewell, who serves as Chair of the White House Council on Native American Affairs, announced the grants during a visit to the Crow Reservation in southeastern Montana. Jewell was joined by Senator Jon Tester, the new chairman of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Larry Roberts.

"The Crow Nation is working to provide reliable, low-cost, renewable power to tribal members, and this grant will help make that vision a reality," said Secretary Jewell. "These grants are about strengthening self-determination and self-governance by enabling tribal nations to evaluate and promote their energy and mineral assets, negotiate the best agreements with partners or investors and develop these resources for the social and economic benefit of their communities."

Jewell is making a three-day visit to Montana, meeting with tribal and business leaders, ranchers, hunters and anglers and other stakeholder groups to discuss the economic value of public lands to local communities, the importance of the Land and Water Conservation Fund in expanding access to hunting and fishing areas, and public-private partnerships that protect public lands, such as the Blackfoot Challenge for the southern part of the Crown of the Continent ecosystem.

The $655,000 grant to the Crow Tribe will allow completion of all technical, environmental, engineering and economic analyses required for an 8 to 12 megawatt hydroelectric project at the Yellowtail Afterbay Dam on the Crow Reservation. This will allow the Tribe to seek power purchase agreements and financing to build the facility, which will provide electricity to its members and invite industry to the reservation with the certainty of reliable, sustainable and clean low-cost power. The project is also expected to improve the Big Horn River's downstream fishery by reducing excessive nitrogen and oxygen levels.

"All Montanans need affordable energy to power their homes, schools and businesses, and Crow Nation is using the mighty Bighorn River to provide that energy for themselves and folks across the region," Tester said. "Using all of Montana's energy resources will strengthen our economy, create jobs and increase our energy security."

In 2009, Senator Tester introduced and then successfully helped pass the Crow Tribe Water Settlement Act that authorized the Crow to develop hydropower at the dam.

As Chair of the White House Council on Native American Affairs, Secretary Jewell leads a comprehensive Federal initiative to work more collaboratively and effectively with Tribes to advance their economic and social priorities. Informed by consultation with the Tribes and reflective of tribal priorities, the Interior Department's FY2015 budget requests $2.6 billion for Indian Affairs, $33.6 million above the 2014 enacted level, to sustain the President's commitment and honor Interior's trust responsibilities to the 566 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes.

Recognizing this commitment to tribal self-governance and self-determination, the budget fully funds contract support costs that Tribes incur as managers of the programs serving Native Americans.

A full list of the 21 projects receiving grant awards for energy and mineral development is available here and includes six for mineral extraction, two for oil and gas production and 13 for renewable energy, including wind, hydropower, geothermal and biomass proposals. Under the Obama Administration, the Indian Affairs Energy and Mineral Development Program has awarded more than $18 million to fund 96 projects to assess the potential of Tribal conventional and renewable energy resources and mineral deposits. A competitive review system evaluates proposals and selects qualified projects for funding.

Funding for construction of the Crow hydropower project was authorized in the Crow Water Rights Settlement that President Obama signed on Dec. 8, 2010. In March 2011 Crow tribal members voted to ratify the Settlement legislation and the Crow Tribe-Montana Water Rights Compact. The Settlement legislation provided the Tribe with the authority to develop hydropower at Yellowtail Afterbay Dam along with some funding to assist in the development along with other energy development on the Reservation. The Grant announced today is an additional and needed boost to the Tribe as it works to develop hydropower.

Together, the Settlement Act and the Compact quantified the Tribe's water rights and authorized funding of $131.8 million for the rehabilitation and improvement of the Crow Irrigation Project and $246.4 million for the design and construction of a Municipal, Rural and Industrial (MR&I) water system to serve numerous reservation communities.

The Crow Reservation is the largest of seven Indian reservations in Montana, encompassing 2.3 million acres and home to 13,000 enrolled Crow tribal members.

Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs 2013 Energy and Mineral Development Program Awards

MINERAL

1. Bois Forte Band of Chippewa S&G Nett Lake, MN
2. Hualapai Tribe Flagstone Peach Springs, AZ
3. Moapa Band of Paiute Indians Limestone Moapa, NV
4. Nez Perce Tribe Limestone Lapwai, ID
5. Spirit Lake Tribe Aggregates Fort Totten, ND
6. Standing Rock Sioux Tribe S&G Fort Yates, ND

Mineral Grant Award Totals $505,420

OIL, GAS, GEOTHERMAL

7. Pueblo of Jemez Geothermal Jemez Pueblo, NM

8. Jicarilla Apache Nation Oil & Gas Dulce, NM

9. Ute Mountain Ute Tribe Oil & Gas Towaoc, CO

Oil,Gas,Geothermal Grant Award Totals $765,234

RENEWABLE

10. Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Biomass Odanah, WI

11. Blue Lake Rancheria Biomass Blue Lake, CA

12. Blue Lake Rancheria WiSolHy Blue Lake, CA

13. Bois Forte Band of Chippewa Biomass DH Nett Lake, MN

14. Crow Tribe Hydro Renewable Crow Agency, MT

15. Crow Creek Sioux Tribe Wind Fort Thompson, SD

16. Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians WTE Cherokee, NC

17. Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Biomass Cloquet, MN

18. Ho-Chunk Nation WTE Black River Falls, WI

19. Pueblo de Cochiti Multi Cochiti Pueblo, NM

20. The Shoshone Bannock Tribes Hydro Fort Hall, ID

21. Tule River Tribe Hydro Porterville, CA

Renewable Grant Award Totals $1,972,350

Division of Energy and Mineral Development - Energy and Mineral Development (EMDP) grants awarded for 2013. Sixty (60) Tribes responded to the Solicitation for Proposals, twenty one (21) total projects will be awarded to nineteen (19) federally recognized tribes across Indian Country.

Tribes receiving more than one EMDP grant for 2013

- Boise Forte Band Of Chippewa – Sand and Gravel
- Boise Forte Band Of Chippewa - Biomass
- Blue Lake Rancheria – Biomass
- Blue Lake Rancheria – Wind, Solar and Hydro project

Each year the Division of Energy and Mineral Development offers Tribes an opportunity to participate in a grant program for energy and mineral assessment projects. The grant program, called the Energy and Mineral Development Program (EMDP), is an annual program, subject to appropriations, designed to financially assist Tribes and Indian allottees in evaluating their energy and mineral resource potential beneath their lands. DEMD solicits proposals from Tribes, and through a competitive review system selects qualified projects for funding. DEMD staff monitors the projects to ensure the best possible product is obtained for the funds allocated.

The EMDP grant program differs from essentially all other funding agencies' grant programs. The primary difference is the hands-on approach employed by DEMD staff serving as technical consulting partners to the Tribes receiving the grant. This approach includes:

- providing funds and technical assistance to Tribes in evaluating their energy and mineral resource potential;
- providing Tribes with geological, geophysical, and engineering reports, maps, and other data concerning their energy and mineral resources;
- providing Tribes with technical assistance on using and interpreting assessment information so that Tribes understand their resource potential and can plan for the potential development of these resources;
- providing Tribes with an outreach vehicle to promote their lands and resources; and perhaps most significantly, providing direct assistance to Tribes in negotiating complex, value added agreements with potential partners or investors.

Total award for Energy and Mineral Development across nineteen (19) individual Tribes, representing twenty-one (21) grants for 2013 EMDP Grants - $3,243,004.00

Mineral projects $505,420

Oil, Gas, Geothermal Projects $765,234

Renewable Projects $1,972,350