Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – As part of the Obama Administration's Generation Indigenous ("GenI") initiative to remove barriers standing between Native youth and their opportunity to succeed, Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs Kevin K. Washburn today announced that the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) has awarded $1.3 million in Tribal Climate Resilience Program grants for internships intended to engage the next generation of Native leaders on climate change. Twentyone grants for internships, specifically designed around climate change adaptation and community resilience, were awarded to federally recognized tribes and tribally chartered organizations.

"American Indian and Alaska Native communities are experiencing the effects of climate change, and we need to engage, educate, and provide relevant work experience for the next generation of tribal leaders and program managers," Washburn said. "These investments in Indian Country's young people show how wide the Obama Administration's commitment is to supporting tribes as they address these challenges."

The funds will support tribal youth internships that focus on identifying and integrating climate adaptation into tribal program management as well as climate research internships to develop actionable science that will help tribal managers identify effective management choices to aid their tribes' resilience to climate change. A subset of awards encourages climate literacy to cultivate the next generation of tribal leaders and climate adaptation program managers. Some applicants received grants in more than one category.

The funds build on the Tribal Climate Resilience Program awards of nearly $14.1 million -- $2.3 million, issued last December, and $11.8 million in direct tribal support awards in June -- presented to 104 tribal and tribal organization projects.

The BIA gave out 21 awards yesterday totaling $1,367,719 in three categories:

- Category 1: Program Internships – Awards: 9; Total Funding: $ 607,836
- Category 2: Research Internships – Awards: 5; Total Funding: $ 319,178
- Category 3: Youth Engagement – Awards: 7; Total Funding: $ 440,705

As part of Executive Order 13653 of November 1, 2013, all federal departments and agencies are expanding their efforts to help tribes, states, cities and localities prepare for the impacts of climate change. To comply with this Executive Order, the Secretary of the Interior's Tribal Climate Resilience Program carries out Recommendations and Supplemental Recommendations of the President's State, Local, and Tribal Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience, and assists in implementing President Obama's Climate Action Plan. A key part of the Climate Action Plan is to build more resilient communities and strengthen defenses for communities already on the front lines of a changing climate.

Furthermore, the President's proposed budget for FY 2016 includes $137 million to prepare communities and ecosystems for the challenges of a changing climate. Included in this request is $50

million to support competitive resilience projects in coastal areas. The budget also proposes expanding the Tribal Climate Resilience Program to specifically address the changing Arctic landscape and offer support to Alaska Native villages and other critically vulnerable communities in evaluating options for their long-term resilience to climate change.

Visit the Indian Affairs website http://www.bia.gov/WhoWeAre/BIA/climatechange/index.htm to view lists of the FY 2015 youth internship and climate awardees.

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. These offices directly administer or fund tribally based infrastructure, law enforcement, social services (including child welfare), tribal governance, natural and energy resources, and trust lands and resources management programs for the nation's federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and villages through 12 regional offices and 81 agencies. The Office of Trust Services administers the Tribal Climate Resilience Program.