Calls for $1 billion investment in Indian education; fully funds contract support costs; invests in energy development, sustainable stewardship of natural resources; and promotes tribal resilience to climate change

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – President Obama's Fiscal Year 2016 budget request for Indian Affairs, which includes the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), is $2.9 billion – a $323.5 million, or 12 percent increase from the FY2015 enacted level. The request maintains the Administration's strong support for tribal self-determination, strengthening tribal nations across Indian Country, and meeting the federal government's responsibilities to the 566 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes, promoting opportunities for Native youth, and strengthening tribal education, economies, and resilience.

"This Fiscal Year 2016 budget reflects President Obama's deep personal commitment to improving the lives of Indian people over the long term, focusing especially on Native youth, who represent the future of Indian Country," said Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Kevin K. Washburn. "Indian Country has been united in requesting greater resources and the President has heard the tribes' requests. This budget will improve the federal government's capacity to meet the trust responsibility and support tribal self-governance."

The 2016 budget for Indian Affairs supports an "all of government" approach to addressing federal responsibilities and tribal needs. Coordination of this work across the federal government is being carried out through the White House Council on Native American Affairs, established by Executive Order on June 26, 2013, by President Obama and chaired by the Department of the Interior.

Creating Opportunities For Native Youth

The budget includes key investments to support the launch of Generation Indigenous, a Native American youth initiative focused on supporting opportunities and addressing barriers to success for Native American youth. This initiative will take a comprehensive, culturally appropriate approach to help improve the lives and opportunities of Native American youth.

In today's global economy a high quality education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity – it is a prerequisite to success. President Obama set out a vision for a 21st century education system grounded in both high academic standards and tribal values and traditions. Making advanced education opportunities available for tribal members is a high priority for tribes, who see education as the path to economic development and a better quality of life for their communities through an educated and skilled tribal member workforce.

The President's budget proposes a $1.0 billion investment in Indian education to support a comprehensive transformation of the **Bureau of Indian Education**. This multi-year process will transform the BIE into an organization that will serve as a capacity builder and service provider to support tribes in educating their youth and which delivers a world-class and culturally appropriate education across Indian Country.

The President's FY2016 budget request for **Indian education operations and construction** includes increases of $93.9 million for programs that improve opportunities and outcomes in the classroom, enrich instructional services and teacher quality, promote language and cultural programs, and enhance broadband and digital access. The budget also includes an increase of $58.7 million to repair and rebuild BIE-funded schools. The BIE budget also includes a $4.6 million increase for scholarships for post-secondary education, with a focus on recipients seeking degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

The Department is working collaboratively with tribes and other federal agencies including the Departments of Education, Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, and Justice to implement education reforms and address issues facing Native American youth. Budget increases across other federal agencies through the Generation Indigenous Initiative will support educational outcomes and provide wraparound services to help address barriers and provide opportunities for youth, including behavioral and mental health, and substance abuse services.

The request also includes an additional $3.0 million for the Bureau of Indian Affairs to support **youth participation in natural resources programs**. The request would support approximately 60 new tribal youth projects and training programs throughout Indian Country and supplement existing training programs within the forestry, water, and agriculture programs.

Supporting Indian Families and Protecting Indian Country

Supporting Indian families and ensuring public safety in Indian Country are top priorities for the President and tribal leaders. As part of the President's commitment to protect and promote the development of prosperous tribal communities and provide opportunities for youth, the BIA will continue to implement the **Tiwahe Initiative**. The initiative promotes a comprehensive and integrated approach to supporting family stability and strengthening tribal communities by addressing the interrelated issues associated with child welfare, poverty, domestic violence, substance abuse, and incarceration. Tiwahe means family in the Lakota language. This initiative aligns directly with the White House **Generation Indigenous** initiative which is focused on addressing barriers to success for Native youth, by leveraging BIA programs in concert with other federal programs to support family and community stability and cultural awareness.

Solutions require the coordination of social service programs, taking steps to maintain family cohesiveness, preparing family wage earners for work opportunities, and providing rehabilitative alternatives to incarceration for family members with substance abuse issues. The budget request proposes an increase of $6.0 million for **BIA social services** programs through the Tiwahe Initiative, to provide culturally appropriate services with the goal of empowering individuals and families through health promotion, family stability, and strengthening tribal communities as a whole. The budget also includes $4.0 million for **BIA Law Enforcement Special Initiatives** and $5.0 million for **tribal courts** to implement a comprehensive strategy for providing alternatives to incarceration and increases in

treatment opportunities across Indian Country.

To further promote public safety and community resilience in Indian communities, the budget proposal for **BIA law enforcement** builds on recent successes in reducing violent crime and expands efforts to lower repeat incarceration in Indian Country, a priority goal of the agency. In 2016, the pilot program to lower rates of repeat incarceration will be expanded from three sites to five with the goal to reduce recidivism at all sites by at least three percent.

Tribal Nation-Building

Programs run by tribes through contracts with the federal government support tribal nation-building and self-determination. The availability of funding for **contract support costs** is a key factor in tribal decisions to assume responsibility for operating federal programs, an undertaking that furthers tribal self-governance and self-determination. The President's budget request for contract support costs is $277.0 million, an increase of $26.0 million above the FY2015 enacted level. Based on the most recent analysis, the requested amount will fully fund 2016 tribal **contract support costs**. The budget also includes – for the first time ever – a new proposal to fully fund BIA and Indian Health Service contract support costs as mandatory funding, beginning in FY2017. The BIA and IHS will continue to work together with tribes and to consult on policies to address long-term programmatic and funding goals to advance tribal self-determination.

Tribal leaders and communities, in partnership with the federal government, need access to quality data and information to make decisions concerning communities, economic development, resource management, and to evaluate and improve programs that deliver services. The budget request includes an additional $12 million to help address long-standing concerns tribes have expressed with the **quality of data in Indian Country** and the ability to collect, analyze, and utilize evidence to support effective tribal policy making and program implementation. This funding will also support creation of an **Office of Indian Affairs Policy, Program Evaluation, and Data** to directly support Indian Affairs' and tribal data and analysis needs.

To support an "all of government" approach to delivering programs and funding to Indian Country, the budget request proposes an increase of $4.0 million to establish the **One-Stop Tribal Support Center** to make it easier for tribes to find and use the hundreds of services available to them across the federal government. Initially, the Center will focus on programs that serve Native American youth, in support of the Generation Indigenous Initiative and to pilot this new approach to serving needs in Indian Country.

The President's proposal includes $4.5 million to establish an **Indian Energy Service Center** staffed by BIA, the Office of Natural Resources Revenue, the Bureau of Land Management and the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians to facilitate energy development in Indian Country. Oil and gas resources are significant revenue generators in Indian Country, with royalty income climbing to $1.1 billion in 2014, nearly three times the revenues in 2010. The Center will expedite leasing, permitting, and reporting for conventional and renewable energy on Indian lands – and importantly – provide resources to ensure development occurs safely, protects the environment, and manages risks appropriately by providing funding and technical assistance to support assessment of the social and environmental impacts of energy development.

Sustainable Stewardship of Trust Resources

BIA trust programs assist federally recognized tribes in the management, development and protection of Indian trust land and natural resources on 55 million surface acres and 57 million acres of subsurface mineral estates. These programs assist tribal landowners in optimizing the sustainable stewardship and use of resources, providing benefits such as revenue, jobs, and the protection of cultural, spiritual, and traditional resources. The President's budget includes a total increase of $6.9 million for **BIA Trust Real Estate Services** activities to bolster the stewardship of trust resources. The increase in funding will address the BIA's probate backlog and support land title and records processing, cleanup and geospatial support needs, and database management.

Supporting Climate Resilience in Indian Country

Tribes throughout the U.S. are already experiencing the impacts of a changing climate including drought, intensifying wildfires, changes in plants and animals important to subsistence and cultural practices, impacts to treaty and trust resources, and coastal erosion and sea level rise. The budget provides a total of $50.4 million, a $40.4 million increase over 2015, across nine BIA trust resource programs to support tribal communities in preparing for and responding to the impacts of climate change. Funds will support tribes to develop and access science, tools, training, and planning, and to implement actions that build resilience into resource management, infrastructure, and community development activities. Funding will target critically vulnerable communities, such as Alaska Native villages in the Arctic and provide support for evaluating options for the long-term resilience of their communities.

Tribal lands, located primarily in the West and Alaska, are by their geography and location on the "front line" of climate change, yet many of these communities face challenges in accessing information and resources needed to help respond to the far-reaching impacts of climate change on infrastructure, economic development, food security, natural and cultural resources, and local cultures. Strengthening access to information, through technical and financial assistance, to address the combined and cumulative effects, are among the highest priorities for supporting climate change adaptation and resilience. Examples of projects that may be funded include training, studies, scenario planning, natural resource and infrastructure projects, public awareness and outreach efforts, capacity building, and other projects. Criteria for tribal funding will be developed and prioritized in consultation with tribes and the interagency White House Council on Native American Affairs subgroup on natural resources and climate.

Indian Water Rights

The budget request for **Indian water rights settlements** continues to demonstrate the Administration's strong commitment to resolve tribal water rights claims and ensure that tribes have access to use and manage water to meet their domestic, economic, cultural, and ecological needs. Many of the projects supported in these agreements bring clean and potable water to tribal communities, while others repair crumbling irrigation and water delivery systems upon which tribal communities depend.

The request proposes a total of $244.5 million, an increase of $73.0 million over the FY2015 enacted level, for technical and legal support and for authorized settlements involving tribal water rights. This

includes $40.8 million for Interior-wide technical and legal support and $203.7 million for settlement implementation. Of the request for settlement implementation, $136.0 million is funded by the Bureau of Reclamation and $67.7 million by BIA.

With the proposed level of funding in FY2016, Interior will complete the funding requirements for the **Taos Pueblo Indian Water Rights Settlement Act**. The BIA portion of tribal water rights settlement payments in the FY2016 request includes:

- $29.2 million for the **Taos Pueblo Indian Water Rights Settlement Act**
- $15.6 million for the **Aamodt Settlement** enacted in the Claims Resolution Act of 2010
- $17.8 million for the **Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project**
- $4.0 million for the **Navajo Water Resources Development Trust Fund**

To strengthen the Department's capacity to meet its trust responsibilities and more effectively partner with tribes on water issues, the budget request includes an increase of $16.9 million in the budgets of BIA, Reclamation, BLM, Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Geological Survey. This funding will support a more robust, coordinated, Department-wide approach to working with and supporting tribes in resolving water rights claims and supporting sustainable stewardship of tribal water resources. Funds will strengthen the engagement, management, and analytical capabilities of the Indian Water Rights Office, increase coordination and expertise among bureaus and offices that work on these issues, and increase support to tribes.

The Office of Indian Affairs' responsibility to federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes is rooted in Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution and subsequently defined in treaties, acts of Congress, executive orders and actions, federal court decisions, and federal policies and regulations. Through the Bureau of Indian Affairs, it is responsible for the management, development and protection of Indian trust lands and natural and energy resources, providing for public safety, social welfare, and justice in tribal communities, 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 and serving over 40,000 students. It also funds 28 tribal colleges and universities and two tribal technical colleges, operates two post-secondary institutions of higher learning, and provides higher education scholarships.
