Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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For Immediate Release: October 14, 2009
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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced today that the Bureau of Reclamation has awarded American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding to additional tribes to help improve infrastructure and water supplies while bringing jobs to Indian country.

Today's announcements apply to five tribes that will receive a total of $47 million—the Three Affiliated Tribes of North Dakota; the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and the Oglala Sioux Tribe in South Dakota; and the Navajo Nation in New Mexico. Reclamation previously has awarded $97 million and will award a total of $157 million in recovery funding to tribes for their water systems.

"President Obama's economic recovery plan is meant to quickly aid Americans by providing jobs and improving infrastructure, while paving the way for tomorrow's success," Salazar said. "It is particularly important to create economic opportunities and local jobs for tribes that currently obtain water from some of the nation's most substandard water supply systems. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is bringing these areas both high-quality drinking water and a brighter outlook for the future."

Funding to tribes announced today includes:

- $6.4 million to the Three Affiliated Tribes of North Dakota. This additional funding will assist the tribes with continued construction of the Fort Berthold Rural Water System.
- $1.9 million to the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe. This additional funding will assist the tribe with continued construction on five rural water system projects in South Dakota.
- $18.9 million to the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe to assist the tribe with continued construction of three projects within the Standing Rock Rural Water Supply System in South Dakota.
- $14.7 million for two Oglala Sioux Tribe rural water projects in South Dakota. The first project involves the Oglala Sioux Rural Water Supply Core System. The second project will include rural water system improvement on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. This improvement will include rehabilitation of water systems at seven Bureau of Indian Affairs schools.
- $5.27 million to the Navajo Nation in New Mexico under modification to an existing contract for purchasing pipeline and related fittings for constructing key portions of the Navajo Nation Municipal Pipeline authorized as part of the Animas-La Plata Project by the Colorado Ute Settlement Act Amendments of 2000.

A total of $215 million in Recovery Act water infrastructure investments through the Bureau of Reclamation will provide a direct or indirect benefit to multiple tribal water users. This investment is in addition to other ARRA funds from Department of the Interior bureaus -- mainly the Bureau of Indian Affairs -- which will provide an additional $500 million to President Obama's economic recovery efforts targeting tribal communities across the nation.

Department of the Interior water infrastructure investments in tribal water systems are part of the $1 billion nationwide effort that Interior's Bureau of Reclamation will channel under the ARRA to restore aging infrastructure, repair aging dams, provide drought relief and improve conservation of water.

In response to the water crisis, across the West, Reclamation will spend $200 million on construction of rural water projects for tribal and non-tribal rural water system construction with an emphasis on water intakes and water treatment plants. These investments will help address public health needs of rural and Native communities and create significant economic development in these distressed areas. The infusion of ARRA funding will allow projects authorized by Congress to deliver water sooner than would otherwise be the case.

Secretary Salazar has pledged quick and responsible implementation of the $3 billion in recovery funds that will be used by the Department of the Interior and its agencies.

Secretary Salazar has pledged unprecedented levels of transparency and accountability in the implementation of the Department of the Interior's economic recovery projects. The public will be able to follow the progress of each project on www.recovery.gov and on www.interior.gov/recovery. Secretary Salazar has appointed a Senior Advisor for Economic Recovery, Chris Henderson, and an Interior Economic Recovery Task Force. Henderson and the Task Force will work closely with the Department of the Interior's Inspector General to ensure that the recovery program is meeting the high standards for accountability, responsibility and transparency that President Obama has set.
