

STATEMENT OF CORA JONES
DIRECTOR, GREAT PLAINS REGIONAL OFFICE
BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BEFORE THE
UNITED STATES SENATE
COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS
NORTH DAKOTA FIELD OVERSIGHT HEARING
ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF TITLE XXXV OF PUBLIC LAW 102-575

April 3, 2002

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. My name is Cora Jones and I am the Director for the Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) Great Plains Regional Office. I am pleased to be here today to discuss the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's Economic Recovery Fund provisions of Title XXXV of Public Law 102-575, the "Three Affiliated Tribes and Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Equitable Compensation Act," an Act to ensure that the Three Affiliated Tribes of Fort Berthold and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe were adequately compensated for the taking of Indian lands for the site of the Garrison Dam and reservoir, and the Oahe Dam and Reservoir, and for other purposes.

The Act established the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's Economic Recovery Fund in the United States Treasury. In fiscal year 1993, the U.S. Treasury began making annual deposits into the Economic Recovery Fund, as required under the Act, until it was fully capitalized at \$90.6 million. While this principal is retained in the U.S. Treasury, the Tribe is authorized to use the interest earned for educational, social welfare, economic development, and other programs, subject to the approval of the Secretary. In fiscal year 1998, the Tribe could begin withdrawing the accrued and annual interest subject to approval of the Secretary. This approval authority is delegated to the BIA's Regional Director for the Great Plains Regional Office.

On June 16, 2000, I approved the "Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's Joint Tribal Advisory Committee Fund Access Plan"(Plan). This Plan, established in consultation with tribal members and the BIA, outlines the Tribe's proposed uses for the interest generated from the principal amount in the Fund. The Tribe submits requests for withdrawing funds to the Regional Director through the Standing Rock Agency. These requests are reviewed for compliance with the Act and consistency with the Plan. When the BIA approves a request, it is forwarded to the Special Trustee's Office of Trust Funds Management in Albuquerque, New Mexico, for final processing and payment. Thus far, the Tribe has requested and received six payments totaling \$46.3 million in interest.

Any funding request outside the Plan will require approval by the Regional Director.

This concludes my prepared statement. I will be happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.