



Summary of Consultation Comments

Tribal/Interior Budget Council (TIBC) Improvement



May 19, 2026

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	1
	Background.....	1
II.	Summary of Tribal Consultation and Input Received	2
	Summary of Tribal Comments Organized by Theme	2
	1 – Meeting Cadence and Time Allocation (Efficiency & Focus)	3
	2 – Subcommittee Function, Attendance, and Facilitation	3
	3 – Representation, Protocols, and Decision-making Authority	3
	4 – Communication, Transparency, and Post-Meting Reporting	3
	5 – Budget Equity, Formulas, and Data-Driven Need Methodologies.....	4
	6 – Public Safety, Roads, and Large Land Base Capacity	4
	7 – Small/Remote Tribes, Housing Access, and Alaska-Specific Needs.....	4
	8 – Education Parity and School Infrastructure	5
	9 – Water Rights and Infrastructure	5
	10 – General Comments	5
III.	Conclusion.....	6
	Appendix A – List of Tribal and Organizational Commenters.....	7
	Appendix B – Survey Summary	9

I. Introduction

Under the leadership of the Assistant Secretary–Indian Affairs, the Department convened a government-to-government Tribal Consultation on TIBC Improvement to gather Tribal input on strengthening the Tribal/Interior Budget Council (TIBC)—with a focus on making the process meaningful, efficient, inclusive, and effective in identifying Tribal priorities and securing funding. -

The consultation occurred May 19, 2026, at the Main Interior Building, Yates Auditorium. It was conducted in person, with a YouTube listen only stream for remote observers, and the proceedings were recorded by a certified court reporter to ensure an accurate record.

The Department affirmed that TIBC will not be dissolved; rather, this consultation sought practical Tribal recommendations to improve how TIBC functions (e.g., meeting cadence, subcommittee operations, facilitation, communication, and data/formulas). Outcomes of the consultation would inform near term actions and the protocol update cycle due in calendar year 2027.

Background

TIBC originated in 1999 as the Tribal Budget Advisory Council (TBAC), shifting Tribal input upstream of budget decisions. In 2010, it was renamed TIBC to reflect broader Interior engagement. TIBC’s purpose is to provide a forum and process for tribes and federal officials to collaborate on annual budget requests for Indian programs in the Department of the Interior; it also serves as an education forum on the budget process. TIBC structure and roles are set out in a protocol reviewed every six years, including Tribal and federal cochairs, regional representation (two Tribal reps per region plus alternates), and seven subcommittees (Budget; Data Management; Education; Public Safety; Transportation; Land, Water & Natural Resources; Economic Development). The Council typically meets three times per year (spring DC, summer Tribal site, winter DC).

Pre-consultation written input included 19 written comments and 20 questionnaire responses, with common themes calling for modernization of TIBC (not dissolution), written responses to TIBC recommendations, improved data timeliness, capacity support for small/remote tribes, better meeting efficiency (more time for budget dialogue), advance distribution of materials, and enhanced interagency coordination (e.g., DOI, DOJ, DOT, DOE, USDA).

II. Summary of Tribal Consultation and Input Received

The consultation was announced through a Dear Tribal Leader Letter. The Indian Affairs (IA) Consultation webpage: <https://www.bia.gov/service/Tribal-consultations/Tribal-interior-budget-council-tibc>, included additional materials along with the May 19, 2026, agenda, which outlined an in-person consultation focused on TIBC Improvement (Day 1) followed by the TIBC Main Session on May 20, 2026 (FY2028 budget). The Department provided a Day 1 Budget Process Presentation with detailed budget timelines, TIBC history/structure, and summaries of the written/electronic comments received, which also can be accessed at the IA Consultation link above.

Participation & Record:

One consultation was held in person at Yates Auditorium, streamed listen only via YouTube, and documented by a certified court reporter. (Attendance totals were recorded in the transcript; multiple Tribal leaders from regions including Great Plains, Alaska, Northwest, Rocky Mountain, Southwest, Southern Plains, Midwest, Western, and Navajo gave remarks.)

Pre-Consultation Submissions: As noted above, 19 written comments and 20 questionnaire responses were received and summarized in the Day 1 presentation. The Department also kept the written comment period open through Friday, May 29, 2026, to capture additional input following the consultation.

Comments were provided by a broad cross section of Indian Country, including Tribal leaders from large land base, small, and remote Tribes; representatives of Tribally controlled schools and education organizations; directors of Tribal program offices such as transportation, public safety, and natural resources; coalitions representing treaty and large land base Tribes; Alaska Native Tribal governments; and national and regional Tribal organizations. Together, these commenters reflected perspectives from multiple BIA regions.

Summary of Tribal Comments Organized by Theme

The following summary reflects collective input gathered from three sources:

1. **Approximately seventy verbal comments** provided during the May 19, 2026, consultation and captured in the certified transcript, which included numerous Tribal leaders, representatives, and participants.
2. **Twenty-five written comment submissions** provided by Tribal Nations, Tribal organizations, coalitions, schools, and other Tribal stakeholders before and after the consultation.
3. **Thirty-three survey responses** submitted as part of the pre-consultation questionnaire, summarizing Tribal representatives' views on the effectiveness of the current TIBC process and areas for improvement.

Across all three sources, many commenters, several written submissions, multiple leaders, and numerous survey respondents expressed the following themes:

1 – Meeting Cadence and Time Allocation (Efficiency & Focus)

- Many commenters emphasized the need to maintain at least three meetings per year, while several suggested adding a work session day or structured subcommittee time to complete technical tasks before full-body deliberation.
- Several commenters requested shorter, more focused agendas, with fewer presentations and more time dedicated to budget dialogue. Many stated that meaningful engagement requires advance distribution of materials—ideally 30–45 days before meetings—to allow adequate preparation.
- Multiple written submissions also underscored the importance of predictable calendars and accessible, user-friendly materials (spreadsheets, not only slides displayed in-room)

2 – Subcommittee Function, Attendance, and Facilitation

- Many commenters stressed the need for stronger attendance and quorum enforcement within subcommittees, noting that inconsistent participation limits progress.
- Several written submissions advocated for neutral facilitation support, noting that external coordination historically improved logistics, materials, and meeting flow. Many emphasized that facilitation should remain non-political and help maintain discussion discipline
- Multiple leaders supported maintaining hybrid formats for subcommittee work sessions to increase participation from small or remote tribes while preserving in person engagement for full-body sessions.

3 – Representation, Protocols, and Decision-making Authority

- Several commenters raised concerns that the current “two representatives per region” model does not always reflect the needs of large land base or direct-service tribes, with many recommending additional structures—such as dedicated representation or distinct subcommittees—to elevate their perspectives.
- Many commenters stressed the importance of clear protocols for alternates and proxies so decision-making remains timely and does not stall when Tribal leaders cannot travel.
- Multiple survey respondents noted that decision authority should rest with designated representatives to maintain consistency and avoid confusion during deliberations.

4 – Communication, Transparency, and Post-Meeting Reporting

- Many commenters called on the Department to provide written responses to TIBC recommendations, explaining how each recommendation was addressed—or why it was not

adopted—in the President’s Budget. Several written submissions emphasized the need for a “recommendation-to-budget crosswalk” to strengthen accountability.

- Several commenters urged the Department to publish meeting materials online, maintain centralized contact lists, and send timely post meeting summaries. Multiple commenters stated that tribes not represented at TIBC should still receive regular updates.
- Many commenters asked for clear logistics well in advance of meetings (attendance rules, security requirements, RSVPs, virtual access). Several stressed that virtual attendees should be able to provide input rather than being limited to listen only.

5 – Budget Equity, Formulas, and Data-Driven Need Methodologies

- Many commenters voiced support for need based, data-driven methodologies, noting that percentage-based approaches and outdated formulas no longer represent actual Tribal conditions. Several emphasized the importance of timely release of critical reports (e.g., Tribal Law and Order Act data) to support informed budgeting.
- Multiple submissions recommended updating Tribal shares and formulas to reflect land base size, population, geography, isolation, and service delivery scale. Several noted that mandatory costs such as Contract Support Costs (CSC) and 105(l) should not erode funding for other programs.
- Many commenters highlighted the need to respect Tribal data sovereignty, improve data access, and ensure tribes have the capacity to validate data used in federal justification.

6 – Public Safety, Roads, and Large Land Base Capacity

- Multiple leaders emphasized severe underfunding in law enforcement, citing large jurisdictions, long response times, staffing shortages, and increasing demands. Many urged resetting base funding levels to reflect modern realities and integrating support for courts, detention, victim services, and MMIP responses.
- Many commenters noted that Road Maintenance is a core public safety and infrastructure priority for large land base tribes, affecting emergency access, schooling, economic development, and daily life. Several recommended revising the Road Maintenance formula and adopting performance-based budgeting approaches.
- Several commenters recommended regular participation from OMB and White House decisionmakers, emphasizing that Tribal priorities must reach those who shape the President’s Budget.

7 – Small/Remote Tribes, Housing Access, and Alaska-Specific Needs

- Many commenters from small and remote tribes described capacity barriers, requesting additional technical assistance, virtual options, and support with travel or staffing to participate effectively in TIBC.

- Several Alaska commenters noted gaps in regional representation, urging expanded recruitment to ensure all subregions, including Kodiak Island and North Slope communities, are represented.
- Multiple commenters highlighted the probate backlog affecting housing availability and economic development in Alaska communities, recommending additional funding for judges, specialists, and modernization of processing systems. Others suggested exploring Tribal administration roles to accelerate resolution.

8 – Education Parity and School Infrastructure

- Many commenters—including school and education stakeholders—praised the work of the Education Subcommittee and requested continued development of full funding methodologies. Several asked for improved data sharing with BIE funded schools.
- Multiple commenters urged exploration of mandatory funding for core education lines (ISEP, transportation, CSC), noting persistent disparities in per pupil funding compared to public and DoD schools.

9 – Water Rights and Infrastructure

- Several commenters raised the unique issue of Indian water rights settlements, noting that reliable access to water is foundational for sovereignty, basic services, public safety, climate resilience, and long-term development. Many recommended establishing a mandatory, permanent fund to support infrastructure and settlement implementation.

10 – General Comments

- Several commenters emphasized preserving TIBC and STAC, noting that each serves distinct roles (budget vs. policy) and must operate collaboratively. Many encouraged regular participation from DOI senior leadership, OMB, and congressional liaisons.
- Many commenters recommended restoring external coordination support to assist with logistics, packet development, and minute preparation. Several noted this would improve meeting efficiency and reduce strain on federal staff.
- Multiple commenters reiterated the importance of advance distribution of materials, timely data releases (e.g., TLOA), and structured decision-making to strengthen TIBC outcomes.
- Interagency coordination: Tribes asked that DOJ, DOT, NPS, USDA, DOE, DHS regularly join TIBC to address cross-cutting priorities holistically and ensure settlements/mandates in other agencies do not erode BIA/BIE budgets.
- Post meeting transparency: Tribes requested quick post consultation updates summarizing decisions, timelines, and next steps, with contact directories and clear points of accountability.
- Access & inclusion: Commenters underscored the importance of blending in person meetings (for relationship building and sidebar problem solving) with targeted virtual tools to include remote communities when travel is not feasible.

III. Conclusion

The Department will consider all comments received—verbal testimony from May 19, 2026, and written submissions received—and will use this input to inform:

- 1) **Near-term TIBC improvements:** agenda design, structured subcommittee time, facilitation options, written DOI responses to TIBC recommendations, virtual access, information distribution, data timeliness, and clarity in logistics.
- 2) **Protocol review (CY2027):** representation models, meeting cadence, coordination with STAC and federal partners.
- 3) **Budget formulation refinements:** need-based methodologies, formula adjustments, support for public safety and roads, education parity, addressing probate backlogs, examining mandatory funding for certain lines, and water rights implementation funding.

In addition, Indian Affairs will work to strengthen cross agency coordination (e.g., DOJ, DOT, NPS, USDA, DOE, DHS) and pursue data driven need methodologies and formula reviews—in partnership with Tribal representatives—to better reflect land base, jurisdictional complexity, population, and treaty responsibilities across regions.

A link to the Day 1 Budget Process Presentation is provided for full detail on the budget timeline, TIBC history/structure, and the pre-consultation comment summary: [TIBC Day1 Budget Process Presentation \(PDF\)](#).

Appendix A – List of Tribal and Organizational Commenters

Category	Count	Comment Format
Verbal Comments	~ 70	Transcript (in-person testimony)
Written Comments	25	PDF and Word submissions
Survey Responses	33	Questionnaire (online form)

1. Verbal Comments (Approximately 70 remarks)

Verbal comments were provided by numerous Tribal leaders, Tribal representatives, and Tribal program officials during the May 19, 2026, consultation session. These remarks are fully captured in the certified transcript.

2. Written Comment Submissions (25 total)

A. Tribal Nations

The following Tribal Nations provided written comments through PDF/Word submissions:

- **Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska** – Written comment (PDF)
- **Taos Pueblo** – Written comment (PDF)
- **Santo Domingo Pueblo** – Written comment (PDF)
- **Lower Brule Sioux Tribe** – Written comment (PDF)
- **Tule River Indian Tribe of California** – Written comment (PDF)
- **Red Lake Nation (Red Lake Band of Chippewa)** – Written comment (PDF)
- **Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope (ICAS)** – Written comment (PDF)
- **Native Village of Afognak** – Written comment (PDF)
- **Organized Village of Kasaan** – Written comment (PDF)
- **Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation** – Written comment (PDF)
- **Crow Creek Sioux Tribe** – Written comment (PDF)
- **Oglala Sioux Tribe** – Written comment (PDF)
- **Cherokee Nation** – Written comments (two PDF submissions)
- **Citizen Potawatomi Nation** – Written comment (PDF)
- **Eastern Shoshone Business Council (Eastern Shoshone Tribe)** – Written comment (PDF)
- **Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe (TIBC Co-Chair submission)** – Written comment (DOCX)
- **Standing Rock Sioux Tribe – Tribal Transportation & Roads Department** – Written comment (DOCX)

B. Tribal Organizations / Coalitions

- **Large Treaty Tribes Coalition Submission** (Uintah & Ouray Ute, Muscogee, Oglala, etc.) – Written comment (PDF)
- **Coalition of Large Tribes (COLT)** – Two written submissions:
 - COLT Letter to DOI
 - COLT Resolution

- **Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council (RMTLC)** – Written comment (PDF)
 - **United South and Eastern Tribes – Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF)** – Two written submissions:
 - USET SPF formal comment letter
 - USET SPF email-forwarded submission
 - **American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC)** – Written comment (PDF)
 - **Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC)** – Written comment (PDF)
 - **NATHPO – National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers** – Written comment (PDF)
-

C. Tribal Schools / Education Institutions

- **Little Wound School** – Written comment (PDF)
 - **Navajo Preparatory School** – Two written submissions (PDF)
-

3. Survey Responses (33 Total)

Survey responses were submitted anonymously through the pre-consultation questionnaire.

Respondents included:

- Tribal representatives serving on TIBC
- Tribal government staff and administrators
- Tribal organization representatives
- Tribal education staff
- Technical advisors and Tribal program personnel

Appendix B – Survey Summary

This appendix summarizes input from the thirty-three respondents who completed the pre-consultation survey, representing a mix of Tribal leaders, designated TIBC representatives, Tribal government staff, Tribal program directors, and other Tribal stakeholders who provided feedback on the effectiveness of TIBC meetings and opportunities for improvement.

Question domains covered: overall meeting effectiveness; beneficial/least beneficial aspects; structure and agenda design; barriers to participation; engagement strategies; communication before/during/after meetings; and follow-up practices.

Key Findings (Overall)

- Effectiveness (overall): Responses spanned Very ineffective → Very effective, with many commenters selecting “Somewhat effective” or “Neither effective nor ineffective” and explicitly noting that packed agendas and advisory only outcomes limit impact.
- Most beneficial: Direct budget presentations/discussion (BIA/BIE/BTFA and federal appropriations process), in person dialogue with DOI leadership, and subcommittee work that allows deeper program level analysis.
- Least beneficial: Lengthy presentations that crowd out discussion, advisory only outcomes with limited transparency on adoption, and insufficient time to complete agendas or make decisions.
- Structure & cadence: Many respondents supported three meetings/year but sought a shorter, focused agenda and more full body budget time or a dedicated work session day; several asked to announce meetings earlier and distribute materials well in advance.
- Barriers: Late materials, limited staff capacity, travel/logistics costs, packed agendas, and virtual access constraints (e.g., listen only) were most cited.
- Engagement strategies: Advance materials, neutral/efficient facilitation, structured decision points, hybrid participation for work sessions, shared action logs, and clear outcomes tracking were top recommendations.
- Communication (before/during/after): Several respondents reported dissatisfaction with timeliness and specificity of communications; many asked for post meeting summaries, clear ownership for follow-ups, and regular status updates.

Beneficial Aspects (What Works)

- Budget content and process visibility: Many respondents praised BIA/BIE/BTFA budget presentations, timelines, and appropriations process discussions for enabling informed input.
 - In person dialogue & relationship building: Several noted that meeting in person with DOI leadership and peers helps surface issues early and fosters collective prioritization.
 - Subcommittee depth: Multiple commenters highlighted subcommittee work as where detailed program analysis and actionable recommendations are developed.
-

Least Beneficial Aspects (What Hinders Impact)

- Excessive presentations & crowded agendas: Many respondents said extended briefings reduce time for Tribal driven budget dialogue and decision-making.
- Advisory only outcomes: Several indicated that limited transparency on how recommendations are adopted makes participation feel less meaningful.
- Late or incomplete materials: Multiple commenters cited late distribution and lack of line-item detail as barriers to preparation.

Barriers to Participation

- Capacity & resources: Many reported limited staff and competing priorities hinder full preparation and travel.
- Timing & materials: Several cited late agendas/briefings as a barrier to informed input.
- Logistics & cost: Multiple respondents emphasized travel costs and scheduling conflicts.
- Virtual access: Many noted listen only or unreliable connectivity can restrict participation and comment opportunities.

Recommended Improvements

Agenda & Structure

- Shorter, focused agendas with more time for budget dialogue and specific decision points (prioritization/adoption).
- Dedicated work session time (or an additional day) to complete technical items before full body sessions.
- Earlier announcements and advance materials (weeks ahead, with spreadsheets/data).

Facilitation & Participation

- Contract/neutral facilitation to manage time and maintain focus; limit non-rep speakers and consider a public comment window at the end.
- Hybrid participation for subcommittee work; retain in person full body for government-to-government dialogue.

Communication & Follow-up

- Shared, live action item tracker visible to tribes; assign owners, deadlines, and provide regular status updates.
- Post meeting summaries emailed to all Tribal contacts; ensure timely distribution and clear next steps.

Communication (Before / During / After Meetings)

- Before: Several respondents requested predictable calendars and earlier, detailed agendas.
 - During: Many advocated for structured decision segments, less presentation time, and facilitated dialogue.
 - After: Multiple respondents asked for concise summaries, assigned owners, and timelines for each action item.
-

Selected Representative Themes (Illustrative, anonymized)

- Limit non-rep speaking; set a public forum at the end to preserve agenda discipline.
- Hold some meetings in regions; strengthen regional coordination and updates to all councils/members.
- Ensure OMB participation; publish a flowchart/tutorial of the federal budget cycle to orient new leaders.
- Give BIE a dedicated day within TIBC; expand parity and student wellness focus.

Limitations & Notes

- Responses are self-reported and anonymized; role categories are inferred from answers. Aggregation emphasized recurring themes rather than precise percentages.