

**Testimony of Orvie Danzuka
Tribal Council Member
The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Indian Reservation
Before the House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Interior
and Related Agencies
Hearing on FY 2017 Appropriations
March 17, 2016**

SUMMARY

Mr. Chairman, I am Orvie Danzuka, and I am a Tribal Council member for the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon. For the Warm Springs, I offer the following recommendations for FY 2017 Bureau of Indian Affairs and IHS budgets.

- 1) BIA Forestry; Oppose “flatlining” in FY17 budget justification; request a \$25 million increase, to \$77.2 million**
- 2) Indian Health Service: Support \$377 million increase, request \$1.9 million to fund the Warm Springs Joint Venture.**
- 3) Public Safety – Detention Facilities**
- 4) Bureau of Indian Education: Support \$3.755 million increase in Johnson-O’Malley grants**
- 5) Alignment with testimony of Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission and Intertribal Timber Council.**

Chairman Calvert, and Ranking Member McCollum: Our people are the Warm Springs, Wasco and Paiute tribes. Our 640,000 acre Reservation in central Oregon ranges from the snow-capped Mt. Jefferson to the salmon-bearing Deschutes River; with forests, farmland and high desert between.

The vast majority of our tribal members live on the Reservation, where we are suffering from dramatically high unemployment. A recent study ranked the town of Warm Springs as having the second highest incidence of poverty in Oregon. Putting our people to work and providing basic social services –especially health care and education -- for our members is extremely challenging at Warm Springs. Possibly more challenging than anywhere in Indian Country, or the nation at large.

Our federal appropriations priorities reflect the circumstances we face, and I deeply appreciate your invitation to speak before you today.

BIA Forestry: Warm Springs is home to one of the largest tribal forests in the country. Management of our forests has traditionally employed tribal members at our lumber mill, which is one of four tribal mills still operating in the U.S. One of the greatest threats and

costs we face come from wildfire. Last year, about 70,000 acres burned at Warm Springs, destroying over \$1 million worth of timber. This is not unusual. We are surrounded by Forest Service land and many fires start on their land and burn onto ours. This has destroyed timber that should be feeding our lumber mill. It has also burned areas that the Tribe has set aside for carbon sequestration projects.

Forestry, logging and our lumber mill are primary sources of employment for our Tribe. Those jobs are crucial for the stability of our community and the health of our people. We are grateful that Congress has provided small increases to BIA Forestry in the last couple of years. We are concerned, however, that funding trends are not meeting the dire needs on the ground.

We are dismayed that the Administration proposes to “flatline” BIA Forestry this year. I urge you to increase the Forestry account by \$25 million, which would bring the total to \$77 million. This would only address a quarter of the \$100 million shortfall facing Indian forestry. In fact, Indian forests are only funded at one-third the level of the U.S. Forest Service.

As a tribe that faces wildfires every summer, we are also concerned with the direction of fire management and post-fire recovery. The Interior Department is considering changes to the distribution of wildfire suppression funds that could disadvantage Indian lands against other Interior departments. I ask that this Committee direct the Department to conduct more meaningful consultation with Tribes and to better prioritize its trust responsibility for Indian forest lands.

Likewise, Warm Springs and other timber tribes are facing challenges after fires to recover value from dead wood and rehabilitate the land. Last year, more acres of Indian forests burned than ever before – consuming over \$200 million worth of timber. Tribes asked Congress for \$15 million for post-fire recovery efforts last year. \$2 million was appropriated, which means that we will not be able to accomplish all the work we need to, or as quickly as we should.

If this trend continues, the costs will only increase as forests grow unhealthy and fires become more destructive.

Indian Health Service:

Joint Venture: In 1992 Congress authorized a Joint Venture agreement between the IHS and Warm Springs. The Tribe financed construction of a new clinic and the IHS agreed to fully fund and staff the facility. Unfortunately, federal funding has been far short of its commitment. The Warm Springs support the proposed \$377.4 million above the FY 2016 Enacted level of \$4.808 billion for IHS. Within this increase, the Warm Springs request a \$1.9 million increase in funding for IHS Hospitals and Clinics to provide full direct services for the Warm Springs Joint Venture. We request full restoration of funding for Community Health programs.

Public Safety – Detention Facilities

The Warm Springs Detention Center is owned by the BIA. It was upgraded in response to a lawsuit from the U.S. Department of Justice. The useful life of that facility upgrade has exceeded the twenty-five year expectancy and the facility has once again fallen into serious disrepair, community justice and safety cannot be assured nor can inmate life, health and safety be protected. Additionally, the BIA has forbidden its use for housing juvenile offenders which has resulted in having to contract with costly off-reservation juvenile detention facilities and services for criminal acts. The facility replacement and cost must be addressed as a joint obligation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Office of Law Enforcement Services and the collateral entities of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Bureau of Indian Education: Support \$3.755 million increase in Johnson-O'Malley grants

In 1960, Warm Springs entered into a partnership with the State of Oregon and the local school district to provide our students with a better K-8 education. Since that time, Johnson-O'Malley has provided partial but critical funding to support our students in the local school district.

Jefferson County schools, which serves students who live on or near the Warm Springs reservation, has the most Native American students out of any district statewide. About 35 percent of its 950 Native students missed too much school last year. Our old on-reservation school was categorized as a "priority school," which means it was one of the lowest-performing schools in Oregon.

In 2014, Warm Springs partnered with the Jefferson County School District to construct a \$21.4 million public K-8 school on our Reservation, replacing the old, smaller school. Our aim is to increase performance of our students at the new school and Johnson-O'Malley funds are critical to maintaining vital school programs. Warm Springs supports the Administration's proposed increase.

Alignment with testimony of Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission and Intertribal Timber Council: As a founding and current member of both CRITFC and ITC, Warm Springs supports the appropriations requests being made by both organizations.