

Testimony of Rep. Deb Haaland (NM-1)
Interior and Environment Appropriations Subcommittee Member Day FY20
Wednesday, March 27, 2019 in 2007 Rayburn, likely during the 1 pm hour (time TBD)

Chairwoman McCollum, Ranking Member Joyce, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to speak about some key priorities for the Interior and Environment Appropriations bill. It is an honor to be here, and I appreciate the hard work you do.

My district is blessed with natural beauty, 300 days of sunshine per year, and abundant wind. I urge you to support the swift transition to clean energy and away from dirty fossil fuels that damage public health and our public lands.

As Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands, I urge you to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund at the newly reauthorized \$900 million level to conserve irreplaceable lands and improve outdoor recreation.

We must also support areas where the federal government owns land, including much of New Mexico. I urge you to fully fund the Payment in Lieu of Taxes and Secure Rural Schools programs, and I am committed to finding a permanent SRS solution for forest counties.

As one of the first Native American women elected to Congress and Co-Chair of the Native American Caucus, I urge you to address the serious problems indigenous peoples face.

The funding needs of American Indians/Alaskan Natives (AI/ANs) on reservations and in urban areas must be a priority to begin to work towards fully honoring the federal government's unique

government-to-government relationship with Tribes. This trust responsibility arose from the forced surrender and reduction of aboriginal lands to the United States, which resulted in a significant loss of life and great suffering.

The US Commission on Civil Rights' *Broken Promises* report analyzes federal spending on fundamental services for the American Indian/Alaskan Native population, all of which are required by treaties, statutes, and established federal trust agreements. This report details the underfunding and neglect of federal obligations and the breach of the US Government's trust responsibility. Based on this, I will be introducing legislation aimed at correcting these budgetary shortfalls and reaffirming the trust responsibility that we have to Tribes.

One issue I want to highlight is public safety. The underfunding of tribal law enforcement and justice systems directly contributes to Native Americans experiencing one of the nation's highest rates of crime and victimization in the United States. DOJ found that more than 4 in 5 AI/AN women have experienced violence within their lives, and 56.1 percent have experienced sexual violence. Additionally, Native Americans are being killed in police encounters at a higher rate than any other racial or ethnic group.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs funding for law enforcement is currently at about 20 percent of the overall need and tribal court funding is only 3 percent of need, and there is no funding available to address the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women in urban areas or state courts, contributing to the gap in data collection.

Health care is another area where the federal budgetary shortfall is most apparent for Native Americans. Chairwoman McCollum, I appreciate the hard work this subcommittee has done to boost funding for the Indian Health Service, and I encourage you to continue those efforts. The Indian health care delivery system still spends only 40 percent of the national average per patient, which leaves AI/ANs among the most vulnerable populations as many basic patient needs are unmet.

I urge you to make equitable and non-discretionary federal funding available *directly to* Tribal Nations to uphold the well-established government-to-government relationship Tribes have with the United States and provide funding for services that most Americans have adequate access to. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.