

Written Testimony of
THE HONORABLE W. RON ALLEN, TRIBAL CHAIRMAN/CEO
JAMESTOWN S'KLALLAM TRIBE submitted to the
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
“2024 Appropriations Testimony for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, BIA, BIE, and IHS”
March 8, 2023

On behalf of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, I am pleased to submit this written testimony on our funding priorities and requests for Fiscal Year 2024 for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), and the Indian Health Service (IHS) budgets. We continue to urge Congress to provide robust investments in Tribal programs and services to ensure Tribes are empowered with the tools and resources needed for effective and efficient governmental operations; a critical prerequisite to achieving Tribal self-sufficiency.

Congress can further Tribal Self-Governance and support strong Tribal governments, economies, and communities by enacting measures that address the structural deficiencies across the Federal system. To include, providing mandatory funding for all Tribal programs and services, requiring the Administration to submit an annual estimate of the total cost to fully fund trust and treaty obligations, break down the funding silos and allow funding from all Federal agencies to be allocated through Self-Governance compacts and funding agreements, provide direct funding to Tribes, increase funding for base and recurring programs instead of grant programs, and empower Tribes with maximum flexibility to improve programmatic outcomes.

Tribal Funding Priority for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, DOI

- 1. \$712 Million Operations and Maintenance Funding for the National Wildlife Refuge**
- 2. \$100 Million State and Tribal Wildlife Grants**

1. \$712 Million - National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Fund - A significant investment of at least \$712 million in Operations and Maintenance funding for the NWR is needed to meet our shared mission and goals and to begin to address a range of critical services, including wildlife and habitat management, conservation planning, conservation law enforcement, infrastructure, maintenance and repairs, and visitor services. Encompassing over 850 million acres, the NWR is the largest and most diverse network of conservation lands and waters in the world. There are 568 NWR across the United States and these lands and waters are comprised of critical ecosystems that serve as habitat for hundreds of rare, threatened, and endangered species of fish, animals, and plants. However, chronic underfunding and understaffing has undermined the ability of the FWS to fulfill its core mission.

Our Tribe has a strong interest in ensuring the health and vitality of the NWR ecosystems. The Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge (DNWR) is part of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe's ancestral homelands. Our Tribal villages were located along the shoreline and we continue to

use and inhabit the Dungeness as we have done since time immemorial. Jamestown has significant historical, cultural, and spiritual connections to these lands and waters and this area is critical to the preservation of our oral history, creation stories, language, ceremonies, and culture. We have an obligation to protect these lands and waters for our future generations which is why we are partnering with the FWS by entering into a Co-stewardship Agreement. Tribal Nations have developed comprehensive approaches to implementing programs and services at the local level using holistic techniques, innovative solutions, and partnerships that have proven successful in leveraging the Federal dollar to yield a higher return on the investment.

2. \$100 Million - State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program - The State and Tribal Wildlife Grant Program (STWGP) funds foster strong partnerships between Federal, State, and Tribal Governments as well as, Private and Non-Profit entities. These partnerships pool resources to enable wildlife professionals to implement conservation techniques that benefit over 12,000 at risk species. We request that Congress appropriate \$100 million to support this grant program.

Tribal Top Three Priorities and Recommendations for the BIA/BIE and IHS:

- 1. Advanced Appropriations for Tribal Programs and Services**
- 2. Mandatory Appropriations for Section 105(I) Leases and Contract Support Costs**
- 3. Increase Funding for Tribal Base Budgets**

Advance Appropriations for Tribal Programs and Services – We are grateful that Congress enacted Advanced Appropriations for the Indian Health Service for FY2024; however, we now urge Congress to make Advanced Appropriations for the Indian Health Service permanent and to extend advanced appropriations to the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Bureau of Indian Education. Providing appropriations one year in advance for the BIA, BIE and IHS will mitigate the adverse financial effects of Federal budgetary uncertainties and allow Tribes to engage in more effective strategic planning, spend funds more efficiently, grow our Tribal economies and businesses and increase the quality of care and well-being of our Tribal citizens and communities.

Reclassify Discretionary Spending for Section 105(I) Leases and Contract Support Costs (CSC) to Mandatory – Separate, indefinite accounts were established to support Section 105(I) leases and CSC but have resulted in the unintended reduction of funding for critical Tribal programs. Funding for 105(I) leases and CSC should be reclassified as mandatory funding to prevent programmatic decreases. In addition, we urge Congress to take legislative action to clarify its intent that space used to provide services within the scope of the ISDEAA to any patient is compensable under 105(I). Many Tribes are the only healthcare providers in their rural communities and the only ones who will accept Medicare and Medicaid patients. Tribes generate third party revenue by serving these individuals as authorized under Section 813 of the IHCIA and this money in turn is used to provide healthcare to their own citizens. The IHS, however, has adopted a policy that denies compensation to Tribes for the portion of their healthcare facility that the agency decides serves non-beneficiaries even though Congress authorized such services under Section 813 of the IHCIA.

Increase Funding for Tribal Base Budgets – Tribal Priority Allocations (TPA) and Recurring Programs are consistently identified as funding priorities by the Tribal Interior Budget Council (TIBC) because they provide core funding that supports critical government programs and services. Flexibility in the use of funds to support local needs is an important aspect of this funding. TPA and Recurring Program funding provides security and certainty for Tribes rather than funding provided through grant dollars. There has been a growing trend among agencies to fund Tribal programs and services with grant dollars rather than providing base and recurring funding. Grant funding is incongruent with the trust and treaty obligations.

Tribal Priorities, National & Regional Requests and Recommendations for the BIA:

1. Trust Natural Resources/Treaty Rights/Habitat Restoration/Climate Resiliency

- **\$60 million BIA Rights Protection Implementation**
- **\$17.1 million Western Washington Fisheries Management**
- **\$10 million Wildlife & Parks Program TPA**
- **\$35 million BIA Climate Resilience**

2. Human Services

- **\$70 million Social Services**
- **\$100 million Welfare Assistance**
- **\$30 million Indian Child Welfare Act**

\$60 million – BIA Rights Protection Implementation – Rights Protection Implementation is essential to preserve our Tribal treaty rights through resource management activities. The Federal investment in our trust natural resources serves two primary purposes: (1) It allows us to fulfill our environmental stewardship responsibilities through the protection and restoration of the ecosystems and habitats of our Tribal homelands and waters through sustainable conservation policies and practices; and (2) it fosters Tribal self-sufficiency by allowing us to grow our economies and cultivate partnerships with state and local governments and other entities. It also allows us to create jobs for our Tribal citizens and community members and promotes and advances trade of our marine resources in local, regional, national, and international markets.

\$17.1 million – Western Washington Fisheries Management – This critical funding supports Tribal co-management activities of our treaty resources with the State of Washington. This funding is critical to support day to day activities and monitoring of endangered habitat and fish stocks. Increased commercial and recreational activities coupled with the severe consequences of climate change has increased the urgency and costs associated with protecting our treaty resources. The vitality and sustainability of our natural resources is integral to the health and welfare of our Tribal citizens, communities, culture and religious practices and economies.

\$15 million - Wildlife and Parks- Aquaculture allows us to demonstrate best practices in restoring our waterways, producing more seafood to alleviate food insecurity, combining our Tribal ecological knowledge with advanced technology in marine science to address endangered species concerns, and create economic opportunities while at the same time protecting the environment and preserving our cultural heritage and traditional practices. This funding supports our hatchery operations that harvest salmon, oysters and other fish and shellfish stocks. Our Tribal culture and traditions, ceremonies and subsistence are dependent on the survival of these species.

\$35 million - BIA Climate Resilience – Climate resilience funding is essential to restore ecological functions, healthy habitats, and protect our resources. Our Tribal Treaty Rights are at risk. Climate change is having a profound impact on Tribal communities, lands, resources and infrastructure and degradation of our natural environment is happening faster than we can restore it in the Northwest.

\$200 million - Human Services/Social Services/Welfare Assistance/ICWA – Funding for our social service programs is an investment in our most important resources, our elders, our children, and our Tribal families. American Indian/Alaska Native children have a unique legal status as citizens of Tribal governments and the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) provides safeguards to maintain Tribal and family connections and relationships. We lead our citizens down the path of self-sufficiency by developing their leadership skills, educational skills, job skills, and fostering their health and well-being in a culturally appropriate way. The return on this investment is measured by the increased number of Tribal citizens and descendants entering higher education and earning degrees, the composition of our growing workforce with over 80% comprised of Tribal citizens, descendants, and other Natives, participation in cultural preservation classes that instill a sense of pride in our people to create marketable products that are sold through the Tribe’s retail outlet.

Tribal Priorities, National and Regional Requests and Recommendations for the IHS:

- 1. \$2.9 billion to Support Current Services**
- 2. \$1 billion for Purchased and Referred Care**
- 3. \$82 million for Behavioral Health Mental and Alcohol and Substance Abuse**

\$2.9 billion - Support Current Services – The Federal trust obligation requires significant investment in Tribal healthcare systems. To maintain current services, factors such as the inflationary rate, pay costs, contract support costs, population growth and staffing needs for recently constructed facilities all need to be fully funded. When these mandatory factors are not funded, Tribes must supplement programs with their own limited revenue, or chose between limiting services or shutting down services completely.

\$1 billion - Purchased and Referred Care (PRC) - PRC funds are used to purchase essential health care services, including inpatient and outpatient care, routine emergency ambulatory care, transportation, and medical support services, such as diagnostic imaging, physical therapy, laboratory, nutrition, and pharmacy services. PRC funds are extremely important to the Portland Area Tribes because the Portland Area lacks hospitals and specialty care centers, so Tribes in the Northwest are forced to turn to the private sector to fulfill this need.

\$82 million - Behavioral Health Mental and Alcohol and Substance Abuse –The Jamestown Healing Clinic will provide a holistic approach to treatment for those who suffer from opioid use disorders through the provision of wrap-around services, to include, primary care, dental services, transportation to and from the clinic, employment, housing, and other associated needs.

The Jamestown S’Klallam Tribes supports the National and Regional Tribal Organizations requests for FY 2024. Thank you.