



Written Testimony of  
**THE HONORABLE LONI GRENINGER yúcci?ə (“yooch-see-uh”), VICE-CHAIR**  
**JAMESTOWN S'KLALLAM TRIBE submitted to the**  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
**“FY2027 Appropriations Testimony for USFWS, BIA/BIE, and IHS”**  
March 18, 2026

On behalf of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, I am honored to submit this written testimony on our funding priorities and requests for the Fiscal Year 2027 Department of the Interior (DOI) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), and Indian Health Service (IHS) budgets.

The following investments will strengthen Tribal nation-building and support our goal of self-sufficiency:

**Tribal Funding Priority - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)**

Top priority **\$800,000 annually** for our Tribe's Co-Management/Co-Stewardship of the Dungeness & Protection Island National Wildlife Refuges (NWR)

**Tribal Funding Priorities – Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)**

1. Top priority is restoring the **\$3.99 million** Climate Resilience Funding to Address Tribal Trust Resources at Risk - Fish Lab/Office
2. We fully support the recommendations of the Top Ten (10) Tribal Priority Allocations (TPA) and Recurring Base Funding **\$177 million** Identified by Tribal Interior Budget Council
3. Increased funding **\$1.9 million** for Strengthening Tribal Communities essential Social Services, Welfare Assistance and Indian Child Welfare program.

**Tribal Funding Priorities – Indian Health Service (IHS)**

1. **\$55 billion** Current IHS Services
2. **\$13 billion** IHS Purchased & Referred Care
3. **\$4 billion** Alcohol and Substance Use Disorder (opioids)/\$5 billion Mental Health

**Regional/National Tribal Priorities - BIA, BIE, and the IHS**

1. Advanced Appropriations for All Tribal Programs and Services
2. Mandatory Funding for Contract Support Costs (CSC) and Section 105(l) Leases
3. Ensure Agencies are Sufficiently Staffed to Carryout Trust and Treaty Obligations
4. Agency Reorganization and De-Regulation Agenda

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

**\$800,000 Annually Co-Management/Co-Stewardship** - Federal agencies are facing a significant crisis in managing public lands, driven by a combination of severe understaffing, budget cuts, rising maintenance backlogs and increased visitation. Investing in Tribal Co-management/Co-stewardship has proven to be an effective solution to protect ecosystems and safe and accessible outdoor recreation. It is successful because it respects Tribal sovereignty and shifts the management approach to a government-to-government partnership that restores Indigenous decision-making authority and empowers Tribes to influence decisions regarding their ancestral homelands, waterways, and natural resources. Integrating Indigenous knowledge and cultural

values into Federal land management decisions, alongside western science, enhances biodiversity conservation and environmental management techniques. Our Tribe has augmented the Federal government's limited funding and welcomed more than 100,000 visitors to Dungeness NWR. Jamestown has committed its own resources and engaged local volunteers in the stewardship of Protection Island NWR. Co-Stewardship leverages local knowledge and resources for cost-effective, sustainable, land management.

Our Tribe has a long record of successful natural resource stewardship and cooperative land management with Federal, state, and local partners. In 2024, the Tribe took over management of the Refuges under a Self-Governance funding agreement with FWS. The Dungeness Bay, Protection Island, and Sequim Bay areas are integral to the Tribe's ancestral home and territory. The Tribe has fished, gathered, hunted, and conducted ceremonies in these areas since pre-contact. Tribal oral histories, ethnographic studies, ecological research, and DOI administrative findings demonstrate the three locations have long provided a physical foundation for the Tribe's historic subsistence and a landscape in which ceremonial life and intertribal relations are embedded. Current efforts include transferring these NWR(s) into trust and restoring Tribal stewardship over ancestral lands while expressly preserving conservation purposes, appropriate public access, and wildlife protections through a Tribal Management Plan.

### **Bureau of Indian Affairs - Tribal Specific Requests**

1. \$3.9 million - Climate Resilience Funding – Tribal Trust Assets – Fish Lab - In October 2024, our Tribe was awarded \$3.9 million in funding to relocate essential Tribal Trust Assets, our Natural Resources Laboratory and Office. In January 2025, Executive Action paused obligations for various programs, and an OMB MEMO issued a broad freeze on Federal funding, grants, and loans. Jamestown's awarded funding is still frozen. Our trust assets are in a high-risk coastal zone area that has grown increasingly precarious due to extremely high tides and storm surge. The Federal government formally designated the area as a Federally Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 100 floodplain and Tsunami inundation zone. Despite numerous correspondence with the DOI that these exigent circumstances require immediate action by our trustee and imploring them to lift the freeze and release the funds post haste, the funds remain frozen. The Federal funding freeze has disrupted over \$430 billion in Federal funding that is impacting Native American communities by delaying or blocking money for public safety, housing, healthcare, and infrastructure. This freeze has placed crucial projects in limbo, including those addressing climate change impacts like erosion threatening the health and welfare of our citizens and communities.
2. \$177 million Increase Funding for Top Ten TIBC Tribal Priority Allocations & Recurring Funding - Tribal Priority Allocations (TPA) and Recurring Base Funding empower Tribes to exercise their Tribal Self-Governance and Self-Determination authority. The top ten programs support core Tribal government programs. Stable, flexible, and Tribally directed base funding is crucial to mitigate the volatility of annual budget cuts and address critical service gaps. It allows Tribes to build administrative capacity to better manage, compete for, and leverage additional Federal funding opportunities. By utilizing Self-Governance funding structures to implement these programs, Tribes have the flexibility and autonomy to shift funds that support core government programs and services between budget categories to address unique local needs and priorities rather than being forced to adhere to rigid Federal requirements. These mechanisms foster Self-Governance and Self-Determination by moving beyond paternalistic models to support sovereign nation building.

3. *\$1.9 million Strengthening Tribal Communities – Social Services, Welfare Assistance, Indian Child Welfare* - Tribal social services, welfare assistance, and Indian child welfare are politically based legally required components of the Federal government’s trust and treaty obligations. Funding for these programs is rooted in the government-to-government relationship. American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) children have a unique legal status as citizens of Tribal governments and Indian Child Welfare (ICWA) provides safeguards to maintain Tribal and family connections and relationships. Tribal social service programs provide essential financial aid in a culturally tailored way to create stability and foster self-sufficiency by aligning support systems with the social needs of our community members. Key aspects of culturally tailored self-sufficiency include the provision of leadership skills, economic empowerment, educational skills, job readiness and training, and health and nutrition. 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 Tribal workforce with over 80% comprised of Tribal citizens, descendants, and other Natives, and 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. Our history remains embedded throughout the community and among the generations through flourishing language, traditional foods, and culture programs.

### **Indian Health Service – Tribal Specific Requests**

1. *\$55 billion Current IHS Services* – As a major Tribal Self-Governed healthcare provider on the North Olympic Peninsula, Jamestown prioritizes maintaining and expanding its current healthcare services because they are considered essential, treaty-based, and integral to the Tribe’s goal of self-sufficiency, community health, and economic stability. The Tribe’s sophisticated healthcare system improves efficiency, maximizes reimbursements, and fills service gaps that discretionary Federal funding fails to cover. Maintaining current services for AI/AN healthcare is critical because it directly impacts the ability to provide consistent, quality care to a population facing significant health disparities, including chronic diseases and mental health disorders.
2. *\$13 billion HS Purchased Referred Care* – The Portland Area is heavily dependent on Purchased Referred Care (PRC) due to the lack of local IHS hospitals. PRC funds are used to pay for or supplement the cost of outside medical services because the IHS is severely underfunded. PRC is a priority for Jamestown because it serves as a crucial lifeline ensuring our citizens receive necessary emergency and/or specialized healthcare that the Tribe’s direct care facilities cannot provide. Despite the high need, the PRC program is chronically underfunded, due to inflation and rising demand. When funds are exhausted, our citizens face significant delays in care or are forced to travel long distances for care.
3. *\$4 billion Alcohol and Substance Use Disorder (Opioids) \$5 billion Mental Health* – Our award-winning Medication Assisted Treatment Healing Clinic for opioid addiction offers culturally responsive and patient centered care for both Tribal and non-Tribal members. The Clinic serves 120 patients daily and approximately 85% of the patients served are non-Natives. The Healing Clinic uses a high-quality comprehensive care model that integrates primary care, dentistry, and specialized behavioral health services. Clallam County, where the Tribe is located, ranks among the highest in the state for per capita overdose deaths at various points in recent years. The Healing Clinic’s proven success has resulted in a 75% client

retention rate and 50% reduction in overdose deaths in a twelve-month period. Despite our overwhelming success in addressing this healthcare crisis, recently, IHS policies and practices have created significant impediments to Tribes fully exercising their authority under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA), including, limiting funding for care and associated administrative costs to AI/AN, inserting non-germane requirements into Agreements impeding good faith negotiations and hindering the Tribe's ability to redesign programs to meet local needs. Exercising our Self-Governance authority to manage our own healthcare system is paramount to improving efficiency and innovation and allows culturally competent care with proven positive results for our citizens and community members.

### **Regional/National Tribal Priorities – BIA, BIE, and IHS**

1. Advance Appropriations for Tribal Programs and Services - 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 community. Advance appropriations are a budgetary solution that does not impact spending caps and allows Tribes to continue to provide critical services as recently demonstrated without passage of an FY 2026 spending bill for IHS.
2. Reclassify Discretionary Spending for Section 105(l) Leases and Contract Support Costs to Mandatory – Reclassifying Section 105(l) and CSC as mandatory funding is needed to prevent them from cannibalizing funds for direct patient care and essential Tribal services.
3. Ensure Agencies are Sufficiently Staffed to Carryout Trust and Treaty Obligations – The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) has designated Federal programs serving Tribes as “high risk” due to chronic understaffing and mismanagement. Despite these longstanding findings, recent Administration actions have cut thousands of staff. These cuts hurt Tribes by exacerbating existing staffing limitations and hindering the government's ability to fulfill trust and treaty obligations. Specifically, the reductions cripple access to critical services, cause funding delays, impede economic development and create safety risks.
4. Agency Reorganization – Agency reorganization is only congruent with Tribal Self-Government when it is collaborative, respects Tribal sovereignty, and enhances the ability of Tribes to manage their own resources and services. Tribes are deeply concerned that the current reorganization effort is disrupting critical services, reducing funding, undermining trust and treaty obligations and creating significant bureaucratic hurdles for Tribal Self-Governance.
5. De-regulation Agenda - Tribes are willing to work with Federal agencies to consider areas where deregulation, and new regulations or policy are needed, but consultation on the best approaches to support effective and efficient services with both funding and staffing resources must occur before any decisions are made. Engaging Tribes at the outset ensures Federal trust and treaty obligations are upheld, Tribal perspectives and experiences are considered, and policies that effectuate Tribal administration of Federal programs while maintaining important protections for Native children and families are advanced.

The Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe continues to support the requests and recommendations of our Regional and National Indian Organizations.