



Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians

Dedicated to Promoting Tribal Self Determination & Sovereignty

April 15, 2019

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Chairman John Yarmuth
Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
204-E Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Steve Womack
Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
507 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Support for Advanced Appropriations for Indian Programs (H.R. 1128 & H.R. 1135)

Dear Chairman Yarmuth and Ranking Member Womack:

On behalf of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI), a regional organization comprised of American Indians/Alaska Natives and tribes in the states of Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, California, and Alaska, I am writing to express ATNI's support for legislation to provide advance appropriations for the Indian Health Service (IHS) and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

The United States has a trust responsibility to Indian tribes established through the U.S. Constitution, treaties, U.S. Supreme Court decisions, and federal legislation. While the trust responsibility requires the federal government to provide for the health and welfare of tribal nations, critical tribal programs at the Indian Health Service (IHS) and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) are chronically underfunded.

The negative impact of the chronic underfunding of tribal programs is exacerbated by continuing resolutions and government shutdowns. Congress has been unable to enact federal appropriations bills in a timely manner for years. This hampers tribal and IHS health care providers' budgeting, recruitment, retention, provision of services, facility maintenance, as well as the implementation of essential BIA public safety programs. Further, government shutdowns, including this year's 35-day shutdown, have a disproportionate impact on tribal nations.

In response to this urgent matter, Indian Country calls for advance appropriations and we are pleased that many in Congress have joined our effort. Representative Betty McCollum introduced H.R. 1128, the Indian Programs Advance Appropriations Act, a bipartisan bill would provide advance appropriations for certain Indian programs at the IHS and the BIA. Representative Don Young also introduced bipartisan legislation, H.R. 1135, the IHS Advance Appropriations Act, which provides advance appropriations for certain IHS programs. In addition, 60 bipartisan Members of Congress wrote to the Budget Committee, urging the inclusion of advance appropriations in the Budget Resolution.

Today, both H.R. 1128 and H.R. 1135 are pending with the House Budget Committee. ATNI encourages the Committee to work with the other committees of jurisdiction—

Natural Resources and Energy & Commerce—to advance these bills through the legislative process. Enacting such legislation would not set a precedent, but would establish parity and help fulfill Congress' trust responsibility to Indian tribes.

Should you have any questions regarding our support, please contact Terri Parr, ATNI Executive Director at tparrw@atnitribes.org.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leonard Forsman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Leonard Forsman, President
Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians

CC: Representative Betty McCollum
 Representative Don Young
 Chairman Raul Grijalva
 Ranking Member Rob Bishop
 Chairman Frank Pallone
 Ranking Member Greg Walden
 Representative Tom Cole
 Representative Deb Haaland