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Testimony to the House and Senate Appropriations  
Subcommittees on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
Regarding the Fiscal Year 2019 IHS and BIA Budgets

April 27, 2018

The Susanville Indian Rancheria submits the following recommendations regarding the FY 2019 Interior Appropriations bill:

- Reject the large proposed cuts in the Bureau of Indian Affairs Social Services program (37%) and the Indian Child welfare Act (27%).
- Retain the BIA's Johnson O'Malley Program Which is Proposed for Elimination
- Reject the Proposal to Eliminate the IHS Community Health Representatives Program
- Continue Full, Mandatory Funding for IHS and BIA Contract Support Costs
- Funding for a New Medical Clinic
- Maintain the Special Diabetes Program's Funding as Mandatory
- Reject Rescissions and Protect the IHS and BIA from Sequestration

The Susanville Indian Rancheria includes over 1,180 tribal citizens located in Northern California. The Tribe operates several programs through Indian Self-Determination Act compact and contracts with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), including the Tribe's two largest: The Consolidated Tribal Government Program and the Road Maintenance Program. Through these programs, the Tribe operates aid to tribal government, Johnson O'Malley, social services, Indian child welfare, community fire protection, adult and higher education, and job placement programs, as well as projects to maintain the Tribe's infrastructure. Through these programs, the Tribe is a vital part of the Susanville and Lassen County economic community.

The Tribe also operates the Lassen Indian Health Center via a Title V self-governance compact with the Indian Health Service (IHS). The Tribe and the Health Center serve not only our tribal members, but also lineal descendants of California and other federally recognized Indians. As a result, our service population for Lassen County is over 1,900 individuals of Indian descent. The Health Center is a vital link for our patients, who receive medical, dental care, behavioral health services, substance abuse counseling, and pharmacy services. Providing

both governmental and health care services is an important role for the Tribe, although we depend on our partners -IHS, BIA, and Congress, to fulfill their contractual obligations.

Reject the BIA Social Services Reduction of 37 percent. The Administration's proposed cut to BIA social services is astonishing. We use our limited Tribal Priority Allocation funds (\$22,506) toward urgent needs of our tribal members. In the past two and one half months, the tribal office has processed over 100 social services types of requests. We estimate that we would need a 141% increase in our TPA just to meet the minimum needs for our tribal members.

Reject the Proposed Indian Child Welfare Act Reduction of \$5 million or 27 percent. The Susanville Indian Rancheria uses what limited TPA funding it receives (\$44,414) towards salaries, telephone costs, supplies, NICWA membership dues, expert witness fees, training, and legal fees. We have averaged slightly over 12 active cases each month with some cases being closed and others being opened due to various reasons (abuse, parent reunification, etc.). In addition we receive an average of 5-8 daily correspondences on ICWA matters that require a response. We have an urgent need for more Native foster homes and have worked with Lassen County Child and Family Services in certifying some Native foster homes. But many of our Tribal member children (and tribal children who are not Susanville Indian Rancheria members) are being placed in homes that do not meet with ICWA placement preference law. It is very important that Native children do not lose their connection with their culture as this this connection is what keeps children whole and provides strength of mind and body. We estimate that would need a 323% increase to meet the minimum ICWA-related needs for our tribal children.

Retain the Johnson O'Malley Program. We strongly oppose the proposal to eliminate the Johnson O'Malley Program (JOM). The JOM serves a very important function for the Susanville Indian Rancheria as it makes possible three after school tutors and also provides the partial salary of our Education Programs Director. In addition, these funds are used for Renaissance learning dues that help our students increase their reading skills, as well as providing assistance for summer activities. We are pleased as we are on track with increasing the reading levels of our students, increasing their math proficiency and increasing cultural awareness. Without these funds we would lose all that we have gained in the past few years. We are proud of our students and what they have accomplished.

Reject the Administration's Proposed Elimination of the IHS Community Health Representatives Program. We are astonished that the Administration would propose the elimination of the Community Health Representatives Program (CHR) which was funded at \$62.8 million in FY 2018. The CHR program provides community-based essential home visiting services to elders and to people of all ages, serving both medical and psycho-social health needs. These home-based services increase the involvement of individuals in managing and improving their own health – especially with chronic disease management - and help prevent avoidable emergency room visits and hospital re-admissions.

Funding for a New Medical Clinic. The Susanville Indian Rancheria is in dire need of a new medical clinic. Our current facility is no longer large enough to house our employees that provide services to our Indian people in Lassen County. It is not cost effective to update this

very old facility. While we have undertaken the planning of a facility but we lack the funding for construction. We are pleased to see the FY 2018 IHS health facility construction funding increase and encourage you to keep providing such funding for replacement of medical facilities.

Maintain the Special Diabetes Program Funding as Mandatory. We oppose the Administration's proposal to change the SDPI program from one which is funded on a mandatory basis to discretionary funding. We understand that the same would be true for the HHS Community Health Centers programming. It appears to be a way to require appropriations subcommittees to have to use their funding allocations for what previously was mandatory funding and thus not counted against their allocation. Many people in Indian Country would like all IHS funds to be mandatory. Making SDPI funds discretionary could open it up to reductions and also subject it to short-term Continuing Resolutions thus leading to difficulties in planning and recruiting and retaining staff.

Continue Full Funding of Contract Support Costs. We are so appreciative of the House and Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittees' support of full and mandatory funding for IHS and BIA Contract Support Costs and for finding a way to make that happen. This action has been crucial to the strengthening of tribal governments' ability to successfully exercise their rights and responsibilities. We do feel that the IHS should pay Contract Support Costs on its grant programs and appreciate the House Committee Report language from FY 2018 encouraging them to do so.

Reject Funding Rescissions and Protect IHS and BIA from Sequestration. We are aware that there is an effort among some in Congress and by the Office of Management and Budget to rescind some funding made available by the Bipartisan Budget Act and the Consolidated Appropriations Act for FY 2018, and we urge you reject such a proposal. The bipartisan agreement that was reached should not be broken. We are grateful for the FY 2018 funding increases made available for the BIA and IHS – notably in the Facilities Accounts. Also of particular significance is the increase in funds to address the national opioid abuse epidemic for which tribes will belatedly have direct access.

While we have not had an automatic across-the-board sequestration of discretionary federal funds since FY 2013, the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act should nevertheless be amended to exempt the IHS and BIA from such reductions. Other health programs, e.g., the Veterans Health Administration, Medicaid grants, and Medicare payments (except for a 2 percent reduction for administration) are held harmless.

Thank you for your consideration of the views of the Susanville Indian Rancheria.