



National Congress of American Indians

# NCAI News

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## House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee Approves FY 2003 Spending Bill

On Tuesday, June 25, the House Interior Subcommittee approved a FY 2003 funding bill for the Department of Interior and Related Agencies. The Subcommittee bill and accompanying report language is not yet available. However, NCAI has obtained a detailed summary of the Indian provisions, which are outlined below.

The actual bill and report language will not be available until after the full House Appropriations Committee conducts its mark up, which has not yet been scheduled. In related news, NCAI has received unconfirmed reports that the Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee will consider its version of the FY 2003 Interior funding measure on Thursday, June 27.

### **Bureau of Indian Affairs**

FY 2002 Enacted	\$2,222,876,000
FY 2003 Budget Request	\$2,245,804,000
FY 2003 House Subcommittee	\$2,270,758,000

### Operation of Indian Programs

Operation of Indian Programs is funded at \$1.86 billion, an increase of slightly less than \$22 million above the budget request and \$59.3 million over the current funding level.

Within this account, tribal priority allocations are proposed to be funded at \$780.7 million, an increase of \$5.1 million above the budget request and \$24.5 million above the current funding level, including a \$1.1 million earmark for new tribes and the restoration of \$4 million in welfare assistance that was cut in the President's budget proposal.

Education programs are funded at approximately \$566 million, an increase of \$4 million above the budget request and \$20.8 million above the enacted level.

### BIA Construction

Construction is funded at the budget request of \$345.3 million, which is \$11.9 million below the current funding level. Within the total, education construction is funded at \$292.7 million, which will provide resources to construct six replacement schools and a

\$2.8 million increase to the facilities improvement and repair program to address major deficiencies.

### BIA Report Language

- Earmarks an additional \$500,000 for the timber-fish-wildlife program as well as restores the base level for the program
- Earmarks \$400,000 for a wildstock initiative within funds for the jobs-in-the-woods-program
- Opposes the BIA's school privatization initiative and instead reprioritizes funding to create incentives for tribes to take over the remaining BIA operated schools
- Earmarks \$300,000 for water management planning for the Seminole Tribe as part of the Everglades Restoration Program
- Earmarks \$500,000 for the Branch of Acknowledgment
- Earmarks an additional \$1 million for Chippewa/Ottawa treaty fisheries
- Urges the BIA to fund three programs developed by the Tohono O'odham Nation
- Urges the Solicitor to provide adequate legal services to the Indian Arts and Crafts Board
- Earmarks \$918,000 to complete the construction of the Ramah Navajo Replacement Dormitory

### **Office of the Special Trustee**

FY 2002 Enacted	\$ 99,224,000
FY 2003 Budget Request	\$151,027,000
FY 2003 House Subcommittee	\$141,277,000

The Subcommittee mark provides \$131.3 million for programs operations support and improvement, which is an increase of \$32 million above the current funding level but \$19.8 million below the budget request. The bill also provides \$10 million above both the budget request and current funding level for computer security reforms and funds executive direction at \$2.5 million.

### New Bill Language

- Requires the Interior Department to provide the Appropriations Committee with the results of the Ernst and Young report providing a transaction-by-transaction accounting of the five named plaintiffs in *Cobell v. Norton*
- Limits compensation for the Court Monitor and Special Master
- Requires the Special Trustee to appoint a new advisory board
- Authorizes the Secretary to pay attorneys fees incurred in *Cobell v. Norton* for employees and former employees
- Limits the historical accounting of the IIM accounts to those accounts open as of December 31, 2000 (going back to January 1, 1985)

**Indian Land Consolidation**

FY 2002 Enacted	\$10,980,000
FY 2003 Budget Request	\$ 7,980,000
FY 2003 House Subcommittee	\$ 7,980,000

**Indian Health Service**

FY 2002 Enacted	\$2,759,101,000
FY 2003 Budget Request	\$2,816,406,000
FY 2003 House Subcommittee	\$2,900,621,000

Indian Health Services

The bill provides a \$36 million increase for hospital and clinic operations from the current level of \$1.15 billion, including \$33 million to bring the 55 most underfunded units up to a 40 percent of need funding level. The President's budget had proposed a \$76 million increase for hospitals and clinics.

The Subcommittee mark would decrease self-governance "shortfall" funds for new compacts by \$9 million because there have been no new compacts over the past several years.

Health Facilities

The Subcommittee mark increases maintenance funding by \$5 million to \$51 million, and equipment funding by \$2 million to \$18 million. The President's budget would have eliminated equipment funding altogether.

The Subcommittee mark also includes \$22 million over the budget request of \$72 million for construction activities, to restore funding for modular dental units and small ambulatory care facilities and fund construction activities at Pawnee (OK), St. Paul (AK), Fort Defiance (AZ), Clinton (OK), and Bethel (AK).

Report Language

- Stipulates that the IHS should ensure that any staff in positions not transferred to the Department of Health and Human Services as part of the consolidation of the legislative and public affairs functions are given priority consideration for vacancies within IHS
- Does not limit the budget increase for recruitment of health professionals to former military and VA employees

- States that IHS needs to re-examine its estimates for residual costs for operation of inherently federal functions at the Headquarters and Area Offices and request increases for direct operations as needed in the FY 2004 budget
- States that maintenance program funding increases need to remain in the base budget
- States that equipment increases should focus on replacing outdated analog medical devices with digital medical devices and telemedicine equipment (and should remain in the base budget).

Please contact NCAI at (202)466-7767 if you have any additional questions regarding the 2003 Interior Appropriations information available at this time.

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