



National Congress of American Indians

# NCAI News

August 14, 2002  
(Broadcast # 02-060)

## House, Senate Appropriations Committee Approves FY 2003 Agriculture Bill

The House and Senate Appropriations Committees recently approved their FY 2003 funding bills for the Department of Agriculture. Additional action on these measures will not occur until September, when Congress returns from its August recess. In both bills, Indian-specific programs were either level funded or saw slight increases.

The House bill and accompanying Committee report (H.R. 5263, H.Rept. 107-623) were approved on July 11 and are available at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d107:h.r.05263>. H.R. 5263 provides \$17.6 billion for discretionary programs, \$1.04 billion above current funding and \$179.54 million more than the budget request. For mandatory programs, it allocates \$56.71 billion, \$206 million below current funding but \$64 million above the budget request.

The Senate bill and Committee report (S. 2801, S.Rept. 107-223) were approved on July 25 and are available at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d107:s.02801>. S. 2801 provides \$74.66 billion, \$1.19 billion above the current level. Of that total, mandatory spending accounts for \$56.68 billion, \$229 million below the current level, and discretionary spending accounts for \$17.98 billion, \$1.42 billion above current funding.

The President's budget included a legislative proposal to charge individual agencies, starting in fiscal year 2003, the fully accrued costs related to retirement benefits of Civil Service Retirement System employees and retiree health benefits for all civilian employees. The budget also requested an additional dollar amount in each affected discretionary account to cover these accrued costs. Because the underlying legislation has not been acted on, the FY 2003 request figures in this report have been adjusted to exclude the accrual proposal.

USDA (\$ in millions)	FY 2002 Enacted	FY 2003 Request	House Bill	Senate Bill
Rural and Economic Development				
Rural Community Advancement Program Indian Set-Aside <sup>1</sup>	24.0	24.0	24.0	24.0
Water/Sewer Grants for Alaska Rural and Native Villages	24.0	20.0	0	30.0
Water/Waste Disposal System Grants for Tribes	0	0	0	18.0
Enterprise Zone/Empowerment Community Grants	14.97	0	14.97	14.91
Circuit Rider Program	11.0	9.5	12.1	12.1
Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants and Loans <sup>2</sup>	49.4	31.1	44.1	51.9
Rural Development Loan Fund Indian Set-Aside	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7
Indian Tribal Land Acquisition Loans	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0

<sup>1</sup> This funding may be used for water and waste disposal grants and loans to tribes, and for rural business opportunity and rural business enterprise grants to tribes. Of the total, the House bill provides \$4 million for community facilities grants to tribal colleges, while both bills provide \$250,000 for a passenger transportation development and assistance initiative.

<sup>2</sup> The House bill would provide a loan level of \$380 million, as well as \$40 million in grants. The Senate bill earmarks \$15 million for public broadcasters to convert to digital transmission and \$10 million for rural broadband and dial-up Internet access grants.

USDA (\$ in millions)	FY 2002 Enacted	FY 2003 Request	House Bill	Senate Bill
Extension Services				
Tribal Colleges Extension Services	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.5
Indian Reservation Agents	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Food Programs				
Food Stamps (incl. Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations) <sup>3</sup>	22,990	26,294.7	26,313.7	26,289.7
WIC	4,348.0	4,751.0	4,776.0	4,751.0
Tribal Colleges				
Endowment Fund	7.1	7.1	9.0	7.1
1994 Institutions Equity Grants	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.7
Agriculture Research Initiative	1.0	1.0	1.2	1.0
Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.5

**Deadline for Comments on “Outdated and Conflicting Laws” Proposal Extended** -- On June 20, 2002, the Department of Interior (DOI) identified 280 “outdated and conflicting laws” in Title 25 of the United States Code and proposed changes to that section of the Code. The proposed changes were made by staff from the Policies and Procedures Subproject of the Bureau of Indian Affairs as part of their trust management reform efforts. DOI intends to send proposed legislation to Congress in February 2003.

Comments to the proposed changes were originally due by August 15, 2002. However, NCAI and the Trust Reform Task Force requested a 90-day extension for additional review, and the DOI has extended the deadline. Comments are now due by November 15, 2002.

A number of tribal attorneys and Indian law practitioners have volunteered to review and draft comments to the proposed changes. If your tribe is interested in participating with this workgroup or would like further information, contact Shelby Settles at NCAI at [shelby\\_settles@ncai.org](mailto:shelby_settles@ncai.org) or (202) 466-7767. Additionally, the DOI document outlining proposed changes may be downloaded from the NCAI website at [http://www.ncai.org/main/pages/issues/other\\_issues/title\\_25.asp](http://www.ncai.org/main/pages/issues/other_issues/title_25.asp).

Comments to the proposed changes may be sent by telefax (202) 208-6426 or by mail to:

Policies and Procedures Subproject  
Bureau of Indian Affairs  
MS-4070-MIB  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

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<sup>3</sup> In FY 2002, up to \$3 million is reserved to purchase bison for the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations from Native American producers and cooperatives.