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Shawn Duran
Taos Pueblo

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Herminia Frias
Pascua Yaqui Tribe

David Decker
Elko Band Council

May 24, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
S-230 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Democratic Leader
S-221 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Enactment of Streamlined Funding Enhancements for Tribal Public Safety Programs

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Democratic Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the Tribal/Interior Budget Council (TIBC) Tribal leadership, we write to urge enactment of legislation that addresses the inadequacies of the current federal funding system for Tribal public safety programs. TIBC was created to provide a forum and process, consistent with Section 5303 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, Executive Order 13175, and the Department of the Interior's (DOI) Government-to-Government policy, whereby Tribal Nations and DOI work together to develop budgets that ensure:

- 1) DOI is able to fulfill its trust responsibilities and treaty obligations; and
- 2) Secure funding levels are provided to Tribal Nations to strengthen Tribal governance capacity, including the fulfillment of Tribal Nations' inherent sovereign rights of self-determination, self-governance, and self-sufficiency.

Improvements to the federal funding system for Tribal public safety programs are integral to the fulfillment of DOI's trust responsibilities and treaty obligations. One of the most fundamental aspects of the federal government's trust responsibility is the obligation to provide public safety on Tribal lands. Congress has consistently acknowledged this obligation.¹

There are several interrelated and mutually-reinforcing challenges related to funding for Tribal justice systems: 1) available funding is profoundly inadequate; 2) available funding is spread across multiple federal agencies with different programmatic and administrative requirements; and 3) a significant portion of the available funding is distributed via short-term, competitive grants that undermine program stability and hamper strategic planning.

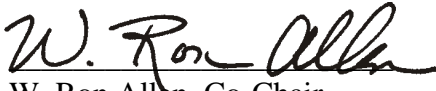
Legislation modeled after Public Law 102-477 would give Tribal governments the authority to consolidate funding from different programs into a single, coordinated, comprehensive program. This would reduce administrative costs and streamline reporting into a simpler single-compliance model that would be monitored and executed by the "lead agency," the Bureau of Indian Affairs – Office of Justice Services.

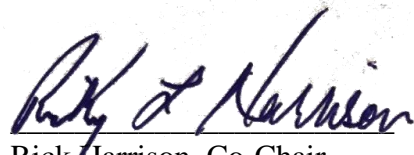
A legislative solution is needed to address Tribal public safety and justice budget restrictions and inefficiencies at DOI and across agencies that fund public safety in Indian country. The

¹ See, e.g., Indian Law Enforcement Reform Act, 25 U.S.C. § 2801 et seq.; Tribal Law and Order Act (Pub. L. No. 111-211, 124 Stat. 2258) (2010).

TIBC Tribal representatives urge Congress to consider and enact legislation that addresses these restrictions with respect to Tribal public safety and justice programs. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,


W. Ron Allen, Co-Chair
Tribal/Interior Budget Council


Rick Harrison, Co-Chair
Tribal/Interior Budget Council

Alvin Not Afraid, Jr., Co-Chair
Tribal/Interior Budget Council