AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Washington, DC.

NONDEPARTMENTAL WITNESSES

[CLERK'S NOTE.—The subcommittee was unable to hold hearings on nondepartmental witnesses. The statements and letters of those submitting written testimony are as follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE 1854 TREATY AUTHORITY

1854 TREATY AUTHORITY

The 1854 Treaty Authority (Authority) is a tribal organization funded by a Public Law 93–638 contract with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) under its Trust-Natural Resources Management-Rights Protection Implementation (RPI) budget.

—The Authority supports the administration's proposed $40,161,000 for BIA Rights Protection Implementation (an increase of 2,500,000) and a proportionate share for the Authority. However, while the Authority supports the 2,500,000 increase to RPI funding, we do not agree that the increase should be open to a "competitive proposal-based process" as outlined in the BIA fiscal year 2017 Justifications (a.k.a. BIA Greenbook), but any increase should be allocated in the same proportions as it has historically been distributed.

—The Authority supports the full finding of contract support for its Public Law 93–638, Self-Determination contract at no less than the administrations proposed $278,000,000.

—The Authority supports maintaining funding for the EPA Great Lakes Restoration budget at least at its current level of $300,000,000.

The Authority is a tribal organization responsible for protecting, preserving, and regulating the treaty-reserved hunting, fishing and gathering rights in the territory ceded to the United States by the Chippewa in the Treaty of September 30, 1854, 10 Stat. 1109. The Bois Forte Band and the Grand Portage Band created the authority following Federal court affirmation of the rights in 1988. As part of a court-approved agreement with the State of Minnesota, the Bands have obligations to preserve the natural resources in the five (5) million acre ceded territory and to regulate the activities of Band members through a conservation code, enforcement officers, and a court. The Authority has also been involved with a variety of inter-agency efforts to study the effect of invasive species, climate change, and activities that impact treaty resources.

Although it has significant responsibilities in a geographic area the size of Massachusetts, the Authority has only fifteen (15) full-time employees. With those limited resources, the Authority has been able to collaborate with State, tribal and Federal agencies to become a prominent presence in the conservation of resources critical to the subsistence hunting, fishing and gathering activities of the Chippewa.

However, the successes of the Authority are overshadowed by the challenges facing the trust resources that are at the heart of the treaty rights. The Minnesota moose population has declined precipitously in just a few years and for reasons unknown, invasive species and climate change threaten the treaty fishing and wild rice

production areas across the ceded territory, and human activities continue to deplete or displace wildlife populations.

The Authority urges the subcommittee and the Congress to acknowledge that the resources we seek to protect are *trust resources, reserved in treaties* that the United States has a legal obligation to protect and preserve.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE ALEUTIAN PRIBILOF ISLANDS ASSOCIATION

The requests of the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association (APIA) for the fiscal year 2017 Indian Health Service (IHS) budget are as follows:

—Funding for a health facility replacement project in Atka, Alaska.
—Provide or require the IHS to allocate an additional $12.5 million to fully fund Village Built Clinic Leases and make it a line item in the budget.
—Place IHS funding on an advance appropriations basis.
—Continue with indefinite funding for Contract Support Costs (CSC) but without the fiscal year 2016 proviso limiting carry-over authority, and make indefinite CSC funding permanent and mandatory.

The Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association (APIA) is a regional non-profit tribal organization with members consisting of the 13 federally recognized tribes of the Aleutian Chain and Pribilof Islands Region. APIA provides healthcare services to the Alaska Natives in four of the tribal communities of this Region through funding received from IHS under Title V of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA). We also provide health-related services through various non-IHS grants and agreements.

ATKA CLINIC REPLACEMENT

We are requesting $2.9 million for a health facility replacement in Atka, Alaska.

—During World War II, Atka Health Clinic was also destroyed along with the entire community by the United States Navy to keep our enemies from using the area.
—In Atka the APIA is working with and helping the City of Atka on a grant and funding package.
—In Unalaska a Joint Venture application with the Indian Health Service is approved, which also includes Atka.
—The Current Atka Health Clinic is inadequate to provide the care the community deserves, it is beyond repair and even a simple window replacement cannot be supported with the existing structure. It is vulnerable to weather & the life safety code.
—The Atka IRA Council, the City, APIA & APIDCA have taken the first steps to finance the design in the amount of $128,000.
—Site-work plans, foundation design, floor plans & draft RFP for a modular building is completed.
—The Atka Health Clinic is a newly designated Community Health Center that serves everyone regardless of race or ability to pay; it is a Veterans service site, as well as an Indian Health Service site.
—We are ready to take this project to the next level & begin the construction phase.
—We are specifically requesting support for construction funding in the amount of $2,923,100.

FUNDING FOR VILLAGE BUILT CLINICS IN ALASKA

The Village Built Clinics (VBCs) continue to face a significant funding crisis. We thank you for the $2 million appropriated in fiscal year 2016 to supplement what was being spent on clinic leases and are heartened by the administration's request of $11 million in fiscal year 2017 ($9 million increase plus $2 million from fiscal year 2016) for this same purpose.

VBCs are leased by the IHS from other entities and are a vital component of the provision of basic healthcare services in rural Alaska, as they serve as the clinic space for the Community Health Aide Program (CHAP). The CHAP utilizes a network of community health aides and practitioners to provide primary healthcare services in otherwise unserved rural and isolated areas. Rental amounts for the VBCs have failed to keep pace with costs—the majority of the leases for VBCs have not increased since 1989. As a result, many of the VBCs are unsafe or have had to be closed, leaving some villages in Alaska without a local healthcare facility.

In addition, the President's proposed fiscal year 2017 clinic lease bill language may need some clarification, depending on IHS's interpretation of the reference that healthcare be delivered in a space acquired through a "full service lease". In some cases tribes receive VBC funding as part of their recurring base, and so the IHS no longer has "full service leases" in place for those clinics. We know that the Appropriations Committees do not intend to limit VBC eligibility based on unclear terminology.

In sum, these amounts are a step in the right direction but the 2105 ANHB study that analyzed the funding deficiency statewide for these facilities identified an increased need of $12.5 million increase. We urge that the full amount needed be appropriated. We also support maintaining this funding as a line item in the bill.

IHS ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS & MANDATORY CONTRACT SUPPORT COSTS

We continue to support placing the IHS budget on an advance appropriations basis, as Congress has done with the Veterans Administration (VA) health accounts. The fiscal year 2016 budget justification for the VA said advance appropriation is necessary to "fulfill the administration's commitment to provide reliable and timely resources to support the delivery of accessible and high-quality medical services for veterans." Advance appropriations for the IHS is equally important to the predictable and timely funding of healthcare for Alaska Natives and American Indians, and for us to more effectively use our resources in what is otherwise a difficult fiscal environment.

We wish to extend our appreciation to the subcommittee for its support for full funding of CSC. We support the President's proposal for an appropriation in fiscal year 2017 of "such sums as may be necessary," with an estimated $800 million for CSC for the IHS in a separate accounts within the IHS's discretionary budget. We join with others in Indian Country, however, in asking that the proviso from the fiscal year 2016 appropriations language ("amounts obligated but not expended by a tribe or tribal organization for contract support costs for such agreements for the current fiscal year shall be applied to contract support costs otherwise due for such agreements for subsequent fiscal years") be removed in 2017 and thereafter. We also believe that indefinite CSC funding should ultimately be made permanent and mandatory, beginning no later than fiscal year 2018.

We appreciate your consideration of our request outlined in this testimony. On behalf of APIA and the people we serve, I am happy to provide any other additional information desired by the subcommittee.

[This statement was submitted by Dimitri Philemonof, President and CEO.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE AMERICA'S GREAT WATERS COALITION

Albemarle-Pamlico Sound • Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River Basin
Chesapeake Bay • Coastal Louisiana • Colorado River • Delaware River
Everglades • Galveston Bay • Great Lakes • Gulf of Maine • Lake Champlain
Long Island Sound • Mississippi River • Missouri River • Narragansett Bay
New York/New Jersey Harbor and Hudson Estuary • Ohio River
Puget Sound • Rio Grande • San Francisco Bay
St. Johns River

Dear Chairwoman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

We express our strong support for your subcommittee's dedication to the restoration of America's Great Waters. As the fiscal year 2017 appropriations bills are developed, we respectfully urge you to maintain strong funding for programs that enable important work to restore landscapes like those in and around the America's 21 Great Waters.[1] In addition to these waterways being valuable ecological re-

[1] America's Great Waters Coalition recognizes 21 Great Waters based on specific criteria. These waters are the Albemarle-Pamlico Sound, Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River Basin, Chesapeake Bay, Coastal Louisiana, Colorado River, Delaware River, Everglades, Galveston Bay, Great Lakes, Gulf of Maine, Lake Champlain, Long Island Sound, Mississippi River, Missouri River, Narragansett Bay, New York/New Jersey Harbor and Hudson Estuary, Ohio River, Puget Sound, Rio Grande, San Francisco Bay, and St. Johns River.

sources, they are also significant economic drivers for large swaths of the Nation, providing much-needed jobs and opportunities for untold numbers of Americans. As you make difficult decisions regarding funding, we want to highlight the solid return on taxpayer investments in Great Waters restoration.

As you prepare the fiscal year 2017 Interior appropriations bill, we encourage you to maintain robust funding for programs that support aquatic ecosystem restoration and exclude policy riders that harm our Great Waters and derail ongoing restoration efforts. Programs important for restoring Great Waters in the Interior bill include but are not limited to:

—EPA's Geographic Programs, which include robust and successful restoration programs in the Chesapeake Bay, Lake Champlain, Great Lakes, Long Island Sound, Puget Sound and others.
—The National Estuary Program, which has restored and protected 1.75 million acres of coastal habitats in 28 estuaries since 2000 and has leveraged $18 of investment for every dollar provided by EPA.
—Department of the Interior priorities such as the National Park Service's Everglades restoration initiatives; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Coastal Program, Cooperative Landscape Conservation Program, National Coastal Wetlands Grant, and North American Wetlands Conservation Act programs; and Joint Ventures, which bring together partners to conserve habitat.
—Clean Water State Revolving Fund and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, which provide important resources for States and municipalities to make much-needed upgrades to wastewater treatment systems and include dedicated Green Project Reserves in each fund.
—Section 319 Nonpoint Source Management Program, which is the primary grants program for States, Territories, and tribes to address nonpoint source challenges.
—USGS National Water Quality Program, which provides robust water quality monitoring and data for informed decisionmaking.

At a time when Federal lawmakers need to make smart spending choices, restoration offers one of the best returns on investment in the Federal budget. Restored watersheds improve our quality of life, increase property values, provide clean water, support fish and wildlife and enhance outdoor recreation for our families. The on-the-ground work to restore our coasts, lakes, rivers, and estuaries produces jobs and utilizes skills and machinery available in the local workforce that provide many benefits to local economies.

—According to Restore America's Estuaries, restoring our coasts can create more than 30 jobs for every million dollars invested, which is more than twice as many jobs as the oil and gas and road construction industries combined.
—Along the Mississippi River, estimates show that more than 50 habitat restoration projects contribute approximately $16.5 million to small businesses and employ more than 300 people in rural counties where, so often, unemployment is the highest following the closure of factories and other industries along the river.
—A report by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation found that economic benefits provided by nature in the Chesapeake watershed will total $130 billion annually, an increase of $22 billion annually, when the Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint is fully implemented.
—A study conducted by Mather Economics found that for every $1 invested in restoring the Everglades, there is at least a $4 return in economic benefits, and that over the next 50 years, the incremental impact of Everglades restoration is expected to produce more than 440,000 jobs.
—A study of the Delaware River Watershed found that it contributes $25 billion in annual economic activity and $21 billion in ecosystem goods and services.

The America's Great Waters Coalition represents diverse national, regional, State and local organizations working to protect, preserve and restore our Nation's waters. The Coalition is a result of years of work by national and local organizations to bring the broader restoration community together to "lift all boats." Together, we urge you to continue to provide the highest level of funding possible for Federal programs critical for effective Great Waters restoration.

Sincerely,

Molly M. Flanagan, Vice President, Policy
—Alliance for the Great Lakes

Jim Bradley, Vice President, Policy and Government Relations
—American Rivers

Eric Draper, Executive Director
—Audubon Florida

Wayne Daltry, President
—Audubon of Southwest Florida

Paul J. Marinelli, President
—Audubon of the Western Everglades

Jennifer Browning, Executive Director
—Bluestem Communications

John R. Paul III, President
—Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association (Riverwatch)

Alix Murdoch, Federal Policy Director
—Chesapeake Bay Foundation

Kathleen E. Aterno, Florida Director
—Clean Water Action

Madeline Urbish, Director
—Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed

Clark Bullard, Director
—Committee on the Middle Fork Vermilion River

Kelly Reed, Vice President, Government Relations
—The Conservation Fund

Duane De Vries, President
—Dwight Lydell Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America

Dan Silver, Executive Director
—Endangered Habitats League

Jennifer Rubiello, State Director
—Environment Florida

Manley Fuller, President
—Florida Wildlife Federation

Ted Auch PhD, Great Lakes Program Coordinator and Lead Researcher
—The FracTracker Alliance

Elinor Williams, President
—Friends of ARM Lox NWR

Jeff Skelding, Executive Director
—Friends of the Upper Delaware River

Matt Rota, Senior Policy Director
—Gulf Restoration Network

Indra Frank, MD, MPH, Environmental Health & Water Policy Director
—Hoosier Environmental Council

Darwin Adams, Chairman
—Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited

Robert Stegmier, National Director
—Izaak Walton League of America

Ivan J. Hack, Jr., President, Headwaters Chapter
—Izaak Walton League of America

Scott Kovarovics, Executive Director
—Izaak Walton League of America

Tom FitzGerald, Director
—Kentucky Resources Council, Inc.

Judy Petersen, Executive Director
—Kentucky Waterways Alliance

Lori Fisher, Executive Director
—Lake Champlain Committee

Sandy Bihn, Executive Director
—Lake Erie Waterkeeper Inc.

John Ruskey, Director
—Lower Mississippi River Foundation

Cheryl Nenn, Riverkeeper
—Milwaukee Riverkeeper

Theresa Pierno, President & CEO
—National Parks Conservation Association

Adam Kolton, Vice President of Federal Policy
—National Wildlife Federation

Sarah Murdock, Director, U.S. Climate Resilience and Water Policy
—The Nature Conservancy

Todd Miller, Executive Director
—North Carolina Coastal Federation

George L. Jones, Director of Special Projects
—Ocean Research and Conservation Association, Inc. Duerr Laboratory for Marine Conservation

Kristy Meyer, Managing Director Natural Resources
—Ohio Environmental Council

Rich Cogen, Executive Director
—Ohio River Foundation

Carol Hays, Executive Director
—Prairie Rivers Network

Millard McCleary, Executive Program Director
—Reef Relief

Allison Colden, Senior Manager of External Affairs
—Restore America's Estuaries

Nicole Barker, Executive Director
—Save the Dunes

Lee Willbanks, Executive Director, Upper St. Lawrence Riverkeeper
—Save the River

Stephen Mahoney, Conservation Chair
—Sierra Club Miami Group

Brett Fitzgerald, Executive Director
—Snook and Gamefish Foundation

Dana Wright, Water Policy Director
—Tennessee Clean Water Network

Paul Botts, President & Executive Director
—The Wetlands Initiative

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS

Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony. My name is Laura L. Lott and I serve as President and CEO of the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). We urge your support for at least $155 million each in fiscal year 2017 for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), as well as $922.2 million for the Smithsonian Institution. We also request your support for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF), including at least $55 million for State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), $15 million for Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs) and $28 million to preserve the sites and stories of the Civil Rights Movement. We request restored funding of $30 million and $4.6 million respectively for the Save America's Treasures (SAT) and Preserve America programs.

Before detailing these funding priorities for the museum field, I want to express my deepest appreciation for the increases enacted by the subcommittee in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, Public Law 114–113. The additional funds for the NEH, NEA, Smithsonian Institution and historic preservation activities will enhance museums' work to enrich their communities and preserve our many heritages. I know the subcommittee once again faces a very limited 302(b) allocation, and must make difficult decisions. In this context, however, we would posit that each of our priorities outlined below is a vital investment that will both protect our Nation's cultural treasures and provide a tremendous economic benefit.

AAM is proud to represent the full range of our Nation's museums—including aquariums, art museums, botanic gardens, children's museums, culturally specific museums, historic sites, history museums, maritime museums, military museums, natural history museums, planetariums, presidential libraries, science and technology centers, and zoos, among others—along with the professional staff and volunteers who work for and with museums. AAM is honored to work on behalf of the Nation's approximately 35,000 museums, which employ 400,000 people, invest more than $2 billion annually in educational programs, receive more than 55 million vis-

its each year from primary and secondary school students, and directly contribute $21 billion to their local economies.

Museums are essential in our communities for many reasons:

—*Museums are key education providers.*—Museums already offer educational programs in math, science, art, literacy, language arts, history, civics and government, economics and financial literacy, geography, and social studies, in coordination with State and local curriculum standards. Museums also provide experiential learning opportunities, STEM education, youth training, job preparedness, and a range of programs geared toward homeschooling families. They reach beyond the scope of instructional programming for schoolchildren by also providing critical teacher training. There is a growing consensus that whatever the new educational era looks like, it will focus on the development of a core set of skills: critical thinking, the ability to synthesize information, creativity, and collaboration. We believe museums are uniquely situated to help learners develop these core skills, and this is borne out by evidence. According to a recent University of Arkansas study, students who attended just a half-day field trip to an art museum experienced an increase in critical thinking skills, historical empathy and tolerance. For students from rural or high-poverty regions, the increase was even more significant.

—*Museums create jobs and support local economies.*—Museums serve as economic engines, bolster local infrastructure, and spur tourism. Both the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National Governors Association agree that cultural assets such as museums are essential to attracting businesses, a skilled workforce, and local and international tourism.

—*Museums address community challenges.*—Many museums offer programs tailored to seniors, veterans, children with special needs, persons with disabilities, and more, greatly expanding their reach and impact. For example, some have programs designed specifically for children on the autism spectrum while others are addressing veterans' post-war trauma or providing youth job training opportunities.

—*Digitization and traveling exhibitions bring museum collections to underserved populations.*—Teachers, students, and researchers benefit when cultural institutions are able to increase access to trustworthy information through online collections and traveling exhibits. Most museums, however, need more resources to digitize collections.

The National Endowment for the Humanities is an independent Federal agency created by Congress in 1965. Grants are awarded to nonprofit educational institutions—including museums, colleges, universities, archives, and libraries—for educational programming and the care of collections. NEH supports museums as institutions of learning and exploration, and as keepers of our cultural, historical, and scientific heritages.

In 2015, through Preservation & Access, one of NEH's national program divisions, 63 peer-reviewed, competitive grants totaling over $3.6 million dollars were awarded to museums, historical societies and historic sites for a variety of projects to preserve and provide access to our Nation's rich cultural heritage. Across all NEH divisions (including Preservation and Access, Research, Education, Public Programs, Challenge Grants and Digital Humanities), these institutions received 118 awards totaling over $12.5 million. Demand for humanities project support, as demonstrated by NEH grant application rates, far exceeds available funding. In fiscal year 2015, NEH received 4,928 competitive grant applications representing $482.8 million in requested funds, but was only able to fund 15.4 percent of these peer-reviewed proposals.

NEH also provides approximately 40 percent of its funding directly to States through grants to humanities councils located in every State and U.S. Territory. In 2015, 55 State councils supported 4,266 events in museums, reaching a total audience of more than 2.1 million people.

Here are just two examples of how NEH funding supports museums' work in your communities:

—In 2015, Chugachmiut was awarded $250,000 for the creation of an online digital archive of approximately 700 ethnographic objects, art works, and photographs, representing the cultural heritage of the Chugach people of southern Alaska. The project will gather, upload, display, and disseminate historical information about all Chugach ethnographic collections worldwide on a dedicated Web site accessible to researchers.

—In 2015, The International Folk Art Foundation in Santa Fe, New Mexico was awarded $400,000 for The Red that Colored the World, including implementa-

tion of a traveling exhibition, a catalog, and public programs about the history and global significance of cochineal, an insect-based dye source whose origins date to the pre-Columbian Americas.

The National Endowment for the Arts makes art accessible to all and provides leadership in arts education. Established in 1965, NEA supports great art in every congressional district. Its grants to museums help them exhibit, preserve, and interpret visual material through exhibitions, residencies, publications, commissions, public art works, conservation, documentation, services to the field, and public programs.

In 2015, more than 2,000 museums participated as Blue Star Museums—a partnership between NEA, Blue Star Families, and the Department of Defense—to offer free admission to all active duty and reserve personnel and their families from Memorial Day through Labor Day. This particular effort served more than 839,000 people, while many other museums offer military discounts or free admission throughout the year.

In 2015, NEA made more than 160 direct awards to museums, totaling over $5 million. Forty percent of NEA's grant funds are distributed to State arts agencies for re-granting, and many museums benefit from these funds as well. Receiving a grant from the NEA confers prestige on supported projects, strengthening museums' ability to attract matching funds from other public and private funders. On average, each dollar awarded by the NEA leverages more than nine dollars from other sources.

Here are two examples of how NEA funding is used to support museums' work in your communities:

—In 2015, the American Jazz Museum received $20,000 to support an indoor and outdoor jazz and blues festival, including education programming for youth and adults as well as potential performance opportunities for local youth jazz ensembles.

—In 2015, Art Mobile of Montana, in Dillon, received $15,000 to support a traveling exhibition and visual arts education program. A specially equipped van travels throughout the State, providing access to original artworks by Montana artists. The program provides resources for teachers in selected schools on Indian reservations.

In addition to these direct grants, NEA's Arts and Artifacts Indemnity program also allows museums to apply for Federal indemnity on major exhibitions, saving them roughly $30 million in insurance costs every year and making many more exhibitions available to the public—all at virtually no cost to the American taxpayer.

The Smithsonian Institution comprises some of the most visited museums in the world, including the National Museum of American History, the National Air and Space Museum, and the National Museum of Natural History. The Smithsonian reaches visitors and learners of all ages, in the Nation's capital and across the country, with innovative exhibits and programs. Its 20 museums—including the National Zoo—attracted over 28 million in-person visitors last year, its Web sites reached more than 100 million unique visitors, and its content and curriculums are used by teachers all over the country.

The President's fiscal year 2017 budget request of $922.2 million includes critical funding necessary for the maintenance, operation, and security of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, which is due to open in September. Additional funding for collections care, cutting-edge research of every type, facilities maintenance, and technology upgrades will allow the Smithsonian to continue caring for the Nation's treasures and increase access for all.

The Historic Preservation Fund is the funding source of preservation awards to States, tribes, local governments, and nonprofits. State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices carry out the historic preservation work of the Federal Government on State and tribal lands. These duties include making nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, reviewing impacts of Federal projects, providing assistance to developers seeking a rehabilitation tax credit, working with local preservation commissions, and conducting preservation education and planning. This Federal-State-local foundation of America's historic preservation program was established by the National Historic Preservation Act. We urge you to provide $55 million for SHPOs and $15 million for THPOs through the Historic Preservation Fund.

We also urge you to restore funding of $30 million for Save America's Treasures and $4.6 million for Preserve America, which have not been funded in recent years. From 1999 to 2010, Federal funding of $315 million for 1,287 Save America's Treasures projects leveraged an additional $400 million in non-Federal funds. These projects protected some of America's most iconic and endangered artifacts, including

Ansel Adams' prints and negatives, Frank Lloyd Wright structures including *Fallingwater,* and the American flag that inspired the *Star Spangled Banner.* SAT projects also created more than 16,000 jobs in local communities across the country. We are disappointed that the administration did not include this funding in its fiscal year 2017 budget.

Also in the context of the Historic Preservation Fund, we support the administration's requested increases for the Civil Rights Initiative, including $25 million for competitive historic preservation grants to preserve the stories and sites associated with the Civil Rights Movement as well as $3 million to help Historically Black Colleges and Universities conduct similar documentation and interpretation.

The 2005 Heritage Health Index of archives, libraries, historical societies, and museums concluded that action is needed to prevent the loss of millions of artifacts, and an updated Heritage Health Index due soon is predicted to show a continuing urgent need. Historic preservation programs are not only essential to protecting our many heritages; they also serve as economic development engines and job creators.

I want to once more acknowledge the difficult choices that the subcommittee faces. I hope that my testimony has made it clear why these priorities are of critical importance to the Nation and will provide a worthwhile return on investment to the American taxpayer. Thank you again for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY

As Congress and the administration consider funding priorities for fiscal year 2017 in a tight budgetary environment, the American Chemical Society (ACS) urges policy makers to support the important work carried out by the Environmental Protection Agency's Science and Technology Program. In reviewing the President's budget request, ACS has identified two areas of focus for EPA:

1. Funding the EPA Science & Technology account at the requested amount of $754 million and increasing support for scientific research supported by the agency, particularly through the Office of Research and Development (ORD).
2. Restoring $10 million the Science To Achieve Results (STAR) fellowships program to the fiscal year 2016 enacted amount of $49.8 million.

The American Chemical Society (ACS) would like to thank Chairperson Lisa Murkowski and Ranking Member Tom Udall for the opportunity to submit testimony for the record on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) science and technology programs for fiscal year 2008.

ACS is a non-profit scientific and educational organization, chartered by Congress, representing approximately 157,000 individual chemical scientists and engineers. The world's largest scientific society, ACS advances the chemical enterprise, increases public understanding of chemistry, and brings its expertise to bear on State, national, and international matters.

We look to science to understand environmental challenges and to develop more intelligent, less burdensome solutions. Over the past two decades, demand for more scientific evidence—whether to set or improve regulations—has grown substantially. The amount of research envisioned in EPA-related authorizations also has increased. Nevertheless, appropriations for EPA science programs have not kept pace with the need for more and better science.

Over the last 20 years, the EPA S&T account, which includes the ORD and research programs in other EPA Offices, has fluctuated between 7 and 10 percent of the agency's total budget. In order for EPA set science-based national environmental standards, conduct research and environmental monitoring, and provide technical assistance to States, local governments, and businesses, the S&T account needs to increase as a percentage of the agency's total budget, ultimately to a stable 10 percent level. The President's budget request is $754 million, a roughly 2.6 percent increase over fiscal year 2016, and 9.2 percent of the total agency request. While ACS supports the President's request, we urge the subcommittee to find additional resources to boost S&T spending at EPA to eventually reach 10 percent of the agency budget.

In the long term, ACS recommends the ORD account should eventually receive $646 million, consistent with its 2004 funding high point. This represents an increase of 20.5 percent percent relative to fiscal year 2016 funding levels. ACS strongly urges to the subcommittee to work with EPA to boost resources for ORD to request and appropriate steadily increasing amounts to eventually reach the 2004 level. ACS recommends that the additional funds be applied to the following priority areas:

—Provide at least a $10 million increase in funding for STAR fellowship program.

—Increase funding of green chemistry and engineering to advance the development and use of innovative, environmentally benign products and processes.
—Invest in EPA's ability to recruit, develop, and retain an effective scientific workforce.
—Continue investing in Federal research and technology development to reduce or avoid greenhouse gas emissions and address the potential impacts of global climate change.
—Support innovative and high-risk research to help identify and explore future environmental problems and develop new sets of technologies to solve existing problems.

The fiscal year 2008 budget request continues a pattern of flat support for science at EPA for the Office of Research & Development, which is the largest part of the S&T account. The administration requested $512 million for ORD for fiscal year 2017. This represents a −.2 percent cut in ORD resources over fiscal year 2016. The decrease, when accounting for inflation, in ORD accounts from fiscal year 2016 threatens ORD's mission to carry out world class environmental research, further damaging the Government's ability to provide top notch research on behalf of the American taxpayer and ensure America's policy makers use sound scientific advice in decisionmaking.

The administration's proposal to reduce funding in the STAR fellowship program is a good case in point. This program is the only Federal program dedicated to graduate study in environmental sciences at colleges and universities across the country. The STAR fellowships are part of a cohesive effort to characterize critical or emerging environmental problems and create solutions to address them. EPA designed this extramural research grant program to work in cooperation with a fellowship program. Together, they provide ideas, information, new discoveries, and new researchers. Today's STAR fellows will become tomorrow's environmental experts working for industry, Government agencies like EPA, and academic institutions. The loss of this program's resources will further erode the agency's capability to attract an excellent workforce and will reduce the amount of scientific information available to inform agency decisions. Over the last decade, STAR fellowship funding has been reduced by over half. We urge the subcommittee to restore funding to the appropriated level of $49.8 million from the budget request of $39.1 million.

ACS supports increased funding for green chemistry and engineering programs to advance the development and use of innovative products and process, reducing or eliminating the use of hazardous substances. Because chemistry and chemical products fuel the economy of every industrialized nation, the tools and strategies chemists and chemical engineers develop will be instrumental in meeting the dual challenges of protecting the environment and strengthening the economy.

ACS is a long term advocate for increased attention to research programs at EPA, both in budgetary and in management terms, and our enthusiasm for these programs remain strong.

[This statement was submitted by J. Carl Maxwell, Director, Energy and Environment Policy, Office of Public Affairs.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION

America's family-owned forests, over one-third of the Nation's forested landscape, are critical to meeting the Nation's clean air and water, wildlife, and wood supply needs today and in the future. With impending threats to these forests from catastrophic wildfires, development pressures, insects, diseases, and other issues, continued delivery of these benefits is not guaranteed. Funding for critical U.S. Forest Service programs is essential for helping the 22 million people who own these lands, continue to provide these necessities for all Americans. In particular, we request the following funding levels and policy improvements for critical programs in the USDA Forest Service budget:

—Revise budgeting structure for wildfire suppressing to allow expenses for large wildfires to be paid for from emergency funds and to reverse both the "borrowing" and the gradual decline of key agency program funding.
—$479 million for the hazardous fuels program accompanied with policy direction to support increased cross-boundary collaboration and implementation, especially with private landowners, through the hazardous fuels program.
—$29 million for the Forest Stewardship Program with continued direction to encourage a focus on outcomes and measurable impact.
—$23.5 million for the Landscape Restoration Program.
—$83 million for the Forest Inventory and Analysis Program.

—$27 million for the Forest Products Laboratory.
—$48 million for Forest Health Protection on Cooperative lands.

The American Forest Foundation is a nonprofit conservation organization that works on the ground with the more than 22 million family woodland owners through a variety of programs, including the American Tree Farm System®, to protect the values and benefits of America's family forests, with a specific focus on clean water, wildlife, and sustainable wood supplies. Unfortunately, new data suggests that by 2020, more than 18 million acres of family forests will be threatened by housing development. Furthermore, almost 14 million acres are at risk of mortality due to insects and disease, while 29 million are at high or very high risk of destruction from wildfire.[1] At the same time, less than 15 percent of family forest owners have sought out technical service for the stewardship of their forests; therefore, it is essential that we provide families with the tools, technical information, and policy support to keep their forests as forests and help them accomplish their management objectives while also protecting the critical benefits Americans depend on every day.

WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION FUNDING FIX

Over the last decade, wildfire expenses have significantly increased, and the Federal wildfire budgets are often insufficient to cover the costs, leading Federal agencies to transfer funds from non-fire accounts to cover fire-fighting expenses. Additionally, as the budgeted 10-year average of wildfire fighting costs has increased in a limited budget, non-fire programs have gradually been squeezed. Programs like the Forest Stewardship Program have seen as much as a 20 percent decline in the last few years, causing serious challenges with State forestry agency's abilities to work with family landowners.

We urge passage of legislation that will both end the disruptive borrowing and reverse the trend of wildfire fighting costs consuming the Forest Service budget at the expense of other critical programs.

HAZARDOUS FUELS PROGRAM CROSS BOUNDARY DIRECTION

A recent AFF survey of family landowners in the West showed that family owners are aware and interested in implementing management to reduce wildfire risks on their properties but there are two important barriers: cost and concern about lack of action by their neighbors. Why is this important? AFF also completed recent analysis that shows if we want to protect critical watersheds in the West from the risks of catastrophic wildfire—which can destroy the storage and filtration benefits forests provide-leading to water quality and quantity problems— we've got to engage family landowners in wildfire mitigation. In fact our analysis shows that nearly 40 percent of the land that keeps water clean in important watersheds that are at a high risk of wildfire, are private and family-owned. Cross-boundary collaborative projects that engage all landowners in a landscape or a watershed— both public and private, will help address these challenges and will also help motivate landowners to act. Thus, we ask the subcommittee to provide direction to the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior to work in partnership with State forestry agencies to encourage cross-boundary collaboration and implementation of wildfire mitigation at a landscape scale, through the hazardous fuels program. We also ask the subcommittee to fund the Forest Service hazardous fuels program at $479 million.

This approach is working. For example, in the Blue Mountains of Oregon, AFF is working through a local collaborative, that involves public agencies and local organizations working together to support wildfire mitigation across the landscape. This collaborative has realized that treating only one piece of the puzzle—the public lands side which has been where most of the focus has been—is not going to full protect communities, homes, lives, and water supplies. To date, we have succeeded in engaging landowners who are now managing almost 22,000 acres for wildfire mitigation, in the patchwork of public and private lands. We are similarly working in collaboratives in Colorado's Front Range, Montana's Great Falls, and California's Northern Sierra's.

FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

The Forest Stewardship Program (FSP), implemented through State forestry agencies, provides Federal support for the boots-on-the-ground needed to engage family landowners in stewardship. With strong funding of $29 million for fiscal year 2017 and strategic changes, FSP could do more. FSP can be, and in some States

[1] Family Forest Research Center, 2014 Preliminary Data.

already is, an essential lynchpin for conducting outreach, marketing, and interaction with landowners in ways that can measurably protect clean water, wildlife habitat, and sustainable wood supplies. Without the presence on the ground, effective landowner engagement will be impossible. We encourage the subcommittee to continue to provide direction to support the changes underway in the program to better focus the program on measurable outcomes, encourage targeted marketing and engagement so resources are focused on the highest priorities, and encourage sustained engagement with landowners so resources are used most effectively to achieve priority outcomes on the landscape.

LANDSCAPE SCALE RESTORATION PROGRAM

The Landscape Scale Restoration Program (LSR), which provides resources through a competitive process, to States and partner organizations to implement work that results in measurable outcomes, is a very effective program. Through LSR, State agencies are working with partners like AFF to move the needle on key issues like protecting clean water in the West or restoring critical ecosystems in the south which will be essential to preventing another flood of species listings in the south. The program is leveraging private sector funding as well. AFF strongly urges the subcommittee to support $23.513 million for the Landscape Restoration Program.

FOREST INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS PROGRAM

The Forest Inventory and Analysis Program provides critical data to inform natural resource decisions, such as where to site a new mill, where to implement wildfire mitigation treatments for the greatest impact, how much carbon is captured and stored in our forests. FIA also provides trends in family forest ownership and demographics so that we can better understand how to work with this significant ownership group. We appreciate the work of the subcommittee in fiscal year 2016 to increase funding for this program and we encourage an increase to $83 million in fiscal year 2017, to allow the agency to implement the current measurement cycle, at a minimum.

FOREST PRODUCTS LABORATORY

The Forest Products Laboratory, part of USFS Research and Development, provides critical research for increasing the market opportunities for forest products. Recently, the Laboratory has been essential to providing the science and data needed to build the new tall wood buildings we are beginning to see in the U.S., that have both economic and environmental benefits. The Lab is also key to researching new products for forests—from biomass energy to nanotechnology products. Markets that provide landowners with income to implement management such as hazardous fuels reduction or habitat creation, will be essential if we're to address the issues facing family lands and continue to see the benefits from these lands. We appreciate the increase the subcommittee provided for the Lab in fiscal year 2016 and we ask that this funding level, of $27 million be at least maintained in fiscal year 2017. We also urge the subcommittee to provide direction that the increased funds be used for a combination of research, development, and technology transfer for advancing wood building construction, nanotechnology, and biomass technology development.

STATE FIRE ASSISTANCE

We ask the subcommittee to provide $87 million for State Fire Assistance to support the program's coordinated fire protection and mobilization for fire suppression on both Federal and non-Federal lands. In addition, the funds support State-coordinated hazard mitigation activities in the wildland-urban interface, focus on reducing property loss, decrease fuels hazards, increase public awareness, develop fire plans, and increase citizen-driven solutions in rural communities.

FOREST HEALTH INVESTMENTS

Threats from invasive species and pests continue to pervade American tree-farmers' lands, thus posing economic and environmental hardships. Close to 500 species of tree-damaging pests from other countries have become established in the United States, and a new one is introduced, on average, every 2 to 3 years. The USFS Forest Health Protection (FHP) Program is necessary to help prevent, contain, and eradicate these dangerous pests and pathogens. The program provides critical assistance to other Federal agencies, State agencies, local agencies and private landowners. We ask the subcommittee fund the Forest Health Cooperative lands pro-

gram at $48 million, to provide protection from insects and diseases on non-Federal lands, including family lands.

Thank you for considering these requests. We know the subcommittee has difficult decisions to make, in this era of limited budgets, especially with the rising costs of wildfire suppression. We hope that the subcommittee will consider the impact the above mentioned priorities can have on millions of family forest owners, along with all other Americans who reap the benefits of well-managed, working forests.

We, at AFF, thank the subcommittee for the opportunity to provide some insight on these programs.

[This statement was submitted by Tom Martin, President & CEO.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMERICAN FORESTS

Dear Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall, and honorable subommittee members:

American Forests appreciates the opportunity to submit public testimony regarding our fiscal year 2017 appropriation recommendations. We understand the continuing economic realities facing the Nation, and we thank this subcommittee for its support of key Federal conservation programs in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016. The return on investing in our Nation's forests is great, whether those forests are public or private, in urban areas or in wildlands. The economic, social, and environmental benefits healthy forests provide are clear incentives for Federal investment. American Forests' funding recommendations are generally consistent with the President's budget requests for the USDA Forest Service, Department of Interior, and the Environmental Protection Agency, with the exception of programs that merit an elevated request.

Founded in 1875, American Forests is the oldest national nonprofit conservation organization in the United States. Its mission is to restore threatened forest ecosystems and inspire people to value and protect urban and wildland forests. American Forests has planted 50 million trees in 1,000 high-impact forest restoration projects, as well as works in cities across the country helping to increase urban forest canopy and demonstrating innovative greenspace projects.

USDA FOREST SERVICE (USFS)

National Forest System

Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP): CFLRP was created to promote job stability, a reliable wood supply, and forest health while reducing emergency wildfire costs and risks. American Forests' request is $20 million above the President's fiscal year 2017 budget ask, and identical to agency budget requests from the past 2 years. Increased funding would support the continued implementation of the 23 existing projects, and allow for the competitive selection of up to 10 additional landscapes across the Nation.

—*American Forests recommends an increase from the President's request to $60 million.*

State and Private Forestry

Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF): U&CF plays an integral part in promoting sound stewardship of our Nation's urban and community forests and trees. By providing important technical and financial support, U&CF helps cities and towns across the Nation enhance tree and forest cover, prepare for storms and other disturbance events, contain threats from native and invasive pests, and maximize the economic, social, and ecological benefits of their tree resources. U&CF is a high-impact program and a smart investment as Federal support is often leveraged 2:1 (or in many cases significantly more) by States and partner organizations. As a model Federal program, U&CF consistently increases communities served, brings together diverse partners and resources, and shows that Federal investment can have huge and lasting impacts on communities of all sizes.

—*American Forests recommends U&CF be funded at $31.3 million.*

Community Forests and Open Space Program (CFP): CFP has made substantial progress in preserving forests by increasing opportunities for Americans to connect with forests in their own communities and fostering new public-private partnerships. CFP has supported 27 community forest projects in cities and towns across 15 States and Territories. In the latest round of CFP grants, project partners leveraged $8.7 million in Federal funds to secure $31.8 million in non-Federal funding.

As a result of these partnerships, more than 14,000 acres of private forestlands have been or soon will be acquired to create new or expand existing community forests.

—*As interest in this program far exceeds the fiscal year 2016 allocation of $2 million, American Forests recommends an increase to $5 million.*

Forest Health Management: The Forest Health Management programs provide essential expertise and assistance to State and municipal agencies and private landowners in countering non-native pests. Municipal governments across the country are spending more than $3 billion each year to remove trees on city property killed by these non-native pests. Homeowners are spending an additional $1 billion to remove and replace trees on their properties and are absorbing an additional $1.5 billion in reduced property values.

—*American Forests asks that the subcommittee appropriate $52 million for Federal lands and $48 million is designated for cooperative lands.*

Forest Legacy Program: Since authorized in 1990, the Forest Legacy Program has protected 2.49 million acres across the country, including 169,250 acres of water bodies and 3,288 miles of streams. It is imperative to continue protecting our Nation's forests for future generations while simultaneously providing the myriad of ecosystem services to current Americans.

—*American Forests supports the President's request of $62.35 million allocated through the Land and Water Conservation Fund.*

Landscape-Scale Restoration: The Landscape Scale Restoration program strategically prioritizes resources by competitively allocating the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act funds. It focuses on targeting Federal investments —leveraged by State funding resources—to areas of greatest need, highest value, or strongest innovation potential as stipulated in each State Forest Action Plan.

—*American Forests recommends funding the Landscape Scale Restoration program at $23.5 million.*

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (BLM)

Public Domain Forest Management: The BLM is entrusted with the management of 58 million acres of forests and woodlands across 12 western States, including Alaska. 14 million acres—or 24 percent—of BLM forests are overstocked increasing insect and disease attacks and catastrophic wildfire. Increased funding to address these serious risks is necessary across all land management agencies.

—*American Forests supports the President's fiscal year 2017 request at $10.08 million.*

National Conservation Lands: The National Conservation Lands encompasses signature landscapes including some of America's finest natural and cultural treasures, many of them forested. Yet, despite their codification in law and growing popularity, the system of national monuments and national conservation areas is still undercapitalized. These areas lack sufficient staff and financial resources to adequately protect their valuable natural and cultural resources and maximize their recreational potential.

—*American Forests supports the President's fiscal year 2017 request for $50.65 million.*

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE (FWS)

Ecological Services: Ecological Services achieves conservation of FWS trust resources, focusing on imperiled species, and works closely with external partners and agencies for the conservation of natural resources across the landscape. The Ecological Services Program facilitates implementation of the Endangered Species Act through the programmatic divisions of listing, planning and consultation, conservation and restoration, recovery and provides assistance to States under the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund.

—*American Forests supports the President's fiscal year 2017 request of $252.29 million for Ecological Services.*

Coastal Program: As part of the habitat conservation arm of FWS, the Coastal Program is a cooperative program to implement habitat restoration and protection projects on public and private lands in 24 priority coastal ecosystems, including areas in the Great Lakes and U.S. Territories. It delivers on-the-ground conservation by working collaboratively with partners to restore, enhance, and protect coastal habitat for priority Federal trust species.

—*American Forests supports the President's fiscal year 2017 request of $13.49 million for the Coastal Program.*

National Wildlife Refuge System: The National Wildlife Refuge System, with 563 refuges covering more than 150 million acres across the country, is vital to protecting America's wildlife and ensuring that their habitats are a priority. Because refuges are visited by nearly 48.5 million people each year, contributes a total of $4.5 billion to the economy, and support more than 35,000 jobs, investment in the Refuge system is an investment in our communities. With 101 refuges within 25 miles of 250,000 or more people, the Refuge System is a vital component of our urban forests, as well.

—*American Forests supports the President's fiscal year 2017 request for $508.20 million with the additional $5.5 million requested for the Refuge Visitor Service allocated to the urban wildlife refuges.*

State and Tribal Wildlife Grant Program (STWG): As authorized by the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956, STWG provides Federal grant funds to States and Tribes to develop and implement programs for the benefit of fish and wildlife and their habitats. All funded activities must link with species, actions, or strategies included in each State Wildlife Action Plan (Plan). The success of this program is evident in the 1.9 million acres of habitat for species of greatest conservation need and the nearly 131,000 acres of habitat it has protected through land acquisition or conservation easements.

—*American Forests supports the President's fiscal year 2017 request for $66.98 million for State and Tribal Wildlife Grants.*

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

National Park System: During this historical centennial year of the National Park Service, American Forests' requests improved funding for the agency's operations, construction, and partnerships. Specifically, the National Park Partnerships (a.k.a. Centennial Challenge) is an economically wise program that leverages private dollars to match Federal funds. The funds support projects to improve the visiting experience at national parks. An fiscal year 2016 investment of $15 million has yielded more than twice that in private donations, and many more opportunities await with a funding boost.

—*American Forests supports the President's fiscal year 2017 request of $2.524 billion for 'Operations', $252 million for 'Construction' and $35 million for National Park Partnerships.*

Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLPP): The State and Local Assistance Program provides matching grants to States and localities for protection and development of parks and recreation resources and is the primary Federal investment tool to ensure that families have easy access to urban forests in parks and open space, and neighborhood recreation resources. This nationally competitive program complements the existing State and local assistance program by creating opportunities for outdoor play as well as developing or enhancing outdoor recreation partnerships in cities.

—*American Forests supports the President's fiscal year 2017 request of $110 million for the State and local assistance program, which includes $12 million for ORLPP.*

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF): Green infrastructure is a cost-effective and resilient approach to stormwater infrastructure needs that also provide many other community benefits. American Forests supports EPA's goal of strengthening green infrastructure activities to further its sustainability goals.

—*American Forests request that not less than 20 percent the CWSRF funding be made available for green infrastructure or environmentally innovative projects that promote water system and community resilience.*

LEGISLATIVE LANGUAGE REQUESTS

Wildfire Suppression Funding

America's forests and forest-dependent communities are at risk from outbreaks of pests and pathogens, persistent drought, and the buildup of hazardous fuels. Urbanization and development patterns are placing more homes and communities near fire-prone landscapes, leading to more destructive and costly wildfires. Unfortunately and again in fiscal year 2015, the 10-year average was not enough to meet

the USFS suppression needs, forcing the agency to transfer $700 million from non-suppression accounts to make up for the shortfall. The current wildfire suppression funding model and cycle of transfers and repayments has negatively impacted the ability to implement forest management, among many other activities. Additionally, the increasing 10-year average to has not met annual suppression needs since before fiscal year 2002, which is why we are thankful to the subcommittee for the full transfer repayment and increased suppression funding in fiscal year 2016. However, we understand this is not expected to occur every year. DOI and USFS need a long-term fire funding solution that would result in stable and predictable budgets.

We appreciate the subcommittee's support of the bipartisan Wildfire Disaster Funding Act, which addresses Federal fire funding challenges as well as other bipartisan congressional efforts in this regard. We respectfully request a bipartisan fire funding solution that would (1) access disaster funding, (2) minimize transfers, and (3) address the continued erosion of agency budgets over time, with the goal of reinvesting in key programs that would restore forests to healthier conditions.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

American Forests supports the permanent authorization of full and dedicated funding, without further appropriation or fiscal year limitation, for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). LWCF programs protect natural resource lands, outdoor recreation opportunities, and working forests at the local, State and Federal levels. This program ensures that these important lands are protected for current and future generations.

—*American Forests supports the President's fiscal year 2016 budget request, which calls for permanent authorization of $900 million in mandatory funding for LWCF programs in the Departments of Interior and Agriculture.*

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN GEOPHYSICAL UNION

The American Geophysical Union (AGU), a non-profit, non-partisan scientific society, appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the fiscal year 2017 budget request for the United States Geological Survey (USGS). The AGU, on behalf of its more than 60,000 Earth and space scientist members, respectfully requests Congress to appropriate $1.17 billion for the USGS. Currently, Federal funding for USGS is 4.5 percent below what it was in fiscal year 2010. Since fiscal year 2010, USGS has not seen a funding increase above 2 percent. Restoring strong funding to USGS will allow the agency to sustain current programs and make strategic investments to improve knowledge and understanding of critical geologic, environmental, and ecological systems needed by decision makers across the country.

USGS BENEFITS EVERY STATE AND TERRITORY IN THE UNION

USGS is uniquely positioned to provide information and informed responses to many of the Nation's greatest challenges and has a mission that positively impacts the lives of all Americans. USGS plays a crucial role in assessing water quality and quantity, reducing risks from earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, landslides, wildfires, and other natural hazards; providing emergency responders with geospatial data to improve homeland security; assessing mineral and energy resources (including rare earth elements and unconventional natural gas resources); and providing the science needed to manage our ecosystems and combat invasive species that can threaten natural and managed environmental systems and public health.

Through its offices across the country, the USGS works with partners to provide high-quality research and data to policymakers, emergency responders, natural resource managers, civil and environmental engineers, educators, and the public. A few examples of the USGS' valuable work are provided below.

WATER QUALITY

The Survey collects scientific information on water availability and quality to inform the public and decision makers about the status of freshwater resources and how they are changing over time. During the past 130 years, the USGS has collected streamflow data at over 21,000 sites, water-level data at over 1,000,000 wells, and chemical data at over 338,000 surface-water and groundwater sites. This information is needed to effectively manage freshwaters—both above and below the land surface—for domestic, public, agricultural, commercial, industrial, recreational, and ecological purposes.

NATURAL HAZARDS

The USGS plays an important role in reducing risks from floods, wildfires, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, landslides, and other natural hazards that jeopardize human lives and cost billions of dollars in damages every year. Seismic networks and hazard analysis are used to formulate earthquake probabilities and to establish building codes. USGS monitors volcanoes and provides warnings about impending eruptions that are used by aviation officials to prevent planes from flying into volcanic ash clouds. Data from the USGS network of stream gages enable the National Weather Service to issue flood and drought warnings. The bureau and its Federal partners monitor seasonal wildfires and provide maps of current fire locations and the potential spread of fires. In domestic and global events, emergency managers and public officials rely on USGS to inform them of risks and hazards posed to human and natural systems.

MINERAL AND ENERGY RESOURCES

USGS assessments of mineral and energy resources—including rare earth elements, coal, oil, unconventional natural gas, and geothermal—are essential for making decisions about the Nation's future. The Survey identifies the location and quantity of domestic mineral and energy resources, and assesses the economic and environmental effects of resource extraction and use. The agency is mapping domestic supplies of rare earth elements necessary for widespread deployment of new energy technologies, which can reduce dependence on foreign oil. The USGS is the sole Federal source of information on mineral potential, production, and consumption.

LAND MANAGEMENT

USGS science plays a critical role in informing sound management of natural resources on Federal and State lands. The USGS conducts research and monitoring of fish, wildlife, and vegetation—data that informs management decisions by other Interior bureaus regarding protected species and land use. Ecosystems science is also used to control invasive species and wildlife diseases that can cause billions of dollars in economic losses. The Survey provides information for resource managers as they develop management strategies for restoration and long-term use of the Nation's natural resources in the face of environmental change.

DATA COLLECTION

Research and data collected by the USGS is vital to predicting the impacts of land use and climate change on water resources, wildfires, and ecosystems. For 43 straight years, Landsat satellites have collected the largest archive of remotely sensed land data in the world, allowing for access to current and historical images that are used to assess the impact of natural disasters on communities and the environment and monitor global agriculture production. A 2013 National Research Council study found that the economic benefit of Landsat data was estimated to be $2 billion for 2011 alone. The consistency of data sets like those provided by Landsat is vital for advances in science, more efficient natural resource management, and profitable applications of data in commerce and industry.

ENHANCED MAPPING FOR THE NATION

The USGS utilizes unique technologies that enable the nationwide collection of accurate terrain information. This information improves our knowledge of water supply and quality issues; better prepares emergency responders for natural disasters; and helps businesses utilize more accurate data for the development of alternative renewable energy projects. Modernized, high-resolution topographic maps are provided by the USGS through their 3D Elevation Program (3DEP). 3DEP, which is run by the USGS, leverages funds from the private sector and other Federal Agencies throughout the U.S. The initiative provides open-access elevation data to inform better flood-inundation maps, cost-effective precision farming, and the development of alternative renewable energy projects.

PUBLIC HEALTH

The USGS plays a critical role in maintaining public health at the local, State, and national level. For example, the agency assesses negative health effects caused by the dispersion of contaminants after natural and man-made disasters, such as hurricanes and oil spills. In one such instance, after Hurricane Sandy, the USGS provided soil, water, and sediment information to public health agencies to help them protect citizens from toxic contaminants.

ENGAGING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SCIENTISTS

The USGS meets monthly with other Department of Interior (DOI) divisions to collaborate on projects that will engage the next generation of scientists. Collectively, the DOI is actively working to provide least 10 million students with educational, work, and training opportunities. In 2015, the USGS offered learning opportunities to 113,375 students and teachers in activities such as science fairs, mentoring opportunities, camps, and hands-on learning experiences. Programs such as the USGS's Cooperative Research Units (CRU) provide under-represented undergraduate students with mentoring and hands-on experience designed as a pathway to DOI recruitment.

CONCLUSION

AGU is grateful to the Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittee for its leadership in restoring past budget cuts and strengthening the USGS. We recognize the financial challenges facing the Nation, but USGS has been historically strained by a large workload and too few resources. With our Nation facing unprecedented challenges such as the loss of ecosystems, demand for limited energy, increasing vulnerability to natural hazards, and need for clean water, the work done by USGS is essential to our environmental, economic, and national security.

AGU respectfully requests that Congress work to provide $1.17 billion for USGS in fiscal year 2017. We appreciate the opportunity to submit this testimony to the subcommittee and thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our request.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN GEOSCIENCES INSTITUTE

Thank you for this opportunity to provide the American Geosciences Institute's perspective on fiscal year 2017 appropriations for geoscience programs within the subcommittee's jurisdiction. We ask the subcommittee to support and sustain the critical geoscience work of the United States Geological Survey (USGS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the National Park Service, and the Smithsonian Institution.

Specifically, we ask that you support the President's request for $1.2 billion for USGS, but we respectfully request that Congress place greater emphasis on the geological sciences within the USGS mission. AGI supports balanced funding for Mission Areas within USGS and notes that funding for important geoscience-based programs has consistently lagged funding for other parts of USGS. AGI also supports $138 million for Energy and Minerals Management at the Bureau of Land Management; $234 million for the National Park Service's Natural Resource Stewardship and Everglades Restoration activities; and $922 million for the Smithsonian Institution.

The Earth provides the energy, mineral, water, and soil resources that are essential for a thriving, innovative economy, national security, and a healthy population and environment. We must understand the Earth system, and particularly the geological characteristics of Earth's surface and subsurface, in order to sustain human health and safety, maintain energy and water supplies, and improve the quality of the environment while reducing risks from natural hazards.

AGI is a nonprofit federation of 51 geoscientific and professional associations that represent approximately 250,000 geologists, geophysicists, and other Earth scientists who work in industry, academia, and government. Founded in 1948, AGI provides information services to geoscientists, serves as a voice of shared interests in our profession, plays a major role in strengthening geoscience education, and strives to increase public awareness of the vital role the geosciences play in society's use of resources, resilience to natural hazards, and the health of the environment.

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

AGI supports the President's request for $1.2 billion for USGS. We respectfully suggest that Congress should allocate more resources to USGS's geoscience functions because there is no alternative source for this expertise. The key Mission Areas of Water Resources, Core Science Systems, and Energy & Mineral Resources have consistently been underfunded when compared to other USGS Mission Areas. AGI strongly supports the proposed increase for USGS Facilities to maintain essential scientific facilities, including monitoring and observation instrumentation. We urge additional funding for the USGS Library, which is an important and unique resource for researchers and industry.

Importance of Geoscience Functions at USGS: The need for geological information has not diminished since USGS was established in 1879. On the contrary, as we

place increasing demands on Earth's system, many critical decisions rely upon geoscience information. The USGS has a wide-ranging mission to provide objective data, observations, analyses, assessments, and scientific solutions to support decisionmaking; while there is merit to USGS's broad remit, its unique geological mission should be paramount.

Table 1 highlights the Mission Areas that have been singled out for lower increases than other sections of USGS since fiscal year 2014; we note that these contain the majority of USGS's geoscience functions. We respectfully ask Congress to recognize the importance of geoscience research, monitoring, information collection and analysis to the Nation's safety, economy, defense, and quality of life, and to support USGS's mandated role by funding balanced investment in USGS programs.

USGS Mission Area or Account	*FY 2014 Enacted*	*FY 2015 Enacted*	*FY 2016 Enacted*	*% change, FY 14-16*	*FY 2017 request*	*% change, FY 16 Enacted – FY17 request*	*% change, FY1 4 Enacted– FY17 request*
Climate & Land Use	131,975	135,975	139,975	*6.1*	**171,444**	22.4	*29.9*
Environmental Health	19,614	21,445	21,445	*9.3*	**24,560**	15	*25.2*
Ecosystems	152,811	157,041	160,232	*4.9*	**173,938**	10.1	*13.8*
Natural Hazards	128,486	135,186	139,013	*8.2*	**149,701**	7.8	*16.5*
Water Resources	207,281	211,267	210,687	*1.6*	**227,992**	7	*10*
Core Science Systems	108,807	107,228	111,550	*2.5*	**118,395**	6.2	*8.8*
Energy, Minerals	71,901	70,826	73,066	*1.6*	**74,923**	2.5	*4.2*
Science Support	110,704	105,611	105,611	*–4.6*	**110,592**	4.7	*0*
Facilities	100,421	100,421	100,421	*0*	**117,258**	16.8	*16.8*
Total USGS	1,032,000	1,045,000	1,062,000	2.9	**1,168,803**	10.1	*13.3*
		Mission Areas that are consistently funded below USGS-wide increases.					

Table 1: Trends in funding for USGS Mission Areas and Accounts, fiscal year 2014–fiscal year 2017 request.

Core Science Systems Mission Area:

—*USGS Library:* The USGS Library is a vital resource for geoscientists within and outside USGS, servicing hundreds of thousands of requests online and in person annually, yet staffing has fallen from 66 Federal staff (FTE) in 2000 to 18 FTE in 2015. AGI supports increased funding for the USGS Library, which serves industry, academia, and government clients and preserves the intellectual stock of the geosciences.

—*National Geospatial Program:* Topographic mapping has been a core activity at USGS since its inception. AGI strongly supports the 3D Nation interagency partnership to build a modern elevation map of the Nation's territories and urges Congress to support USGS's contribution, the 3DEP (3D Elevation) program. AGI strongly supports investment in lidar and ifsar mapping, and the President's request for $69 million for the National Geospatial Program.

—*National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program (NCGMP):* This important, decades-long partnership between the USGS, State geological surveys, and universities has a proven track record of delivering cost-effective geological maps. Over the past few years the number of grant proposals has increased while funding has remained stagnant. AGI asks that Congress increase funding for the National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program to $30 million in fiscal year 2017 to meet growing demand.

—*Data Preservation:* The National Geological and Geophysical Data Preservation Program (NGGDPP) produces more value in terms of economic, environmental, hazard mitigation, and regulatory efficiency than it costs to run. AGI urges Congress to reauthorize NGGDPP and to fund it at the previously authorized level of $3 million.

Energy and Mineral Resources Mission Area:

—*Mineral Resources Program:* AGI is a founding member of the Minerals Science and Information Coalition (MSIC), which supports minerals expertise in the Federal Government. We are concerned at the dearth of investment in this foundational component of the manufacturing supply chain, which is critical to our national economy and defense. AGI supports the President's request for $49 million for the Mineral Resources Program and asks that Congress add $5 million in new funding to create minerals forecasting capabilities.

There is no point developing new materials if we cannot supply the raw materials to manufacture them. AGI suggests the creation of a Critical Minerals Hub, with funding of $25 million per year for 5 years, to match the Critical Materials Hub in the Department of Energy.

—*Energy Resources Program:* AGI supports increased funding for the Energy Resources Program. We note the importance of research on gas hydrates, which may play a significant role in future energy and climate scenarios. AGI supports funding of $286 million for the Energy Resources Program.

—We urge USGS to develop opportunities to collaborate effectively with other agencies, including integrating more geological information with DOE's Subsurface Technology and Engineering (SubTER) crosscut, to ensure prudent use of Federal funds.

Climate and Land Use Mission Area:

—*Land Remote Sensing Program:* One of the most fundamental concepts in the geosciences is that the Earth changes through time. It is impossible to overstate the importance of long-term, consistent monitoring of the Earth to provide a sound basis for decisionmaking. AGI supports the President's request for $96.5 million for the Land Remote Sensing Program, which includes Landsat and other Earth observing systems.

Water Resources Mission Area:

—Challenges in water supplies and water quality highlight the importance of understanding the quality, quantity, and distribution of our groundwater and surface water resources. AGI urges Congress to ensure the continuity and expansion of nationwide, long-term data collection and research programs that support water planning and decisionmaking across all States, and to fund Water Resources at $228 million for fiscal year 2017.

Natural Hazards Mission Area:

—Landslide hazards are assessed using detailed topographic data from the National Geospatial Program. AGI supports the proposed increase to $8 million for the Landslides Hazards Program in order to reap societal benefits from investments in geospatial information.

—Earthquakes are increasing in States like Oklahoma and Kansas, and early warning systems are needed to avoid potential devastation from large earthquakes. AGI supports funding for the Earthquake Hazards Program of $60.5 million.

—AGI supports robust funding of the Natural Hazards Program and urges Congress to appropriate $139 million to this Mission Area.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

AGI notes efforts by the Energy and Minerals Management program to improve the return to taxpayers from the extraction of natural resources on our Nation's public lands. AGI supports funding the Energy and Minerals Management activity at $138 million.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

The Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History plays a dual role in communicating the excitement of the geosciences and enhancing knowledge through research and preservation of geoscience collections. AGI supports the President's request of $922 million for the Smithsonian Institution in fiscal year 2017.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

National parks are very important to the geoscience community and the public as unique national treasures that showcase the geologic splendor of our country and offer unparalleled opportunities for research, education, and outdoor activities. AGI supports the President's request for $224 million for Natural Resource Stewardship activities and $10 million for Everglades Restoration during the centennial year of the National Parks.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony to the subcommittee.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM

REQUEST SUMMARY

On behalf of the Nation's Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), which collectively are the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), thank you for this opportunity to present our fiscal year 2017 appropriations recommendations for the 28 colleges funded under Titles I and II of the Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities Assistance Act (Tribal College Act); the two tribally chartered ca-

reer and technical postsecondary institutions (Title V of the TCU Act); the two Bureau of Indian Education postsecondary institutions; and the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA). The Bureau of Indian Education administers each of these programs, with the exception of IAIA, which is congressionally chartered and funded in its own account.

In fiscal year 2017, TCUs seek:

—$89,220,000 to fund institutional operations and technical assistance under Titles I and II of the Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities Assistance Act of 1978 or Tribal College Act, of which $88.5 million is for Titles I & II operating grants (which would fund 28 TCUs at the authorized level for the first time in 35 years) and $701,000 is to address increasingly needed technical assistance and a modest increase of $100,000 (this would be the first increase in technical assistance funding in over a decade);

—$11,000,000 for Title V of the Tribal College Act, which provides partial institutional operations funding for the two tribally controlled postsecondary career and technical institutions;

—$11,835,070, as included in the President's budget, for the Institute of American Indian Arts (this includes $2 million towards forward funding of IAIA);

—Minimum of $21,767,000, as included in the President's fiscal year 2017 budget, for Haskell Indian Nations University and Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, the Bureau of Indian Education's two postsecondary institutions; and

—$18,200,000 for a one-time appropriation to fully transition institutional operating funding for the three federally chartered TCUs, from the Federal fiscal year to an academic year, as follows: $3.4 million for IAIA (in additional to the $2 million included in the President's budget) and $14.8 million for Haskell Indian Nations University and Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute.

IAIA, Haskell Indian Nations University, and Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute are the only schools funded through the Department of the Interior that still receive their institutional funding on the Federal fiscal year (October 1) or more likely, much later in the year when the annual Interior appropriation bill is passed, rather than the first week of July in preparation for the upcoming school year. Once forward-funded these TCUs—like other institutions of higher education—will be able to plan multiyear budgets and start (and end) each school year with dependable funding. Forward funding does not increase the Federal budget in the long-term. It simply allows vital education programs to receive basic operating funds before each school year begins, which is critically important when the Federal Government is funded under continuing resolutions.

TCUs are founded and chartered by their respective American Indian tribes, which hold a special legal relationship with the Federal Government, actualized by more than 400 treaties, several Supreme Court decisions, prior congressional action, and the ceding of more than one billion acres of land to the Federal Government. Despite the trust responsibility and treaty obligations, the TCUs' primary source of basic operating funds has never been adequately funded. Further, our member institutions—already operating on shoestring budgets—have suffered the ramifications of sequestration and other across-the-board cuts.

TCUs: "DOING SO MUCH WITH SO LITTLE"

Tribal Colleges and Universities are an essential component of American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) education. Currently, 37 TCUs operate more than 75 campuses and sites in 16 States, within whose geographic boundaries 80 percent of all American Indian reservations and Federal Indian trust land lie. They serve students from well over 250 federally recognized tribes, more than 85 percent of whom receive Federal financial aid—primarily Pell grants. In total, the TCUs annually serve 160,000 AI/ANs and other community members through a wide variety of academic and community-based programs. TCUs are public institutions accredited by independent, regional accreditation agencies and like all U.S. institutions of higher education must regularly undergo stringent performance reviews to retain their accreditation status. Each TCU is committed to improving the lives of its students through higher education and to moving AI/ANs toward self-sufficiency. To do this, TCUs serve many roles in their reservation communities, functioning as community centers, libraries, tribal archives, career and business centers, computer labs, summer camps, community farms, economic development centers, GED/HiSET training and testing centers, child and elder care centers, and more.

The Federal Government, despite its direct trust responsibility and binding treaty obligations, has never fully funded TCU institutional operations as authorized under the Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities Assistance Act of 1978. Yet despite

funding challenges, TCUs are leading the Nation in preparing AI/AN nurses and more recently, in preparing teachers for our Native schools. For example, in 2014, half of all AI/AN special education teachers in Montana graduated from Salish Kootenai College. TCUs train other professionals in high-demand fields, including agriculture and natural resources management, human services, IT technicians, and building tradesmen. By teaching the job skills most in demand on our reservations, TCUs are laying a solid foundation for tribal economic growth, with benefits for surrounding communities, and the Nation as a whole. But that is not enough. TCU leadership understand that we must do more—we must move beyond simple workforce training. Today, TCUs are tackling the tougher—but much more significant—issue of job creation because we know that to break the cycle of generational poverty and end the culture of dependency that grips so much of Indian Country, simply filling jobs that would be filled anyway is not enough. We must create new industries, new businesses, and a culture of self-sufficiency and innovation. Our job creation initiative is focusing initially on advanced manufacturing, through a partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy, National Laboratories, TCUs, and industry.

Tribal Colleges continually seek to instill a sense of hope and identity within Native youth, who one day will lead our tribal nations. Unfortunately, the high school drop-out rate for Native students remains around 50 percent. To help address this alarming reality, TCUs are partnering with the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Education to help create a lasting "college-going culture" in Indian middle and high schools. TCUs are reaching back to create a bridge for Indian students as early as the elementary school, encouraging them to abandon any notion of dropping out of high school and instead, to think that the natural course is to finish high school and go on to the local TCU. In addition, TCUs offer Dual Credit courses for high school students, provide math teachers for local high schools as a strategy for improving course delivery, host Saturday academies, after school programs and summer camps for middle and high school students, and at the other end of the spectrum, they offer GED training and testing.

As noted earlier, the TCUs' operations funding is insufficient, and their budgets are further disadvantaged because, on a per student basis, the colleges receive funding for only about 85 percent of their academic enrollments. Approximately 15 percent of the TCUs' collective enrollments are non-Indian students living in the local community, but TCUs receive Federal funding based only on Indian students, defined as members of a federally recognized tribe or the biological children of enrolled tribal members. While many TCUs do seek funding from their respective State legislatures for their non-Indian, State-resident students (often referred to as "non-beneficiary" students) successes have been, at best, inconsistent. Given their locations, often hundreds of miles from another postsecondary institution, TCUs are open to all students, Indian and non-Indian, believing that education in general, and postsecondary education in particular, is a catalyst to a better economic future for their areas.

A recent independent, economic impact study proves this, illustrating that TCUs create lasting value from multiple perspectives: students, society, and taxpayers. TCUs elevate their students' lifetime incomes, and this in turn benefits society as a whole by increasing the region's economy and generating a wide array of savings through improved lifestyles. The increased employment benefits taxpayers through increased tax receipts and a reduction in the need for welfare and unemployment benefits. In fact, for every dollar spent the lifetime income of students more than quadruples; society gains over five times the investment in added income and social savings; and the taxpayers get back almost two and a half times the investment. In short, the TCUs are a very sound investment of Federal funds.

FURTHER JUSTIFICATIONS & FACTS

—*Breaking the cycle of generational poverty:* Tribal Colleges and Universities provide access to higher education for American Indians and others living in some of the Nation's most rural and economically depressed areas. In fact, seven of the Nation's 10 poorest counties are home to a TCU.

—*Growing number of TCUs:* Compounding existing funding disparities is the fact that although the numbers of TCUs and students enrolled in TCUs have dramatically increased since they were first funded in 1981, appropriations have increased at a disproportionately low rate. Since 1981, the number of tribal colleges has more than quadrupled and continues to grow; the number of Indian students enrolled has risen over 300 percent. In the past 10 years, six additional TCUs have become accredited and eligible for funding under Title I of the Tribal College Act, and two more colleges are expected to be eligible for Tribal

College Act funding as soon as fiscal year 2018. While AIHEC celebrates the growing number of tribally chartered colleges and universities and the increasing numbers of Native students served, these successes have forced TCUs to function with smaller slices of an already inadequate annual funding pie.

—*Local Tax and Revenue Bases:* TCUs cannot rely on a local tax base for revenue. Although tribes have the sovereign authority to tax, high reservation poverty rates, the trust status of reservation lands, and the lack of strong reservation economies hinder the creation of a reservation tax base. As noted earlier, on Indian reservations that are home to TCUs, the unemployment rate can well exceed 70 percent. By contrast, the national unemployment rate is currently 5 percent.

—*Gaming and the TCUs:* Although several of the reservations served by TCUs have gaming operations, the vast majority are not mega-casinos located in urban areas and featured in the broad-based media. Only a handful of TCUs receive regular income from the chartering tribe's gaming revenue, and the amounts received can vary greatly from year to year. Most reservation casinos are small businesses that use their gaming revenue to improve the local standard of living and potentially diversify into other, more sustainable areas of economic development. In the interim, where relevant, local TCUs offer courses in casino management and hospitality services to formally train tribal members to work in their local tribally run casinos.

Some form of gaming is legalized in 48 States, but the Federal Government has not used the revenues generated from State gaming as a justification to decrease Federal funding to other public colleges or universities. Some have suggested that those tribes that operate the few extremely successful and widely publicized casinos located in or near urban areas, should be financing higher education for all American Indians. And yet, no State is expected to share its gaming revenue with a less successful or non-gaming State.

APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

As noted earlier, it has been over 35 years since the Tribal College Act was first funded, and the TCUs have yet to receive the congressionally authorized per Indian student funding level. Full funding for the TCUs' institutional operating grants ($8,000 per Indian student) for fiscal year 2017 would require an increase of approximately $19.4 million over the fiscal year 2016 appropriated level. Additionally, to transition the three federally chartered TCUs to receive their operations funding on an academic schedule, rather than the Federal fiscal year, requires a $18.2 million one-time appropriation (IAIA—$3.4 million (in addition to the $2 million included in the President's budget; Haskell Indian Nations University and Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute—$14.8 million). Additionally, if the subcommittee determines that forward funding is to be achieved through incremental appropriations, language needs to be included directing that funds appropriated to partially fund the transition to forward funding are to be held until the needed sum (75 percent of full year funding) is accrued.

CONCLUSION

AIHEC Member institutions/Tribal Colleges and Universities provide quality higher education to thousands of American Indians and other reservation residents, as well as essential community programs and services to those who might otherwise not have access to such opportunities. The modest Federal investment that has been made in TCUs has paid great dividends in terms of employment, education, and economic development. Continuation of this investment makes sound moral and fiscal sense.

We greatly appreciate your past and continued support of the Nation's Tribal Colleges and Universities and your careful consideration of our fiscal year 2017 appropriations requests.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION

The American Lung Association is pleased to present our recommendations for fiscal year 2017 to the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee. The work to monitor and clean up harmful air pollution funded by this subcommittee will prevent asthma attacks, emergency room visits, hospitalizations, and premature deaths across the country. Founded in 1904 to fight tuberculosis, the American Lung Association is the oldest voluntary health organization in the United States. The American Lung Association is the leading organization

working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease through education, advocacy and research.

Support and Defend EPA's Programs to Address Climate Change and Improve Air Quality

Mr. Chairman, the Clean Air Act is a key public health safeguard. It is especially important for populations most at risk, including those with asthma and other lung diseases; children; older adults; people living in low-income communities; people who work, exercise or play outdoors; and people with heart disease and diabetes. We urge you to invest in protecting public health from the impacts of dangerous air pollution. We also urge you to reject any policy riders that would block, delay or weaken EPA's ability to save lives and improve public health by reducing air pollution, including carbon pollution from power plants and ground-level ozone pollution.

State, Tribal, and Local Government Work to Improve Air Quality

The American Lung Association requests that the subcommittee provide $171 million for Federal Support for Air Quality Management. The Federal Support for Air Quality Management Program assists States, tribes, and local air pollution control agencies in the administration of programs and standards to protect the air we breathe. States have the primary responsibility for developing clean air measures necessary to meet Federal standards, but rely on support and assistance from EPA to create effective comprehensive air quality management programs. The EPA also supports training for State, tribal, and local air pollution professionals on rulemakings and other significant actions.

The American Lung Association also requests that the subcommittee provide $268.2 million for Categorical Grants: State and Local Air Quality Management and $12.829 million for Categorical Grants: Tribal Air Quality Management. State, local and tribal air pollution agencies need more funding, not less, to ensure proper protection of the public through implementation of the Clean Air Act. These agencies are on the front lines of vital efforts to improve air quality and protect public health, yet they are perennially underfunded. This must change in order to secure the benefits promised by Clean Air Act protections.

Climate Change

Climate change is one of the greatest threats to public health, including lung health. The health threats posed by climate change include worsened air pollution, the spread of diseases into new areas, stronger and longer heat waves, and more frequent and severe droughts. The EPA has a critical role to play in reducing carbon pollution, methane, and other climate pollutants and must have the resources needed to meet the challenge ahead. Reducing climate pollutants will save lives and protect health. We request that the subcommittee provide $115.9 million for the Climate Protection Program.

Radon

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, and the EPA's State Indoor Radon Grants are the only nationwide program that helps prevent exposure to it. States and tribes depend on this program as well as technical assistance through the Radon Programs to educate the public and fight this deadly carcinogen. In 2003, the National Academy of Sciences estimated that radon kills 21,000 people each year. We request that the subcommittee provide $8.1 million for the Categorical Grant for Radon.

Reducing Pollution From Vehicles

We request that the subcommittee provide $100 million for the Diesel Emissions Reduction Grant Program. Ten million old diesel engines are in use today that pollute communities and threaten workers. Immense opportunities remain to reduce diesel emissions through the DERA program. The subcommittee's continued investments in this program have yielded up to $13 of public health benefit for every $1 spent on diesel projects, according to an EPA report to Congress from February 2016.

The American Lung Association also requests that the subcommittee fully fund EPA's Federal Vehicle Fuels Standards and Certifications Programs at $103.6 million, particularly to improve the effectiveness of the certification and compliance testing programs in the face of increasing demand, more challenging oversight requirements, and the increasing diversity of technologies. Currently, EPA conducts very limited testing of small imported engines, but a high fraction of these engines fail the test. Additional resources are needed to improve testing, including on-road testing, and compliance for this important program to protect public health.

Monitoring and Enforcement

The American Lung Association requests that the subcommittee provide at least $111.3 million for EPA's Compliance Monitoring & $282.7 million for Enforcement. To protect public health, EPA must ensure that air pollution standards and requirements are met. EPA must, therefore, have the ability and funding needed to reduce non-compliance, as well as enforce penalties for violations. EPA must also be prepared to respond to civil enforcement actions authorized by the Clean Air Act.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, air quality is crucial for health. Air pollution can harm anyone, but is particularly dangerous for children, people over 65, people with asthma and other chronic lung diseases, people with cardiovascular disease and diabetes, people living in poverty, and people who work or exercise outdoors. Our Nation has made significant progress in reducing levels of dangerous outdoor air pollution. We urge this subcommittee to continue making investments into EPA's life-saving work toward fulfilling the promise of the Clean Air Act: healthy air for all to breathe.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

On behalf of our 2.5 million supporters, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies. Founded in 1866, the ASPCA is the first humane organization established in the Americas and serves as the Nation's leading voice for animal welfare. We request that the subcommittee consider the following concerns when making fiscal year 2017 appropriations.

WILD HORSES AND THE BLM

In the 45 years since Congress charged the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) with protecting our country's wild horses and burros, Americans have witnessed the agency's Wild Horse and Burro Program deteriorate into a continuous cycle of roundups and removals with little regard for the preservation-focused mandate specified in the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Our wild horses and burros should be revered as historical icons, treated humanely, and managed fairly and respectfully on our public lands. We appreciate BLM's recognition of the great need for reform in the Wild Horse and Burro Program. We are encouraged by BLM's interest in incorporating the use of on-the-range management methods, such as immunocontraception, and in identifying alternatives to the confinement of wild horses in long-term holding facilities. However, the implementation of additional significant reforms must be immediate and effective.

Prohibit BLM Funding for Euthanasia or Sale of Wild Horses as Management Methods

In December 2004, Congress passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2005, which amended the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act to allow for the sale of certain wild horses and burros. This instant transfer of title from the U.S. Government to the individual purchaser revokes the animal's status as a protected equine and leaves mustangs vulnerable to the still-thriving horse slaughter industry. Additionally, in 2008, BLM publicly announced that, for the first time, it was considering using its statutory authority to destroy old, sick, or unadoptable wild horses and burros by implementing mass euthanasia as a population control method. The public uproar that followed forced BLM to quickly withdraw the proposal. However, both the sale provision and the language allowing for the destruction of wild horses and burros remain in the law.

In September 2012, published reports revealed that since 2009, the BLM had sold more than 1,700 captured mustangs—70 percent of the total number of animals sold since the program's onset—to a single Colorado livestock hauler known to be a longtime kill buyer for the horse slaughter industry.[1] Although BLM has since implemented measures to prevent the sale of such a large number of horses to one individual, Congress must send a clear message that the slaughter of our Nation's wild horses and burros is a gross violation of the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. In past appropriations bills, Congress has repeatedly confirmed its opposition to the slaughter of our Nation's wild horses and burros; it did so most recently in

[1] "All the Missing Horses: What Happened to the Wild Horses Tom Davis Bought From the Gov't?" ProPublica: September 28, 2012.

the fiscal year 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act, the current funding vehicle for the Department of Interior. The President's fiscal year 2017 budget request also includes an administrative provision to bar appropriations for the euthanasia of healthy horses and their sale to slaughter. The ASPCA requests that the subcommittee continue to include the following language, present in both the President's budget request and previous appropriations bills: "Appropriations herein made shall not be available for the destruction of healthy, unadopted, wild horses and burros in the care of the Bureau or its contractors or for the sale of wild horses and burros that results in their destruction for processing into commercial products."

Prioritize On-the-Range Management Over Roundup and Removal

The Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act makes clear that on-the-range management should be preferred over roundup and removal as the primary method of wild horse management. BLM has multiple options to make that happen.

The ASPCA realizes that population control is necessary in some circumstances, and we appreciate BLM's public acknowledgement that fertility control methods must be a significant part of wild horse population management. Porcine Zona Pellucida (PZP), the contraceptive vaccine that has been used for decades to manage horse and deer populations, is registered by EPA and commercially available. In fiscal year 2015, BLM administered 469 fertility control treatments, a decrease from nearly 1,200 treatments 3 years prior.[2] If PZP is to be a serious part of the solution, its use must be increased to levels that will significantly impact population growth. A 2013 National Academy of Sciences report noted the promising capabilities of this and other forms of chemical fertility control.[3] The ASPCA recommends that the subcommittee direct BLM to prioritize the use of humane, reversible fertility control when necessary to stem the population growth of wild horse or burro herds.

Included in the administration's fiscal year 2017 budget request is an unsettling new proposal from BLM. If included in the Interior Appropriations bill, this language would allow for the immediate transfer of wild horses and burros as "working animals" to State, Federal, and local agencies.[4] This language would set a dangerous precedent, allowing for the immediate disposition of any wild equine that has been removed from the range. This means thousands of wild horses could be instantly stripped of their legal protections and could easily fall victim to slaughter, as we know has happened to others in the past. Additionally, this language fails to address the program's true need—better on-range management of the wild horse population through NAS-recommended methods such as immunocontraception. The ASPCA strongly encourages the subcommittee to prioritize humane on-range management methods as it crafts the fiscal year 2017 Interior appropriations bill.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE ANIMAL WELFARE INSTITUTE

WILD FREE-ROAMING HORSES AND BURROS ACT

The Bureau of Land Management continues to round up wild horses and warehouse them on private lands at great public expense. This is not a humane or responsible solution, and this subcommittee has called on the BLM to implement humane on-the-range solutions. Since some progress has been made, we are concerned that the BLM's proposed $572,000 decrease for Wild Horse and Burro Management could put any advances at risk. We ask the subcommittee to fund the BLM at fiscal year 2016 levels and to urge it to continue exploring more effective and longer lasting fertility control agents. We understand the desire to explore alternatives to warehousing tens of thousands of healthy wild horses but oppose Sec. 110 "Transfer of Excess Horses" of the fiscal year 2017 budget. This language is unnecessary and could result in once-protected wild horses ending up in slaughter, a practice this subcommittee has long opposed. Thousands of healthy and viable wild horses, not bound by limitations of the Act, are currently being held by the BLM and are already available for sale to other Federal, State, and local entities. The subcommittee should encourage the BLM to explore this option before changing the Act. Should this option be considered, the subcommittee must ensure safeguards are established

---

[2] "Wild Horse and Burro Quick Facts." U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management. March 23, 2016. http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/whbprogram/history__and__facts/quick__facts.html.

[3] "Using Science to Improve the BLM Wild Horse and Burro Program: A Way Forward." National Research Council. The National Academies Press, 2013.

[4] Department of the Interior Budget Estimate, fiscal year 2017. https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2017/assets/int.html.

to ensure wild horses sold to other agencies are also protected from slaughter. Finally, we strongly support the continued inclusion of this "no-kill" language to ensure that BLM does not kill healthy wild horses and burros: *Provided, that appropriations herein made shall not be available for the sale or destruction of healthy, unadopted wild horses and burros in the care of the Bureau or its contractors.*

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE—NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM—SIGNAGE AND REPORTING

We support the administration's request of $506.6 million for operating and maintaining the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS), which generates $2.5 billion in economic impacts and $342.9 million in tax revenues. To further enhance the NWRS's stated purpose of conserving wildlife (including species threatened with extinction), and to ensure that National Wildlife Refuges are safe for the millions of Americans who visit these public lands each year, we request the inclusion of the following report language, which is geared towards promoting public safety and greater transparency regarding the use of body-gripping traps on wildlife refuges. Currently, over half of the System's 563 refuges allow trapping. Steel-jaw leghold traps, Conibears, and strangulation snares pose distinct risks to humans, wildlife, and other animals (e.g., pets) given their indiscriminate nature and the trauma such devices inflict upon individuals or animals captured in these traps.

Trapping Report Language: The Committee directs the Fish and Wildlife Service to comply with the following for any refuge unit within the National Wildlife Refuge System that allows the use of body-gripping traps: The Service shall post sufficient signage on the physical premises to protect visitors to the refuge, including children and pets; the Service shall post notice of any refuge that allows body-gripping traps on the System Web site and on the Web site of the relevant refuge. No later than 1 year after the enactment of this legislation, the Service shall submit to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate a report that provides the following information relating to the use of any body-gripping trap in the System for the preceding fiscal year: The identification of any refuge in which the use of a body-gripping trap was authorized; the purpose for such use, such as for management, recreational, or commercial purposes; a description of any non-lethal control methods used before authorization was granted for management purposes; the types of body-gripping traps used; trap-check time requirements; the number of Special Use Permit Applications granted, either by Service Region or by State, to engage in trapping on a National Wildlife Refuge; the number and species of target and non-target animals that were captured in body-gripping traps on refuges; and a description of any injuries sustained by target and non-target animals caused directly or indirectly by the capture in body-gripping traps. The Committee encourages the Service to continue collecting the aforementioned data and information regarding the use of body-gripping traps in the System on an annual basis.

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE—OFFICE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT—$75.1 MILLION

The FWS Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) is one of the most important lines of defense for wildlife both at home and abroad. OLE enforces over a dozen Federal wildlife and conservation laws that frequently impact both domestic and global security. Year after year, OLE protects the public against the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products—which ranks third only to the illicit trade in narcotics and weapons in terms of global revenue—and the United States remains a source of, or destination for, much of this contraband. Even those who may not concern themselves with wildlife are reaping benefits as OLE protects against smuggling illegal substances and helps to thwart potentially devastating human health threats. We support FWS's proposed appropriation of $75.1 million for OLE, a modest increase of $328,000 over the 2016 enacted level. Ensuring that OLE receives adequate funding is crucial in terms of supporting the work of Special Agents and Wildlife Inspectors, and enhancing FWS's ability to combat wildlife trafficking.

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE—INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS—WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING—$500,000 INCREASE

Combatting increased wildlife trafficking is a high priority for the administration and Congress. Congress in particular (with strong bipartisan support) has taken important steps in this regard, e.g., the House of Representatives passing H.R. 2494, the Global Anti-Poaching Act earlier this session. Wildlife trafficking threatens not only species conservation, but also global security given its close association with terrorism and criminal syndicates. With poaching reaching unprecedented levels, domestic and international governments and private entities have turned to FWS for

leadership in coordinating, guiding, and implementing a response. This funding increase will help provide financial assistance to projects in foreign countries that advance counter wildlife trafficking activities as outlined in the National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking and actions articulated in the Implementation Plan. The goal is to continue efforts to build further capacity and partnerships for species conservation. Such measures are in concert with the aims of the Global Anti-Poaching Act and other bills under consideration this Congress, which would facilitate partnerships between the U.S. Government and foreign countries fighting terrorist organizations and international crime syndicates that profit from wildlife trafficking.

WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME (WNS)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.—$4,500,000 total; $2 million in Endangered Species Recovery; $2.5 million in Service Science.

U.S. Geological Survey.—$1,501,000 in Ecosystems/Wildlife.

National Park Service.—$3,155,000 in Natural Resource Stewardship.

Bureau of Land Management.—$500,000.

U.S. Forest Service.—$2.5 million, Research & Development; $500,000, Forest Systems.

White-nose syndrome (WNS) remains at the root of North America's most precipitous wildlife die-off of the past century. The disease is caused by an invasive species of fungus, *Pseudo-gymnoascus destructans (Pd),* which thrives in caves and abandoned mines and infects bats hibernating there, disrupting their physiological processes. WNS has killed at least 6 million bats and has spread to 27 States and 5 Canadian provinces. WNS has struck seven species, including the federally endangered Indiana and gray bats, while the presence of the fungus has been confirmed in three more States and five more species, including one endangered species. It has reached the ranges of other endangered bats, including the Virginia big-eared bat and the Ozark big-eared bats, and has the potential to affect 25 of our country's 47 bat species. Declines due to WNS are so severe that the FWS has designated the northern long-eared bat as threatened. The loss of bats from WNS has serious implications for our economy and environment. Bats are primary predators of night-flying insects, including pests that attack corn, soybeans, cotton, and other crops. By eating these pests, bats reduce the need for pesticides, lower food production costs, and save U.S. farmers an average of $22.9 billion yearly. Bats also aid 66 plant species that produce timber.

Thanks to steady Government funding, progress has been made. USFWS is the lead agency for WNS response, serving as an umbrella for nationwide WNS action on the part of more than 100 Federal, State, local, tribal, academic, nonprofit, and other entities. Grants from FWS fund research that likely would not occur otherwise. Two recent examples are projects spearheaded by teams from the University of California-Santa Cruz: one finding evidence of *Pd* in China, which will offer new populations to study for their resistance; and another identifying a potentially promising treatment utilizing bacteria that occur naturally on bats' skin. In addition, FWS is the largest source of funding for State agencies to monitor, manage, and research WNS.

USGS also plays a critical role in WNS research. In 2006, WNS and *Pd* were unknown to science. Since then, USGS's research has laid much of the foundation of our understanding of the disease and continues to explore ways to treat WNS. USGS developed a more accurate WNS test for bats which, unlike previous methods, does not require euthanizing the animals. The agency has expanded surveillance for *Pd* and WNS through sampling of bats and hibernacula and collaborates with State agencies to monitor the disease. In 2015, scientists from its National Wildlife Health Center and the University of Wisconsin developed an "energy depletion" model to explain how WNS kills bats. With a view to possible treatments, USGS has a number of ongoing projects studying *Pd's* cave environment to identify conditions conducive to and hostile to the fungus that might yield natural controls, as well as whether other microbes found on bats' skin could mitigate the effects of *Pd.* It is also developing an oral vaccine and is working to identify the best delivery method.

The natural resources of the NPS provide significant challenges for WNS management and information-sharing. NPS staff take seriously their responsibility to "safeguard bats, their hibernacula, and maternity roosts from WNS . . ." They conduct bat and disease monitoring in NPS's many caves and abandoned mines to inform the nationwide understanding of the disease. With the largest number of visitors every year, NPS properties play an important role in educating the public about WNS, through ranger outreach, visitor infrastructure, and multimedia materials. NPS's visitors also heighten the need for the agency to prevent human spread of

Pd through screening and closures. Conducting chemical disinfection for visitors and staff when entering/exiting caves and abandoned mines has enabled NPS to advance knowledge of various decontamination methods. NPS is integrating WNS into all staff bat-resource activities; for example, conducting wing swabs for WNS is becoming standard procedure whenever NPS staff handle bats. Forty-three projects in over 40 parks were to have been completed in 2015. One in particular had astounding results. A survey conducted at Great Smokey Mountain National Park revealed an 85 percent decline in the capture rate for one species and a 65 percent decline in the capture rate for another.

With at least 3,000 caves and an estimated 31,000 abandoned mines on its lands, the BLM has much work to do on WNS and has never been allocated funds for this purpose. Most of BLM's lands, concentrated in the western U.S., have not yet suffered from WNS, but the threat is moving in that direction. Addressing the disease is therefore necessary and urgent, and BLM has begun the task, thanks in part to directive language from Congress. To address a paucity of information about bats on BLM lands, staff are conducting bat inventories and inspecting bats for signs of *Pd* or WNS, either visually or by swabbing. To minimize the risk of *Pd* spread, the agency has integrated decontamination into protocols for personnel who enter caves or abandoned mines and is producing educational programming on decontamination for visitors. BLM also aims to prevent *Pd* spread by closing abandoned mines, installing gates on other mines and caves to keep people out, and selectively closing caves to visitors. Through an internal small-grant program, BLM field offices apply for up to $2500, which must be matched by other funds, often from State agencies or local NGOs.

With many land and research resources, e.g., the Center for Forest Mycology Research, USFS has been a leader in WNS activities, but it needs and deserves a dedicated funding stream to maintain its effort. USFS scientists contribute significantly to our understanding of WNS and *Pd.* In 2013, agency researchers taxonomically reclassified the WNS-causing fungus, laying the foundation for a better understanding of *Pd* with regard to its closely related benign fungi. Furthering this line of inquiry, USFS currently is comparing these fungi to pinpoint *Pd's* harmful genes, in the hope of silencing them. USFS is also exploring the use of a native soil bacterium to inhibit *Pd* and improve survival of WNS-infected bats. In the spring of last year, FWS released the results of a study involving the bacterium *Rhodococus rhodochrous,* a native soil bacterium that inhibits *Pd* growth. Among diseased bats were treated with this bacterium in the lab, there was a 50 percent increase in survival, and recovered bats were released last May.

In response to directive language in fiscal year 2012, USFS wrote a WNS science strategy. With those goals accomplished, USFS issued an updated strategy in September, the goal of which is to sustain functional WNS-affected bat populations through integrated disease management. It is estimated that $4.5 million will be needed to implement the plan over 4 years. USFS has also developed *A Plan for the North American Bat Monitoring Program (NABAT),* a program to conduct coordinated, standardized monitoring of multiple bat species across North America to gain reliable data for conservation decisionmaking—similar to programs for birds and amphibians. USFS also wants to develop an "electronic nose," a device that identifies the components of an odor and analyzes its chemical make-up to identify it. *Pd* and WNS have "odors" (chemical biomarkers) that could be identified by an "e-nose," thus permitting early detection and application of treatments. The e-nose would also enable testing of bats without handling them, thus reducing disturbance and stress.

It is clear that the Forest Service has made and continues to make major contributions to our understanding, detection, and treatment of *Pd* and WNS, but it has been doing so at the expense of other programs. We believe that the redirection of surplus funds from other accounts (such Forest Inventory and Analysis), as well as new funds, are more than justified.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE ASSINIBOINE AND SIOUX TRIBES OF THE FORT PECK RESERVATION

I would like to thank the subcommittee for permitting the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation to present testimony concerning fiscal year 2017 appropriations for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Indian Health Service (IHS). My name is Floyd Azure. I am Chairman of the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Reservation. I will focus my testimony today on infrastructure, public safety and public health needs for our tribe which are largely dependent upon the appropriations of this subcommittee to the BIA and IHS. The tribes also express strong support for the administration's request for full funding

for contract support costs for both agencies. We also fully support the administration's proposal to make this funding mandatory.

FORT PECK RESERVATION RURAL WATER SYSTEM

Congress has long recognized that the foundations for economic development and prosperity in Indian country lay in community stability which begins with infrastructure such as safe drinking water, roads and utilities.

This is why we strongly support the administration's $2.262 million request for the Operation and Maintenance (OM&R) funding for the Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water System for fiscal year 2017. This funding is essential for this system to operate, which now provides drinking water to more than 15,000 residents in Northeast Montana and several social and governmental agencies, including the BIA Agency Office, Poplar Schools, and Poplar hospital.

More than 20 years ago, the tribes realized that a new water source was necessary to ensure the health of our people. Located on a former inland sea with a high saline content, coupled with unprecedented contamination from oil production, water on the reservation and the surrounding communities is not safe for human consumption. To ensure our future, we sought to find another water source for our people. Congress agreed and in 2000 enacted the Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water System Act to build a modern rural water system for the Reservation (Assiniboine and Sioux Rural Water System) and to assist the off-reservation communities in Roosevelt, Sheridan, Daniels and Valley Counties (Dry Prairie Rural Water Authority) build a rural water system that would "interconnect" with the tribes.

We are more than 60 percent complete and the project now serves more than 70 percent of the reservation population with safe, reliable drinking and industrial water. The statute requires that the OM&R of the Assiniboine and Sioux Rural Water System—the portion on the reservation that is held in trust by the Federal Government—be paid in full by the BIA as a Federal obligation. This is consistent with the Federal trust responsibility to the tribes, who were promised a permanent home when we agreed to move to the reservation. A permanent home requires safe drinking water.

To date, the Federal Government has invested $180 million in constructing the Fort Peck Reservation Rural Water System. The Assiniboine and Sioux Rural Water System components—the "common facilities"—must be maintained. The entire system is dependent upon the safe and proper operation of common facilities which includes the Missouri River intake, the pumping system, the water treatment plant, sludge lagoon, and miles of main transmission lines running east-west and north-south within our 2 million acre reservation. Adequate funding of the operation and maintenance of our "common facilities" will extend the useful life of this vita infrastructure project. Thus, the $2.2 million requested for the OM&R of this project is critical. If Congress does not appropriate the required funds for OM&R, then this System will not operate and the people of northeast Montana will have no drinking water.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND DRUG TRAFFICKING

The reservation lies immediately west and north of the Bakken and Three Forks Formation and we are already witnessing the economic impacts of oil and gas development in this region. With rapid development come social ills in the form of increased criminal activity, including methamphetamine use, prescription drug abuse and addiction, which are reversing the downward trend our tribal police achieved through effective policing techniques, task force collaboration and effective education campaigns.

Six years ago, through effective policing techniques, our Chief of Police was seeing a reduction in methamphetamine use on our reservation, but over the last few years it has returned with a vengeance. The growing population working in the Bakken formation has created an easy source of meth on our reservation. This problem must be attacked on all fronts: law enforcement; treatment; and improved social services. This is why we support the President's Generation Indigenous Initiative as a comprehensive interagency response to the challenges facing Indian country, but so much more needs to be done if we are to reverse substance abuse.

A. Law Enforcement

There is no greater need in Indian County than public safety and justice and these programs cannot be sacrificed for any purpose. Our police chief estimates that 70–80 percent of criminal conduct has a drug component to it, with assaults and burglaries arising out of drug use and addiction. The BIA's own statistics are alarming; over a 5 year period, drug related arrests in Indian Country increased nearly

10-fold from 443 arrests in fiscal year 2008 to 4,289 arrests in fiscal year 2013. Our tribal police department has 18 police officers, two dedicated to drug enforcement, three criminal investigators, and we share dispatchers with Roosevelt County. Our Police Chief said he could use six drug enforcement agents to help with the rising workload. The needs of our community and those throughout Indian Country cry out for increase law enforcement and justice funding. We urge you to reject the administration's proposal to cut law enforcement funding.

B. Social Services

In the last year, we have had too many infants born addicted to meth. These infants must be placed in foster in families. This causes tremendous stress on our social services program. The administration's $53 million request for tribal social service programs and the $19 million requested for Indian Child Welfare programs will help meet this need. In addition, the $30 million requested for tribal courts will also ensure that our children are safer as these institutions will have additional resources to supervise and monitor the children in their care.

C. Detention Services

The Fort Peck Tribes completed a modern detention facility to serve the reservation and other tribes. This allows for inmates to be close to their homes and families. It will do a great deal to ensure continuity in our families. Beyond not requesting additional funds for law enforcement personnel, the budget does not request sufficient funds for the operation of BIA or tribally operated detention facilities that were opened in the last 2 years, like Fort Peck.

The tribes worked with the BIA office of Justice Services when we were building this new detention facility, including on the staffing and operations costs. The tribes entered into a contract with the BIA for the operation of this facility. And while we received some funding associated with this contract, it is approximately 30 percent of what we negotiated with the BIA to have a fully functional detention center. When we expressed concern, the BIA officials said that the tribes would be made whole in fiscal year 2016. This did not happen last year. We ask you do this so that we can continue to provide safe and secure detention services in our community and protect the tribal and Federal investment.

ROAD MAINTENANCE

By its own admission, the administration's funding request for the Road Maintenance Program for fiscal year 2017 will permit tribes to maintain only 16 percent of BIA-owned roads and 62 percent of BIA-owned bridges in "acceptable" condition. This leaves 8 out of 10 BIA-owned roads and nearly 4 out of 10 BIA-owned bridges with funds to maintain them in their current poor or failing condition. This is a safety issue. Most of these routes are gravel and earthen school bus routes that require more frequent maintenance than paved roads. We urge the subcommittee to add at least an additional $9 million to the Road Maintenance Program out of planned increases for the Interior Department for fiscal year 2017. Doing so will increase the percentage of BIA-owned roads and bridges maintained to an "acceptable" condition.

INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE

We continue to build government services and programs on the reservation and attract businesses to improve the quality of life for our members. The IHS operates two clinics on the reservation; the Verne E. Gibbs IHS Health Center in Poplar, and the Chief Redstone IHS Health Center in Wolf Point. In-patient services are available at the non-IHS Poplar Community Hospital and Trinity Hospital in Wolf Point. To combat the high incidence of heart disease, cancer and diabetes, the tribes supplement health services on the reservation through our Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (HPDP) Wellness Program, the Spotted Bull Resource and Recovery Center, and nursing services for a Youth Detention Center, which we operate pursuant to an ISDA contract with the IHS.

The tribes' focus on preventative care is the reason we so strongly support the requested increase of $48 million for Purchased and Referred Care. This level of funding will allow more Service Units to move beyond life or limb coverage, and provide a fuller range of healthcare services, instead of crisis care. Everyone agrees that focusing on the health of a person instead of crisis care will improve the health status of our people.

One area I would ask the subcommittee to address in its report is that for many of our people who have insurance, whether it be private, Medicaid, or Medicare, the Service Unit at Fort Peck will not refer people out for anything but life or limb care. Thus, even if someone has the ability to cover the cost of a procedure, like gall blad-

der surgery, the person's primary provider, who is at the Service Unit, will not refer them out. If the person gets the gall bladder surgery, the IHS will not pay the copay or the deductible because they did not meet the life or limb criteria. Many of our tribal members, who have insurance, are the working poor. They cannot pay these obligations, which are often times substantial. Thus, they consequently get referred to collections. I would ask that the subcommittee direct the IHS to reconsider its business practices, because waiting until someone is at life or limb stage to address a health issue makes neither good economic or healthcare sense. It would make more sense to pay the copay and deductible before someone gets dangerously ill.

We are disappointed that the Indian Health Service has yet to implement a portion of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act that allows the IHS to provide dialysis services to patients. More than 20 years ago, the Fort Peck Tribes recognized the need for dialysis services on our reservation and built and opened a dialysis clinic on the reservation. This was without any assistance by the IHS because, at that time, the IHS said it did not have the authorization to provide these services. Today, this facility needs to be expanded, and now the IHS has the authority to provide dialysis services. However, the IHS has not requested any funding from Congress to do so. We would urge the subcommittee to direct the IHS to provide an update on how it plans to expand its role in providing dialysis care in Indian Country, especially in tribal communities such as on our reservation where existing dialysis treatment is overburdened.

CONCLUSION

We thank the subcommittee for the opportunity to present written testimony concerning the President's fiscal year 2017 budget.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR FIRE ECOLOGY, INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WILDLAND FIRE, TALL TIMBERS RESEARCH STATION AND LAND CONSERVANCY, AND THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

JOINT FIRE SCIENCE PROGRAM FUNDING IS VITAL FOR MANAGING WILDFIRES SAFELY AND COST-EFFECTIVELY

The undersigned leading professional wildland fire organizations in the Nation and the world are seriously concerned with the proposed cut and a new funding process for the USDA Forest Service's (USFS) Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP). The clear current wildfire trend is more acres burned, higher severity, and on more days each year, raising our challenge to apply resources in a wise, science-based manner. We respectfully request that the USFS JFSP be funded at $7 million through the Wildland Fire Management budget. We additionally request that the Department of the Interior Joint Fire Science program be funded at $6 million.

The USFS JFSP has a relatively small budget for a program that successfully yields important results which are directly and widely applied across a broad geographic landscape. These tools and technology products support the fire risk reduction community that help track the effectiveness of Forest Service programs, such as vegetation management and hazardous fuels reduction. Their applied research supports resilient landscapes and communities, and provides key information on wildfire mitigation impacts on water quality, atmospheric emissions, and other natural resources and ecosystem services. We are concerned about the zeroing out of this program under Wildland Fire Management in exchange for funding a smaller portion from the already-constrained Forest & Rangeland Research budget. Restoring the USFS funding mechanism under Wildland Fire Management and ensuring an appropriated level of $7 million would help to address the urgent need to maintain and further important research.

MAINTAINING RESEARCH

The JFSP is a research program that builds on a 15+ year commitment to focusing research questions on the needs and objectives of fire managers. As such, JFSP serves as an independent and vital research arm of the broader efforts to safely and efficiently manage wildland fire on all ownerships. Additionally, JFSP:

—Generates priorities based on the expressed needs of managers and local land units, maximizing their relevance and effectiveness in improving fire management. This need-driven priority focus frees it from alternative priorities and mandates of any individual agency and ensures funded research is directly applicable to managers.

—Draws its strength and relevance from being truly collaborative and interdisciplinary—by engaging Federal and university scientists, land/resource managers and multiple stakeholders in advancing the field of fire science. This is vital for a profession in which fire knows no bureaucratic boundaries.
—Serves as an international forum for information and technology exchange particularly important in the face of global climate change.

MORE RESEARCH, NOT LESS

Wildland fire management requires a significant investment from Federal agencies, in particular the USFS. Currently, JFSP is only 1 percent of the total Wildland Fire Management budget. For an agency with approximately half of its budget focused on wildland fire management, it makes fiscal sense to invest in a research program like the JFSP in order to understand the science of fire management, fire prevention, and landscape-scale climate impacts.

With continued and even expanded funds for cutting-edge research, we could expect to pioneer safer and less costly methods to manage fires on public lands, thus earning long-term cost savings.

CURRENT POLICY SUPPORTS RESEARCH

The Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy states as two of the guiding principles:

—"Fire management plans and activities are based upon the best available science."
—"Knowledge and experience are developed among all wildland fire management agencies. An active fire research program combined with interagency collaboration provides the means to make this available to all fire managers."

The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy states as one of the guiding principles and core values:

—"Fire management decisions are based on the best available science, knowledge, and experience, and used to evaluate risk versus gain."

Fully funding JFSP is one of the few ways to achieve these goals and sustain scientific and technological innovations that are critical for the vitality of wildland fire management and for expansion of knowledge and skill.

We urge you continue to fund the USFS JFSP at $7 million under the Wildland Fire Management budget and additionally the DOI JFSP at $6 million. These levels and funding structures would emphasis Congress' commitment to the continued development of research tools that have greatly improved our success in managing wildland fire in the past and which are needed even more so in the future.

Dr. Leda Kobziar
President, Association for Fire Ecology

Tom Zimmerman
President, International Association of Wildland Fire

Dr. William Palmer
President/CEO, Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy

Cecilia Clavet
Senior Policy Advisor on Fire and Forest Restoration, The Nature Conservancy

---

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ART MUSEUM DIRECTORS

The Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) respectfully requests funding of $155 million each for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) for fiscal year 2017. We also ask that the subcommittee provide the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) with the funding necessary to staff and train personnel in order to avoid placing any additional impediments on American art museums that are importing works of art containing ivory for the purposes of temporary public exhibition.

ARTS AND ARTIFACTS INDEMNITY PROGRAM

AAMD again thanks the subcommittee for revising the statutory caps for international and domestic arts exhibition indemnity agreements under the Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Act, which is administered by the NEA on behalf of the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities, of which both NEA and NEH are mem-

bers. Participating AAMD members reported saving an average of more than $650,000 in insurance fees in 2015. A partial list of examples of indemnified exhibitions that may be of particular interest to members of the subcommittee includes:

1. "Of Heaven and Earth: 500 Years of Italian Painting from Glasgow Museums" at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art.
2. "Portrait of an English Country House: Houghton Hall" at Frist Center for the Visual Arts (Nashville, Tennessee).
3. "Gods and Heroes: Masterpieces from the École des Beaux-Arts, Paris" at Portland Art Museum (Oregon).
4. "The Paintings of Sir Winston Churchill" at Mildred Lane Kemper Museum of Art (Saint Louis, Missouri).
5. "America's Eden: Thomas Cole and The Voyage of Life" at Dixon Gallery and Gardens (Memphis, Tennessee).
6. "When Modern Was Contemporary: Selections from the Roy R. Neuberger Collection" at Mississippi Museum of Art and The Albuquerque Museum of Art and History.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

As stated above, AAMD requests that Congress appropriate $155 million for the NEA. The agency continues to make modest but important grants that leverage significant private support, disseminate best practices, and foster innovation.

For example, the Boise Art Museum received a grant to support an exhibition related to the Minidoka National Historic Site, a World War II Japanese internment camp in Idaho. This project comprises an exhibition of artwork created at the camp or created by artists who have a personal connection with the Minidoka incarceration experience, such as Takuichi Fujii (1892–1964), Kenjiro Nomura (1896–1956), Teresa Tamura (b. 1960), Roger Shimomura (b. 1939), and Wendy Maruyama (b. 1952). To engage visitors of all ages with the Minidoka National Historic Site, educational programming will take place at Boise Art Museum, at the national park site, and at Boise State University (BSU). The exhibition is scheduled to coincide with the annual Civil Liberties Symposium at BSU.

The director of the museum, Melanie Fales, explained the significance of the NEA's support:

"BAM is sensitive to the fact that people have mixed feelings regarding the actions of the U.S. Government during World War II. We want to facilitate the opening of a dialogue about the events that occurred in our State during that time. The museum is not taking a stance, rather we intend to present a safe space for artists and audience members to discuss the events that took place, focusing on the artistic process of documentation and response. We want to present a balanced approach to a challenging topic. For topics such as this, which can be considered potentially controversial, it is not always possible to garner funding from local sources. The significance of this discussion is evident at a national level, and we are grateful to the NEA for recognizing its value. This funding makes it possible for the museum to carry out the project for the benefit of our community and country."

Examples of recent grants listed on the NEA's Web site include:

1. To support an exhibition at the Anchorage Museum featuring indigenous artists and focusing on contemporary indigenous issues in the north.
2. To support shipping and loan costs for the exhibition "Multiplied: Edition MAT and the Transformable Work of Art, 1959–1965" at the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum in St. Louis.
3. To support an exhibition at Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City of work by contemporary artists.
4. To support the exhibition "Phantom Bodies: The Human Aura in Art," at the Frist Center for the Visual Arts in Nashville, and accompanying catalogue.
5. To support reinstallation of the New Orleans Museum of Art's Spanish Colonial collection, and accompanying catalogue.
6. To support the exhibition "Jewel City: Art of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition" at the de Young Museum in San Francisco, with an accompanying catalogue.
7. To support a professional development program for artists at the RISD Museum in Providence.
8. To support the Northwest Filmmaker's Festival and related programming at the Portland Art Museum.

AAMD commends NEA for its commitment to the Blue Star Museums initiative, now in its seventh year. AAMD members have responded with overwhelming enthusiasm to Chairman Chu's invitation to offer free admission to active duty military

and their families at least from Memorial Day through Labor Day. In 2015, approximately 90 percent of AAMD members in the United States either formally joined the program or already offered free admission to all.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

As stated above, AAMD requests that Congress appropriate $155 million for the NEH.

This important agency assists art museums in presenting humanities scholarship to the general public. It also plays an invaluable role in assisting with the preservation and conservation of important collections. This is exactly the type of unglamorous work for which it is chronically difficult to raise private funding, making Federal support all the more valuable.

AAMD commends the NEH for two initiatives in particular. The Common Good is designed to demonstrate the critical role that humanities scholarship can play in public life. This is especially suitable for museums, which have developed expertise in presenting complex ideas to non-specialists. Standing Together, the Humanities and the Experience of War, supports programs that explore war and its aftermath, promote discussion of the experience of military service, and support returning veterans and their families. Taken in tandem with Blue Star Museums, this program clearly demonstrates the commitment of the two agencies to both veterans and active duty military.

A few of the agency's grants to art museums include:

1. To the Santa Barbara Museum of Art to perform an on-site preservation and condition assessment of 800 paintings.
2. To the Palm Springs Art Museum to conduct an assessment of architectural drawings, blueprints, renderings, and archival documents within the permanent collection.
3. To the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at the University of Oregon to improve long-term preservation of 156 oversize objects and increase scholarly research and public use of these collections.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

The AAMD has had extensive conversations with the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) about the importance of presenting works of many cultures to the American public, works that without temporary exhibitions, Americans would never see. These works, entrusted to our museums from both foreign museums and foreign private collectors, are fragile, invaluable and represent the highest professional quality. American museums borrowing these works must be assured that the works can move quickly, safely and be fully protected.

This is especially true when moving works of art, made in whole or in part of ivory, through designated ports as called for in the Director's Order 210 issued February 25, 2014. The Director's Order 210 imposed strict requirements on importing works of ivory from abroad, with which museums are struggling to comply.

Unfortunately, the FWS has limited capacity to staff and train personnel at the designated ports to process works of ivory for special exhibitions. There must be sufficient staff to ensure that the works move in accordance with professionally accepted procedures and the new requirements at the speed that a temporary exhibition requires. The AAMD urges the subcommittee to provide FWS with the funding necessary to staff and train personnel in order to avoid placing any additional impediments on American art museums.

ABOUT AAMD

The purpose of the Association of Art Museum Directors is to support its members in increasing the contribution of art museums to society. The AAMD accomplishes this mission by establishing and maintaining the highest standards of professional practice, serving as forum for the exchange of information and ideas, acting as an advocate for its member art museums, and being a leader in shaping public discourse about the arts community and the role of art in society.

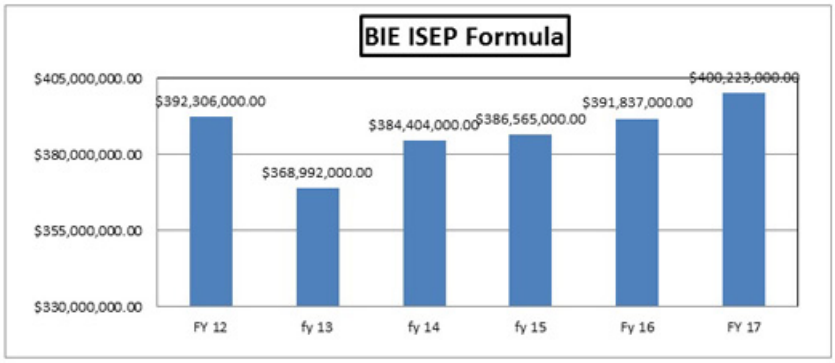
PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY TRIBAL SCHOOLS INC.

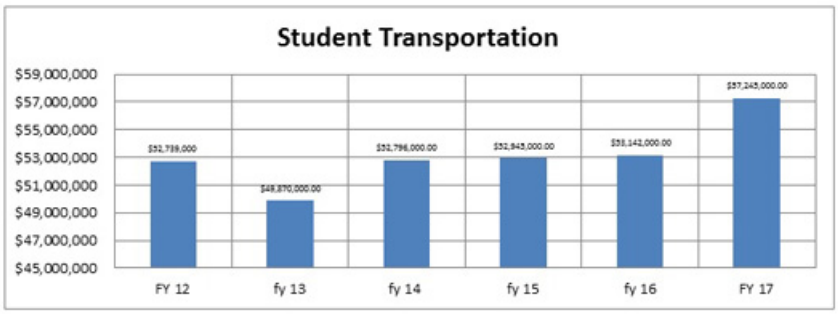
My name is Tom Miller; President of the Association of Community Tribal Schools Inc. (ACTS) and Superintendent of Hannahville Indian School in Michigan. We want to thank you for the fiscal year 2016 appropriations.

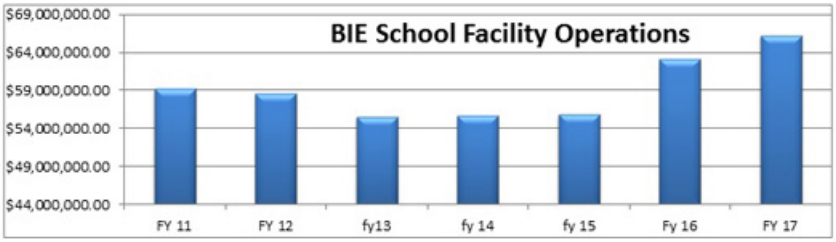
The tribal school movement started in 1966 with Rough Rock Demonstration School in Arizona. Currently there are over 30,000 students in 129 tribal elementary

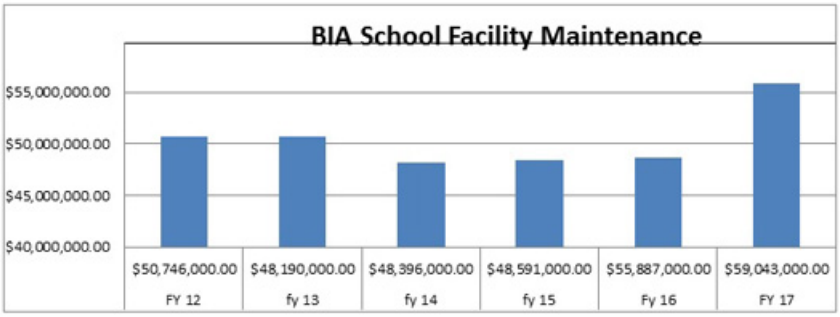
and secondary schools. The schools are in the States of Maine, Florida, North Carolina, Mississippi, Louisiana, South Dakota, Minnesota, North Dakota, Michigan, Iowa, Wisconsin, Kansas, Wyoming, Oklahoma, Montana, California, Washington, Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico. ACTS represents a significant number of the students in the 129 tribally controlled elementary and secondary schools. ACTS's mission is to "assist community tribal schools toward their mission of ensuring that when students complete their schools they are prepared for lifelong learning and that these students will strengthen and perpetuate traditional tribal societies."

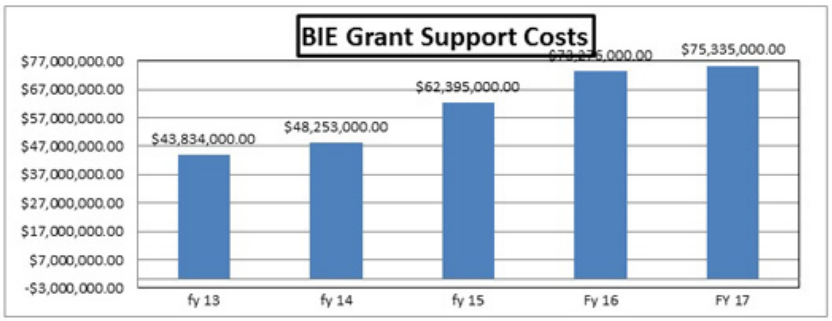
The following charts illustrate the revenues over the last few years and the proposed fiscal year 2017 appropriations.











REQUESTED ACTION

1. Divert BIE-Elementary/Secondary Programs—ISEP Program Adjustments and Education Program Enhancements to ISEP, Transportation, etc. These funds often used to continue paternalistic practice of telling tribes and schools what is best for their children.—($17,472,000)
2. Increase Early Child and Family Development (.70 WSU).—$15,000,000
3. Continue to annually increase, by 2 percent, these accounts for next 3 (fiscal year 2018, 2019, 2020) years:

BIE-Elementary/Secondary Programs—ISEP	$ 8,000,000
BIE-Elementary/Secondary Programs—Facility Operations	$ 2,000,000
BIE-Elementary/Secondary Programs—Facilities Maintenance	$ 2,000,000
BIE-Elementary/Secondary Programs—Student Transportation	$ 2,000,000
BIE-Elementary/Secondary Programs—Grant Support Costs	$ 1,400,000
	$15,400,000

4. Construction—Education Construction. The BIA reported a nearly $75,000,000 annual facility deterioration rate, $388 million in deferred maintenance and, also reports a $4.4 billion school replacement value.

Annual Need:

Replacement School Construction	$65,000,000
Replacement Facility Construction	$25,000,000
Employee Housing Repair and Replacement	$10,000,000
Facility Improvement and Repair	$90,000,000

Add this Administrative Provision:

—The BIE will accept new school and expansion applications from federally recognized tribes and tribal organizations. This will help determine the feasibility of allowing more BIE funded schools for possible fiscal year 2019 consideration.

—The BIE is not to be considered a State education agency, prefer the tribal education departments.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF NAVAJO COMMUNITY CONTROLLED SCHOOL BOARD, INC.

The Association of Navajo Community Controlled School Board (ANCCSB), Inc. is an organization of 11 member school boards who operate federally funded schools on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona and New Mexico under contracts or grants from the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE).

We would like to take the opportunity to thank this subcommittee for making Indian Education a bi-partisan priority. We are deeply grateful for the substantial increases in funding for Indian Education in fiscal years 2015 and 2016. These increases were desperately needed to fund such basic things as text books and student transportation. Providing consistent and adequate funding for core functions means that we as educators and administrators can focus on providing our students with a world class education instead of worrying about how we can afford to heat our classrooms during the winter or whether these classrooms are safe to occupy. Looking at the administration's request for fiscal year 2017, we are grateful to see a commitment to maintain, and in some cases build upon, the gains of the last 2 years. We highlight below some of the budget categories that directly impact our schools' educational programs, facilities, student transportation, and administrative management.

TRIBAL GRANT SUPPORT COSTS

Since the 1988 Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization, tribally operated elementary and secondary schools have received funding for the administrative expenses incurred for the operation of BIE-funded schools through an Administrative Cost Grant, now called Tribal Grant Support Costs (TGSC). These funds are used for costs of essential services such as contract/grant administration; program planning and development; human resources; insurance; fiscal, procurement, and property management; required annual audits; recordkeeping; and legal, security and other overhead services. Tribal Grant Support Costs are the tribally operated schools' Contract Support Costs.

Impact. In fiscal year 2016, Tribal Grant Support Costs were fully funded for the first time. In previous fiscal years when TGSC appropriations had been insufficient to meet the level of need without other sources of funding, we had been forced to re-direct more and more funds from our education program budgets to cover essential administrative costs. Our schools were forced to make difficult decisions—such as delaying purchase of new textbooks and other materials, paying non-competitive teacher salaries, reducing the number school days—to fit within these reduced budgets. Even with these cost-saving measures, some schools were still struggling with further reductions in management and business-office personnel at the risk of prudent internal controls and meeting the federally mandated requirements for fiscal processes and operation of education grants/programs. Since TGSC is forward-funded, the fiscal year 2016 appropriation provided TGSC funds for school year 2016–17.

We are grateful that this year the administration again proposes to follow through on commitments to pay full TGSC funding for all BIE-funded schools, and to include in its request sufficient funding for schools that are deciding to transition to grant or contact school status. ANCCSB applauds this subcommittee's and the administration's decision to treat schools' support costs the same as contractors with the BIA and the IHS.

Request. We fully support the administration's proposal that TGSC and startup costs be funded at $75.3 million, and request that this subcommittee support this level of funding.

FACILITIES OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Facilities Maintenance funds are intended to provide for the preventative, routine, and unscheduled maintenance for all school buildings, equipment, utility systems, and ground structures. We are very grateful for the $7 million increase we saw in this budget category in fiscal year 2016 and encouraged that the fiscal year 2017 request for a $3 million increase would build upon these gains. This is a marked improvement from years past and while it would not meet all the needs of our schools, it will certainly help.

There are numerous studies which attest to the fact that there is a close correlation between poor or inadequate facility conditions and poor student and staff performance. According to the administration's fiscal year 2017 request, 55 of the 183 BIE-funded schools and dormitories (one-third) are still rated in "poor" condition in the Bureau's Education Facility Condition Index (FCI). Further, the administra-

tion's fiscal year 2017 request elaborates that there is $388.9 million in deferred maintenance backlogs! It is clear that there is a long way to go with regard to upkeep of our schools. Part of the maintenance problem will be solved by replacing school wholesale, but Federal resources for this crucial need must increase so our schools buildings can make it to their replacement date.

Facilities Operations funding is for the ongoing operational necessities such as electricity, heating fuels, custodial services, communications, refuse collection and water and sewer service. This budget category also saw a $7 million increase in fiscal year 2016 along with a $3 million requested increase above that for fiscal year 2017. This is another budget category that has been severely underfunded in years past and we are encouraged to see the proposed increase.

Impact. Our schools are making every effort to make do with very modest facilities funding. Since we cannot delay paying our utilities or avoid taking actions that would impact student safety, we often have to resort to using our other education or academic program monies. We caution that insufficient funding to for facilities maintenance and operations will mean delaying routine, as well as unscheduled, maintenance of buildings, equipment, utility systems and grounds—thereby jeopardizing student and staff safety. Attempts to moderate electrical and/or heating costs, or reduce custodial and refuse services and similar costs cutting measures would only make our already compromised learning conditions more uncomfortable and unhealthy for students and staff. If we cannot provide a decent learning environment, how can we expect our students to focus on achieving academic success?

Request. The administration states that the $59 million requested for Facilities Maintenance and the $66.2 million requested for Facilities Operations would fund 78 percent of calculated Facilities Operations and Maintenance need across BIE-funded schools. We respectfully ask that the subcommittee consider funding 100 percent.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

The Student Transportation account is intended to cover: (1) the costs of the daily bus services for children attending the BIE-funded elementary and secondary schools; and (2) air travel for children who attend distant boarding schools. School transportation costs include vehicle rental (buses, vans), maintenance and repair, fuel, and qualified bus driver salaries. The BIE budget justification states that students at BIE-funded schools travel 16 percent of their miles on unimproved roads, and that the BIE-funded schools have transportation routes where the mileage covered is "significantly higher than in metropolitan areas."

For the schools located on the Navajo Reservation, the percentage of unimproved roads traveled by our buses is much higher and in some cases it can be as much as 90 percent. Further, these unpaved roads are often subject to becoming "washboards" due to adverse weather impacts such as mud and snow. At times these roads become impassable so we must resort to using 4-wheel drive vehicles to ferry the students to a waiting bus. There have been times, however, when even the 4-wheel vehicles cannot reach the students so they are prevented from making it to class through no fault of their own. These conditions take a tremendous toll on vehicles, resulting in greater maintenance and repair costs, and greatly increase student travel time as well as the drivers' work day.

From our experience, the 66 BIE-funded schools on the Navajo Reservation must supplement our Student Transportation allocated amounts by at least $70,000 to $100,000 each year. The best estimates show that there is a $21 million shortfall in funding for Student Transportation as the BIE has allowed funding to fall far behind need, and has been willing to allow schools to poach other school funds for transportation purposes.

Impact. As with the other program shortages, varied cost cutting measures have been instituted—from reducing the number of bus routes (resulting in longer rides for our students) to delaying vehicle replacements as long as possible. Nonetheless, underfunding Student Transportation will continue to adversely impact classroom programs since each year schools have no choice but to use scarce education program dollars to subsidize transportation costs.

Request. We are relieved to see that the administration is requesting a $4 million increase for this critical budget category but we respectfully request that the subcommittee consider providing at least $73 million for Student Transportation in the BIE system.

INDIAN SCHOOL EQUALIZATION PROGRAM (ISEP) FORMULA FUNDS

The Indian School Equalization Program (ISEP) Formula is the core budget account for Educational and Residential programs of the BIE elementary and sec-

ondary schools and dormitories. These funds are used for instructional programs at BIE-funded schools and include salaries of teachers, educational technicians, and principals. The amount provided to each school is determined by a statutorily mandated formula established by regulation.

During the 8-year period of fiscal year 2003 to fiscal year 2010, the ISEP Formula account increased by almost $45.5 million; but in only two of those years—fiscal year 2009 and fiscal year 2010—the increase was actually an increase in program funding. For the other years, the requested increases were limited to amounts needed for fixed costs and related changes, as opposed to actual program increases. Funding for ISEP began to fall in fiscal year 2011, and the fiscal year 2015 level was actually $5 million less than in fiscal year 2010.

Impact. For most BIE-funded schools, the chronic shortfall in the other key school accounts has a negative impact on ISEP Formula funding, because ISEP Formula funds are often diverted to make up the shortfalls in other accounts such as Student Transportation, Facilities, and Tribal Grant Support Costs when a tribe or tribal school board has no other source of funding to satisfy those shortfalls. This means fewer dollars are available for the education. We are tremendously grateful that Congress has increased funding for these critical accounts so ISEP Formula funds can be used for their intended purpose.

Request. The administration's request for a $6.5 million increase would be very helpful but it still does not acknowledge the shortfalls that have been building for years. ANCCSB Member Schools respectfully request a total of $431 million for this critical budget category.

EDUCATION CONSTRUCTION

We are very grateful for the substantial increase that Congress provided for Education Construction in fiscal year 2016. We are pleased to see that the fiscal year 2017 request would maintain this level of funding. Providing consistent funding for this budget category each fiscal year means that our aging schools can be replaced in an orderly, scheduled fashion.

CONCLUSION

Thank you Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall, and members of this subcommittee for the opportunity to relay our needs to you.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC AND LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITIES (APLU) BOARD ON NATURAL RESOURCES (BNR)

On behalf of the APLU Board on Natural Resources (BNR), we thank you for your support of science and research programs within the United States Geological Survey (USGS). We appreciate the opportunity to provide recommendations for the following programs within USGS: $9 million for the Water Resources Research Institutes and $20 million for the Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units.

APLU BNR requests $9 million for the Water Resources Research Institutes (WRRI). The APLU BNR request is based on the following: $7,500,000 in base grants for the WRRI as authorized by Section 104(b) of the Water Resources Research Act, including State-based competitive grants; $1,500,000 to support activities authorized by section 104(g) of the Act. Federal funding for the WRRI program is the catalyst that moves States and cities to invest in university-based research to address their own water management issues. State WRRIs take the relatively modest amount of Federal funding appropriated, match it 2:1 with State, local and other funds and use it to put university scientists to work finding solutions to the most pressing local and State water problems that are of national importance. The Institutes have raised more than $16 in other funds for every dollar funded through this program. The added benefit is that often research to address State and local problems helps solve problems that are of regional and national importance. Many of the projects funded through this program provide the knowledge for State or local managers to implement new Federal laws and regulations. Perhaps most important, the Federal funding provides the driving force of collaboration in water research and education among local, State, Federal and university water professionals. This program is essential to solving State, regional and inter-jurisdictional water resources problems. As USGS itself has stated: "The Water Institutes have developed a constituency and a program that far exceeds that supported by their direct Federal appropriations."

The institutes also train the next generation of water resource managers and scientists. Last year, these institutes provided research support for more than 1,400

undergraduate and graduate students at more than 150 universities studying water-related issues in the fields of agriculture, biology, chemistry, earth sciences, engineering and public policy. Institute-sponsored students receive training in both the classroom and the field, often working shoulder-to-shoulder with the top research scientists in their field on vanguard projects of significant regional importance.

In addition to training students directly, Water Resources Research Institutes work with local residents to overcome water-related issues. For example, the California Institute for Water Resources, like most of its peers, holds field days, demonstrations, workshops, classes, webinars, and offers other means of education in an effort to transfer their research findings to as many users as possible. Outreach that succeeds in changing a farmer's approach to nitrogen application or reducing a homeowner's misuse of lawn treatments can reduce the need for restrictive regulation.

Below are some examples of work being done in various States:

—The current drought in California is creating serious economic hardship for agricultural producers and local communities. The University of California's (UC) California Institute for Water Resources (CIWR) has responded by creating an information hub that is being accessed by agricultural and urban interests to gain vital information on how to adapt during the drought. This hub contains valuable information from multiple units within the UC system. It also brings together information on workshops and seminars (many of which are and will be provided in video form on the Web). In 2014–2015, UC promoted and hosted over 350 workshops and has many more planned (ciwr.ucanr.edu). The CIWR has also produced a series of drought tip fact sheets and a webinar series of short (15-minute) talks with useful information on irrigation practices, salinity management, landscape management and more.

—The Minnesota Water Resources Center has funded a number of research projects that address important, nationally-relevant water resources issues with USGS/WRRA funding over the last 4 years. This funding has been highly leveraged with university funds and the Minnesota Environmental Trust Fund. Researchers have addressed critical issues, including determining the biogeochemical variables that can be used to predict how much arsenic will get into groundwater used for drinking water, and determining the degree of antibiotic resistance in wastewater treatment plant effluent.

—Researchers with the Idaho Water Resources Research Institute have collaborated with Idaho Department of Water Resources scientists to develop technology for assessing crop-water usage over large areas using satellite based remote-sensing information. This technology is now used routinely within the Idaho Department of Water Resources for investigating and resolving water rights conflicts, for aquifer depletion modeling and for stream flow management. This technology is also being adopted by 10 western States and parts of Africa, Europe and Australia.

APLU BNR requests at least $20 million for the Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units (CRU). This program: (1) trains the next generation of fisheries and wildlife managers; (2) conducts research designed to meet the needs of unit cooperators; and (3) provides technical assistance to State, Federal and other natural resource managers. Originally established in the 1930s to provide training for students in fisheries and wildlife biology, the units were formally recognized by the Cooperative Units Act of 1960 (Public Law 86–686). The CRUs provide experience and training for approximately 600 graduate students per year, a critical need as State and Federal workforces face unprecedented retirements over the next 5 to 10 years. The CRUs also provide valuable mission-oriented research for their biggest clients, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and cooperating State agencies. Today, there are 40 Cooperative Research Units in 38 States.

Each unit is a true Federal-State-university-private sector collaboration in that it is a partnership between the U. S. Geological Survey, a State natural resources management agency, a host university, and the Wildlife Management Institute. For every $1 the Federal Government puts into the program, $3 more are leveraged through the other partners. The U.S. economy has long relied on the bountiful natural resources bestowed upon this land. Federal investment in the CRUs will be returned many times over though the training of future natural resource managers who will guide the Nation in sustainable use of our natural resources. The research conducted by CRU scientists directly supports the difficult management challenges faced by natural resources managers. The examples below demonstrate the value of the CRUs to wildlife issues with local and national importance.

—*Minnesota:* The Minnesota CRU is currently researching the olfactory sensitivity of Asian carps to putative sex pheromones. This work has recently re-

ceived national attention, because Asian carps are an invasive species that threatens many of the Nation's freshwater native fishes through competition for food. The Minnesota CRU hopes to use the sex pheromones to attract and trap Asian carp, removing them permanently from the Nation's freshwater lakes and rivers. Minnesota CRU researchers are also studying human behavior, working to understand the motivations of agricultural producers enrolling in USDA water quality and wildlife habitat programs. They hope to gain insight into designing and developing programs, practices and messages that encourage broader participation in those programs.

—*Tennessee:* In 2011, an estimated 826,293 anglers fished in Tennessee, creating an economic impact of nearly $1.3 billion for the State. The Tennessee CRU supports this economic driver by assessing fish stocks, working on recovery efforts for threatened and endangered species, providing research and technical assistance to support State decisions related to fishing. For example, research on sauger in the Tennessee River showed that minimum size requirements by the State were not leading to increased mortality of released fish below the minimum size. Their research also kept "stinger" hooks available for fishermen by showing they also did not contribute to increased mortality.

—*Oklahoma:* The Oklahoma CRU is celebrating its seventh decade of activity. Since opening in 1948, the graduate students that conducted research at the CRU have completed over 400 theses and dissertations. One on-going research project is to gather an accurate count of the black bear population expansion out of Arkansas and into eastern Oklahoma. Wildlife managers need this information for appropriate management of the bear population now that black bear hunting has been reintroduced in Oklahoma.

BNR thanks you for the opportunity to provide our views to the subcommittee. We look forward to working with you through the fiscal year 2016 appropriations process.

About APLU and the Board on Natural Resources

APLU's membership consists of 235 State universities, land-grant universities, State-university systems and related organizations. APLU institutions enroll more than 4.7 million undergraduate students and 1.2 million graduate students, and conduct $42.7 billion annually in university-based research annually. The Board's mission is to promote university-based programs dealing with natural resources, fisheries, wildlife, ecology, energy, and the environment. BNR representatives are chosen by their president's office to serve and currently number over 500 scientists and educators, who are some of the Nation's leading research and educational expertise in environmental and natural-resource disciplines.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF STATE DRINKING WATER ADMINISTRATORS

The Association of State Drinking Water Administrators (ASDWA) respectfully submits the following recommendations for fiscal year 2017 appropriations on behalf of the drinking water programs in the 50 States, 5 Territories, District of Columbia, and Navajo Nation.

Summary of Request: ASDWA respectfully requests that, for fiscal year 2017, the subcommittee appropriate funding for three programs at levels commensurate with Federal expectations for performance; that ensure appropriate public health protection; and that will result in enhancing economic stability and prosperity in American cities and towns. ASDWA requests $200 million for the Public Water System Supervision (PWSS) program; $1.0205 billion for the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund (DWSRF) program; and $10 million for State drinking water program security initiatives. A more complete explanation of the needs represented by these requested amounts and their justification follows.

OVERVIEW: THE IMPORTANCE OF SAFE DRINKING WATER FOR OUR COMMUNITIES AND THE ECONOMY & THE ROLE OF STATE DRINKING WATER PROGRAMS

States need increased Federal support to maintain public health protection and to support the needs of the water systems they oversee. State drinking water programs strive to meet the Nation's public health protection goals through two principal funding programs: the Public Water System Supervision Program (PWSS) and the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund (DWSRF) Program. These two programs, with their attendant State match requirements, provide the means for States to work with drinking water utilities to ensure that American citizens can turn on their taps with confidence that the water is both safe to drink and the supply is

adequate. In recent years, State drinking water programs have accepted additional responsibilities in the area of water system security and resiliency that include working with all public water systems to ensure that critical drinking water infrastructure is protected; that plans are in place to respond to both natural and man-made disasters; and that communities are better positioned to support both physical and economic resilience in times of crisis.

Vibrant and sustainable communities, their citizens, workforce, and businesses all depend on a safe, reliable, and adequate supply of drinking water. Economies only grow and sustain themselves when they have reliable water supplies. Over 90 percent of the population receives water used for bathing, cooking, and drinking from a public water system—overseen by State drinking water program personnel. Even people who have their own private wells will visit other homes, businesses, and institutions served by a public water system. As important as public water systems are to the quality of the water we drink and our health, the majority of water produced by public water systems is used by businesses for a variety of purposes, including processing, cooling, and product manufacturing. The availability of adequate supplies of safe water is often a critical factor in attracting new businesses to communities. Public water systems—as well as the cities, villages, schools, and businesses they support—rely on State drinking water programs to ensure they are in compliance with all applicable Federal requirements and the water is safe to drink. Several recent incidents in the United States have led to illnesses, death, or prohibitions against use, due to unsafe drinking water. These have included deaths in several States due to microbiological contaminants; unsafe drinking water in Charleston, West Virginia for over a week due to an upstream chemical spill; unsafe drinking water in Toledo, Ohio for over a day due to algal toxins; and the leaching of lead from lead-containing pipelines into the water supply in Flint, Michigan. These incidents serve as stark reminders of the critical nature of the work that State drinking water programs do—every day—and the reason why State drinking water programs must be adequately funded.

STATE DRINKING WATER PROGRAMS: HOW THEY OPERATE, WHY SUPPORT IS NEEDED, AND JUSTIFICATIONS FOR REQUESTED AMOUNTS

The Public Water System Supervision (PWSS) Program:

How the PWSS Program Operates: To meet the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), States have accepted primary enforcement responsibility for oversight of regulatory compliance and technical assistance efforts for over 155,000 public water systems to ensure that potential health-based violations do not occur or are remedied in a timely manner. Over 90 contaminants are regulated in Federal drinking water regulations and the pace of regulatory activity has accelerated in recent years. Beyond the contaminants covered by Federal drinking water regulations, States are also implementing an array of proactive initiatives to protect public health from "source to tap." These include source water assessments and protections for communities and watersheds; technical assistance for water treatment and distribution for challenged utilities; and enhancement of overall water system performance. In recent years, States have also taken on an increasingly prominent role in working with Federal and local partners to help ensure sufficient water quantity. Many States have worked intensively with numerous small water systems in recent years that were within days of running completely dry. The public health and economic consequences of such a catastrophe would have been incalculable to the residents of those communities. In short, State activities go well beyond simply ensuring compliance at the tap—and, States perform all of these tasks more efficiently and cheaply than would be the case if the program were federally implemented. Well supported State drinking water programs are a good deal for America.

Why Adequate Support is Needed: State drinking water programs are extremely hard pressed financially and the funding gap continues to grow. States must accomplish all of the above-described activities—and take on new responsibilities—in the context of a challenging economic climate. State funding has historically compensated for inadequate Federal funding, but State budgets have been less able to bridge this funding gap in recent years. State drinking water programs have often been expected to do more with less and States have always responded with commitment and integrity, but they are currently stretched to the breaking point. Insufficient Federal support for this critical program increases the likelihood of contamination events that puts the public's health at risk. $101.9 million was appropriated for the PWSS program in fiscal year 2016 and the administration requested only $109.7 million in fiscal year 2017 (or, on average, about $2 million per State per year). These amounts are woefully inadequate for the enormity of the task faced by State drinking water programs. We believe, based on our rigorous assessment of

every State's need (in a report we released in January 2014), that at least twice that amount is needed. Inadequate Federal funding for State drinking water programs has a number of negative consequences. Many States are simply unable to implement major provisions of the newer regulations, leaving the work undone or ceding the responsibility back to EPA, which is also challenged by the Agency's own resource constraints and lack of "on the ground" expertise. States also want to offer the flexibilities allowed under existing rules to local water systems. However, fewer State resources mean less opportunity to work individually with water systems to meet their individual needs. This situation has created a significant implementation crisis in several regions of the country and is ultimately delaying or hampering implementation of critically needed public health protections.

For the PWSS Program in Fiscal Year 2017, ASDWA Respectfully Requests $200 million: The number of regulations requiring State implementation and oversight as well as performance expectations continue to grow while at the same time, the Federal funding support necessary to maintain compliance levels and meet expectations has been essentially "flat-lined." Inflation has further eroded these inadequate funding levels. The recommended amount is based on ASDWA's aforementioned January 2014 resource needs report and begins to fill the above-described resource gap. These funds are urgently needed for implementing new drinking water rules, taking on a number of other new initiatives, and to account for the eroding effects of inflation. We further recommend that Congress not allow any Federal funds already appropriated to State drinking water programs to be rescinded.

The Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund (DWSRF) Program:

How the DWSRF Program Operates: Drinking water in the United States is among the safest and most reliable in the world, but it is threatened by aging infrastructure. Through loans provided by the DWSRF, States help water utilities overcome this threat. The historical payback to the DWSRF on this investment has been exceptional. In the core DWSRF program, approximately $18 billion in cumulative Federal capitalization grants since 1997 have been leveraged by States into over $29 billion in infrastructure loans to small and large communities across the country. Such investments pay tremendous dividends—both in supporting our economy and in protecting our citizens' health. States have very effectively and efficiently leveraged Federal dollars with State contributions to provide assistance to more than 10,000 projects, improving health protection for millions of Americans. The U.S. Conference of Mayors estimates that each public dollar invested in water infrastructure increases private long-term Gross Domestic Product output by $6.35. An important feature of the DWSRF program is States "set-aside" funds and another key reason for adequately funding this critical program. States can reserve up to 31 percent of these funds for a variety of critical tasks, such as shoring up the technical, managerial, and financial capacity of public water systems. Set-asides are thus an essential source of funding for States' core public health protection programs and these efforts work in tandem with infrastructure loans.

Drinking Water Infrastructure Investment is Well below the Documented Need: The American Society of Civil Engineers gave the Nation's drinking water infrastructure a D+ grade and EPA's most recent National Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey (2011) indicated that drinking water system infrastructure needs total $384 billion over the next 20 years; $72.5 billion of that total is needed to prevent contamination of 73,400 water systems. The American Water Works Association recently estimated that 20 year need at $1 trillion (which more fully accounted for water distribution system replacement costs). Investment is needed for aging treatment plants, storage tanks, pumps, and distribution lines that carry water to our Nation's homes, businesses and schools. The DWSRF must continue to be a key part of the solution to the Nation's infrastructure crisis.

For the DWSRF Program in Fiscal Year 2017, ASDWA respectfully requests $1.0205 billion: States were very encouraged by the $1.387 billion appropriated for the DWSRF in fiscal year 2010 but have been disappointed by the subsequent generally downward trend—$963 million in fiscal year 2011, $919 million in fiscal year 2012, $854 million for fiscal year 2013 (a figure not seen since 2006), $907 million in fiscal year 2014 and fiscal year 2015, and $863 million in fiscal year 2016. The primary purpose of the DWSRF is to improve public health protection by facilitating water system compliance with national primary drinking water regulations through the provision of loans to improve drinking water infrastructure. Water infrastructure is needed for public health protection as well as a sustainable economy, as explained above. In light of these indicators of success and documented needs, we believe funding at the $1.0205 billion level—the level requested in the President's fiscal year 2017 budget—will better enable the DWSRF to meet the SDWA compliance and public health protection goals for which it was designed.

State Drinking Water Security and Resiliency Programs

State Drinking Water Security and Resiliency Responsibilities: State drinking water programs are critical partners in emergency planning, response, and resiliency at all levels of government. In fact, States are typically the critical nexus between Federal and local level officials in emergency situations. State primacy agencies provide key resources and critical support—regardless of whether the emergency is rooted in terrorism, natural disasters, or cyber intrusions. States continually work toward integrating security considerations throughout all aspects of their drinking water programs and provide information and support to water systems needing to better understand cyber threats.

State Drinking Water Security Funds Are Urgently Needed: After 7 years of congressional support for State security programs through a small grant of approximately $5 million in EPA's appropriations (from fiscal year 2002 through fiscal year 2008), no funds have been provided for this purpose since fiscal year 2009 and none are requested by the administration for fiscal year 2017. It is very difficult to understand why this small, but essential grant to States has been zeroed out of EPA's proposed budget and why Congress has not supported State drinking water security and resiliency programs. State drinking water programs urgently need funds to continue to maintain and expand their security activities, particularly in partnership with small and medium public water systems.

For State Drinking Water Security Programs in Fiscal Year 2017, ASDWA Respectfully Requests $10 million: Given the realities and the lessons learned from recent catastrophic events such as Hurricane Sandy in New York and New Jersey; tornados in central Oklahoma; wildfires and floods in Colorado; and continuing drought in California and Texas—to name but a few—State drinking water programs are working more closely than ever with their water utilities to evaluate, assist, and support drinking water systems' preparedness, response, and resiliency capabilities. States continue to expand their efforts to reflect a resilient, "all hazards" approach to water security and to assist public water systems of all sizes, particularly smaller water systems that most need help.

Conclusion: ASDWA respectfully recommends that the Federal fiscal year 2017 budget needs for States' role in the provision of safe drinking water be adequately funded by Congress. A strong State drinking water program supported by the Federal-State partnership will ensure that the quality of drinking water in this country will not deteriorate and, in fact, will continue to improve—so that the public can be assured that a glass of water is safe to drink no matter where they travel or live. States are willing and committed partners. However, additional Federal financial assistance is needed to meet ongoing and ever growing regulatory, infrastructure, and security needs. In 1996, Congress provided the authority to ensure that the burden would not go unsupported. For fiscal year 2017, ASDWA asks that the promise of that support be realized.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS AND AQUARIUMS

Thank you Chairwoman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall for allowing me to submit written testimony on behalf of the Nation's 219 AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums. Specifically, I want to express my support for the inclusion of $11,100,000 for the Multinational Species Conservation Funds (MSCF) operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), $15,800,000 for the USFWS's International Affairs program, and $11,100,000 for National Environmental Education Act programs at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the fiscal year 2017 Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies appropriations bill. I also urge you to reject any efforts to include language that would prohibit the USFWS from moving forward with its efforts to eliminate loopholes in the commercial elephant ivory trade.

Founded in 1924, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) is a nonprofit 501c(3) organization dedicated to the advancement of zoos and aquariums in the areas of conservation, education, science, and recreation. AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums annually see more than 183 million visitors, collectively generate more than $17 billion in annual economic activity, and support more than 166,000 jobs across the country. Annually, AZA-accredited institutions spend $160,000,000 on more than 2,650 field conservation projects in 130 countries.

MSCF programs support public-private partnerships that conserve wild tigers, elephants, rhinos, great apes, and marine turtles in their native habitats. Through the MSCF programs, the United States supplements the efforts of developing countries that are struggling to balance the needs of their human populations and endemic wildlife. MSCF programs help to sustain wildlife populations, address threats

such as illegal poaching, reduce human-wildlife conflict, and protect essential habitat. By working with local communities, they also improve people's livelihoods, contribute to local and regional stability, and support U.S. security interests in impoverished regions. This Federal program benefits AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums in their field conservation efforts and partnerships with the USFWS.

The EPA offers valuable environmental education initiatives that AZA encourages you to support. Education programs at AZA-accredited institutions provide essential learning opportunities, particularly about science, for schoolchildren in formal and informal settings. Studies have shown that American schoolchildren are lagging behind their international peers in certain subjects including science and math. In the last 10 years, accredited zoos and aquariums formally trained more than 400,000 teachers, supporting science curricula with effective teaching materials and hands-on opportunities. School field trips annually connect more than 12,000,000 students with the natural world. Increasing access to formal and informal science education opportunities has never been more important.

Tragically, elephants are being slaughtered for their ivory. From 2010 to 2014, 81 AZA-accredited facilities provided nearly $5.8 million to Asian and African elephant field conservation efforts. Sadly, it is estimated that 96 elephants are killed by poachers in Africa every day for their ivory, a total of 35,000 per year. Much of this ivory ends up in the United States, which continues to be one of the largest markets for ivory in the world.

In 2013, the AZA joined The Wildlife Conservation Society as a partner in the 96 Elephants Campaign—an effort focused on securing a U.S. moratorium on illegal ivory; bolstering protection of African elephants; and educating the public about the link between ivory consumption and the elephant poaching crisis. Through the 96 Elephants campaign, millions of zoo visitors can take action to stop the demand for ivory here in the United States and around the world. The USFWS has proposed a rule to eliminate loopholes in the commercial elephant ivory trade. Any delay in this process comes at the expense of Africa's elephants which desperately need action now.

Finally, much of the important conservation work at AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums depends on a robust and fully staffed USFWS. Acknowledging the budget challenges facing Congress and the agencies, I encourage you to ensure that the USFWS has sufficient resources to employ qualified professionals, particularly for the programs handling permits, which support the science-based conservation breeding and wildlife education programs that require animals to be moved in an efficient, timely manner: International Affairs (Management Authority), Endangered Species, Law Enforcement, and Migratory Birds.

AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums are essential conservation and education partners at the Federal, State, and local levels domestically as well as internationally. To ensure that AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums can continue to serve in these important roles, I urge you to include $11,100,000 for the Multinational Species Conservation Funds operated by the USFWS, $15,800,000 for the USFWS's International Affairs program, and $11,100,000 for National Environmental Education Act programs at the Environmental Protection Agency in the fiscal year 2017 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE BRISTOL BAY AREA HEALTH CORPORATION

The requests of the Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation for the fiscal year 2017 Indian Health Service (IHS) budget and our comments on BIA Recognition are as follows:

—Allocate at least an additional $12.5 million to the IHS to fully fund Village Built Clinic (VBC) leases and make it a line item in the budget.
—Active support by the subcommittee to change Contract Support Costs funding to a permanent, mandatory funded basis and eliminate provisos on indefinite funding that could be misread to conflict with the carryover funding authority in the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act.
—Increase IHS behavioral healthcare funding.
—Funding for built-in costs.
—Urge the Department of Interior to issue a decision regarding recognition of Knugank.

The Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation (BBAHC) was created in 1973 to provide healthcare services to Alaska Natives of Southwest Alaska. BBAHC began operating and managing the Kanakanak Hospital and the Bristol Bay Service Unit for the

IHS in 1980, and was the first tribal organization to do so under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA). BBAHC is a co-signer to the Alaska Tribal Health Compact with the IHS under the ISDEAA and is now responsible for providing and promoting healthcare to the people of 28 Alaska Native Villages.

We have made significant progress but now deal with modern-day health problems. Today, rather than TB and influenza epidemics, we struggle with diseases of a modern society that include chronic illnesses such as cancer, diabetes and heart disease. The life expectancy of our people has increased from 47 years of age in 1952 to 69.4 in 1998, still below that of U.S. residents and other Alaskans. We are strengthening our programs and services to address chronic illnesses as well as continuing to provide acute care services that dominated healthcare need much of the past 100 years for the people of Bristol Bay.

VILLAGE BUILT CLINICS

We appreciate that the fiscal year 2016 appropriations act included $2 million to supplement funds for operational costs at tribal clinics in spaces acquired through full service leases, which we understand was intended for all Village Built Clinics (VBCs) in Alaska. Even when this additional funding is finally allocated, VBC facilities will continue to face a significant funding crisis in our region. Our 27 VBCs are essential to our ability to maintain our Community Health Aide/Practitioner (CHA/P) programs which provide the only local source of healthcare for many of our Alaska Native people.

Because the CHA/Ps could not operate in most of rural Alaska without clinic facilities in the Alaska Native villages, the IHS established the VBC leasing program in the 1970s, but the leases have been chronically underfunded ever since. Lease rental amounts for VBCs have failed to keep pace with costs; the majority of leases have not increased since 1989. Unlike tribal healthcare facilities in the lower 48 States, the IHS treats VBCs as being ineligible for maintenance and improvement funding, for which Congress appropriated over $73.6 million in fiscal year 2016. Current funding for the VBCs is not sufficient to cover the cost of repair and renovation as necessary to maintain the facilities in a safe condition.

The regional tribal health organizations collaborated with the Alaska Native Health Board and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium to develop an updated needs assessment for VBCs, called "Village Based Clinics in Crisis 2015." According to the report, lease amounts in fiscal year 2015 covered less than 30 percent of the basic operating costs of the VBCs. The report estimates that an additional $12.5 million in funding—in addition to the $4.5 million in current annual funding—would be needed to maintain and operate Alaska VBCs on a par with similar tribal health facilities elsewhere. We request that you direct the IHS to (1) add an additional $12.5 million to the current amount being provided for the VBCs, (2) request that amount in a separate line in the IHS budget, and (3) allocate that amount to the VBC lease program.

CONTRACT SUPPORT COSTS (CSC) MANDATORY FUNDING

We wish to extend our thanks for the change made in funding to CSC in the fiscal year 2016 appropriations act, which made the fiscal year 2016 CSC funding for an indefinite amount. This shift helped to ensure that CSC would be fully funded without having to reprogram funding for critical healthcare services and other programmatic funding to cover the CSC need.

For fiscal year 2017, we support the President's request for an appropriation of "such sums as may be necessary," with an estimated $800 million for CSC for the IHS, and an estimated $278 million for the BIA, in separate accounts in both the IHS and BIA discretionary budgets. However, we request the removal of the following proviso: "amounts obligated but not expended by a tribe or tribal organization for contract support costs for such agreements for the current fiscal year shall be applied to contract support costs otherwise due for such agreements for subsequent fiscal years." This proviso is problematic because it could be misread to effectively deny the carryover authority granted by the ISDEAA.

BBAHC strongly believes, however, that the indefinite appropriation of CSC funding must be made mandatory and permanent. Under the ISDEAA, the full payment of CSC is not discretionary; it is a legal obligation, affirmed by the U.S Supreme Court. Funding of CSC on a discretionary basis has placed the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations, in their own words, of being in the "untenable position of appropriating discretionary funds for the payment of any legally obligated contract support costs." We are committed to working other Native organizations and Congress to determine how best to achieve that goal.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FUNDING

BBAHC continues to face particular hardships in providing for our communities' behavioral and mental health needs, particularly with regard to our youth. Our Behavioral Health Counseling Center, located in Dillingham, relies on a staff of mental health clinicians to provide outpatient behavioral health services, village outreach services, as well as 24 hour crisis stabilizations services for the entire region. To say the least it is a challenge and there are major gaps in the provision of behavioral healthcare in the region's isolated villages. We have well-qualified professional staff who serve approximately 8,000 people in our region. The 6 mental health, 2 master level social work supervisors, 5 alcohol and drug counsellors, and 7 behavioral health aides theoretically would serve more than 300 persons each. The ratio of mental health clinicians to clients is 1 to 1,300. In addition the significant increase in heroin use in the region has made the provision of quality services increasingly difficult.

Particularly concerning is that the treatment for our youth with substance abuse problems is lacking. Our 14 bed residential facility for substance abuse (Jake's Place) has an Alcohol and Drug Safety Program funded by the State of Alaska but it is primarily an education program, not a treatment program, and much of the education is done remotely, via the Internet. And, as you know, there is an epidemic of suicide among Alaska Natives. Alaska outpaces the rest of the Nation in suicide rates and suicide attempts requiring hospitalization. Alaska Native teens commit suicide at a rate nearly six times that of non-Native teenagers.

It seems that finally there is increased attention nationally by policy makers to behavioral health issues. Thus we appreciate the $10 million appropriated in fiscal year 2016 in the IHS Alcohol and Substance Abuse line item for the Generations Indigenous (Gen-I) initiative to address youth behavioral, mental health and substance abuse issues. This funding will be critical for the hiring of staff to provide more services and prevention programs for our youth. We ask for your support to fund the expansion of the Gen-I program in fiscal year 2017. The administration is requesting a $16.8 million increase focused on youth: $15 million to expand Gen-I for additional staffing and $1.8 million for a pilot program that would provide a continuum of care for youth after discharge from a Youth Regional Treatment Center.

We also support the administration's proposed $25 million increase in the IHS Mental Health account. It would consist of $21.4 million to integrate behavioral health services more broadly in the healthcare system, including to community-based programs, and $3.6 million for a "Zero Suicide Initiative".

BUILT-IN COSTS

We support the administration's fiscal year 2017 request of $159 million for built-in costs: $75.4 million for medical inflation at a 5.8 percent rate; $26 million for pay costs; and $43.2 million to partially fund population growth. Built-in costs are often sacrificed in the budget negotiation process, but lack of them impacts all programs. Inflation—both medical and non-medical, pay raises that must be afforded to employees, and population growth are real facts of life that impact our ability to provide sufficient healthcare services. The cumulative effect of underfunding of built-in costs over a period of years takes a significant toll on our budgets and ultimately on our ability to provide a range of quality healthcare services. We urge Congress to fund this request.

KNUGANK RECOGNITION

We bring to your attention the efforts to get the Department of Interior to correct the omission of Knugank (which is in the Bristol Bay region) from the list of federally recognized tribes. We are supporting Knugank in this effort and are hopeful this this situation will be corrected soon although there has been a series of delays in issuing a decision.

In a January 2012 letter to Senator Murkowski, the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs explained that Knugank could be added to the list of recognized tribes if it meets the standards established by Congress in Section 1 of the Alaska Amendment to the Indian Reorganization Act (25 U.S.C. § 473a). Several months later, the office of the Assistant Secretary agreed to evaluate Knugank's extensive documentation, and based on the statutory standards, issue a decision regarding Knugank's eligibility to be included on the list of recognized tribes. Several times we have been told that a decision (which we believe will be favorable to Knugank) is imminent and that all needed information has been provided. Now, after significant investments made over the course of many years by BBAHC, Knugank, Members of Congress

and the Agency to resolve this matter, we understand that the Offices of the Solicitor and Assistant Secretary have completed their review but still have not taken the final steps necessary to issue a decision.

BBAHC is deeply troubled by the Agency's continued delays. We respectfully request that this subcommittee exercise its oversight responsibility to ensure that the Assistant Secretary issues a decision in the coming days so that the substantial investment of Federal and tribal resources is not wasted but instead serves to fully resolve Knugank's tribal status. We expect this decision will correct the Agency's omission of Knugank from the list of federally recognized tribes, affirm their eligibility to organize as a tribe under the standards and precedent established by the Alaska Amendment to the Indian Reorganization Act, and allow Knugank its rightful government-to-government status and access to an array of Federal resources.

Other. There is no room within the page limits to comment on all issues but we want you to know that we support a permanent reauthorization of the Special Diabetes Program for Indians, for establishment of Medicare-like Rates for non-hospital services thus stretching our Purchased/Referred Care dollars, and, as Congress has done for the VA medical accounts, providing funding to IHS on an advance appropriations basis so that may have better lead time for our planning, budgeting, and purchasing processes and for our recruitment of personnel.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns and needs.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE CENTRAL ARIZONA WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

On behalf of the Central Arizona Water Conservation District (CAWCD), I encourage you to include $1.5 million for salinity specific projects in the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Soil, Water and Air Program in fiscal year 2017. The funding will help protect the water quality of the Colorado River that is used by approximately 40 million people for municipal and industrial purposes and used to irrigate approximately 5.5 million acres in the United States.

CAWCD manages the Central Arizona Project (CAP), a multi-purpose water resource development and management project that delivers Colorado River water into central and southern Arizona. The largest supplier of renewable water in Arizona, CAP diverts an average of over 1.5 million acre-feet of Arizona's 2.8 million acre-foot Colorado River entitlement each year to municipal and industrial users, agricultural irrigation districts, and Indian communities.

Our goal at CAP is to provide an affordable, reliable and sustainable supply of Colorado River water to a service area that includes more than 80 percent of Arizona's population.

These renewable water supplies are critical to Arizona's economy and to the economies of Native American communities throughout the State. Nearly 90 percent of economic activity in the State of Arizona occurs within CAP's service area. The canal provides an economic benefit of $100 billion annually, accounting for one-third of the entire Arizona gross State product. CAP also helps the State of Arizona meet its water management and regulatory objectives of reducing groundwater use and ensuring availability of groundwater as a supplemental water supply during future droughts. Achieving and maintaining these water management objectives is critical to the long-term sustainability of a State as arid as Arizona.

NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF CONCENTRATED SALTS

Natural and man-induced salt loading to the Colorado River creates environmental and economic damages. EPA has identified that more than 60 percent of the salt load of the Colorado River comes from natural sources. The majority of land within the Colorado River Basin is federally owned, much of which is administered by BLM. Human activity, principally irrigation, adds to salt load of the Colorado River. Further, natural and human activities concentrate the dissolved salts in the River.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has estimated the current quantifiable damages at about $382 million per year to U.S. users with projections that damages would increase to approximately $614 million per year by 2035 if the program were not to continue. These damages include:

—A reduction in the yield of salt sensitive crops and increased water use to meet the leaching requirements in the agricultural sector;

—Increased use of imported water and cost of desalination and brine disposal for recycling water in the municipal sector;

—A reduction in the useful life of galvanized water pipe systems, water heaters, faucets, garbage disposals, clothes washers, and dishwashers, and increased use of bottled water and water softeners in the household sector;

—An increase in the cost of cooling operations and the cost of water softening, and a decrease in equipment service life in the commercial sector;
—An increase in the use of water and the cost of water treatment, and an increase in sewer fees in the industrial sector;
—A decrease in the life of treatment facilities and pipelines in the utility sector; and
—Difficulty in meeting wastewater discharge requirements to comply with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit terms and conditions, and an increase in desalination and brine disposal costs due to accumulation of salts in groundwater basins.

Adequate funding for salinity control will prevent the water quality of the Colorado River from further degradation and avoid significant increases in economic damages to municipal, industrial and irrigation users.

HISTORY OF THE BLM COLORADO RIVER BASIN SALINITY CONTROL PROGRAM

In implementing the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act of 1974, Congress recognized that most of the salts in the Colorado River originate from federally owned lands. Title I of the Salinity Control Act deals with the U.S. commitment to the quality of waters being delivered to Mexico. Title II of the Act deals with improving the quality of the water delivered to users in the United States. This testimony deals specific with Title II efforts. In 1984, Congress amended the Salinity Control Act and directed that the Secretary of the Interior develop a comprehensive program for minimizing salt contributions to the Colorado River from lands administered by BLM.

In 2000, Congress reiterated its directive to the Secretary and requested a report on the implementation of BLM's program (Public Law 106–459). In 2003, BLM employed a Salinity Coordinator to increase BLM efforts in the Colorado River Basin and to pursue salinity control studies and to implement specific salinity control practices. Meaningful resources have been expended by BLM in the past few years to better understand salt mobilization on rangelands. With a significant portion of the salt load of the Colorado River coming from BLM administered lands, the BLM portion of the overall program is essential to the success of the effort. Inadequate BLM salinity control efforts will result in significant additional economic damages to water users downstream.

The threat of salinity continues to be a concern in both the United States and Mexico. On November 20, 2012, a 5 year agreement, known as Minute 319, was signed between the United States and Mexico to guide future management of the Colorado River. Among the key issues addressed in Minute 319 included an agreement to maintain current salinity management and existing salinity standards. The CAWCD and other key water providers are committed to meeting these goals.

CONCLUSION

Implementation of salinity control practices through the BLM Program has proven to be a very cost effective method of controlling the salinity of the Colorado River and is an essential component of the overall Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program.

CAWCD urges the subcommittee to include $1.5 million for salinity specific projects in the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Soil, Water and Air Program. The continuation of funding will prevent further degradation of the water quality of the Colorado River and further degradation and economic damages experienced by municipal, industrial and irrigation users. A modest investment in source control pays huge dividends in improved drinking water quality for nearly 40 million Americans.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA

Thank you for inviting the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma to present written testimony on the fiscal year 2017 President's proposed budgets for the Indian Health Service (IHS) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). I submit this testimony on the funding priorities and budget issues important to the Choctaw Nation and its citizens.

The Choctaw Nation requests that Congress exempt tribal government services and program funding from sequestrations, unilateral rescissions and budget cuts in all future appropriations.

CHOCTAW NATION TRIBAL SPECIFIC REQUESTS IN INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE

A. $24 million Joint Venture Project Staffing for Choctaw National Regional Medical Center

NATIONAL BUDGET REQUESTS—INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE AND BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

B. Special Diabetes Program for Indians—Reauthorize at $200 million/year for 5 years
C. Contract Support Costs—Indian Health Service and Bureau of Indian Affairs
   1. $800 million for IHS full funding ($82 million above 2016 enacted)
   2. Reclassify CSC funding as Mandatory for 2018–2020
   3. $278 million for BIA full funding ($1.0 million above 2016 enacted)
   4. Remove Provisions from all future appropriations "amounts obligated but not expended by a tribe or tribal organization for the current fiscal years shall be applied to CSC otherwise due for such agreements for subsequent fiscal years"
D. Purchased and Referred Care (PRC) (Formerly Contract Health Services). The President's fiscal year 2017 budget includes $48.2 million increase
E. IHS Mandatory Funding (Maintaining Current Services)—provide an increase of $482.4 million over the fiscal year 2016 President's proposed budget
F. Provide Funding Increases to Support the Office of Tribal Self-Governance (IHS) and the Office of Self-Governance (DOI) to fully staff the operations to build capacity to support the increased number of tribes entering Self-Governance

The Choctaw Nation supports the fiscal year 2017 budget requests of the National Congress of American Indians and the National Indian Health Board.

THE CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is the third largest Native American tribal government in the United States with over 208,000 members. The Choctaw Nation territory consists of all or part of 10 counties in southeast Oklahoma, and we are proudly one of the State's largest employers. The Nation operates numerous programs and services under Self-Governance compacts with the United States, including but not limited to: a sophisticated health system serving over 33,000 patients with a hospital in Talihina, Oklahoma, nine (9) outpatient clinics, referred specialty care and sanitation facilities construction; higher education; Johnson O'Malley program; housing improvement; child welfare and social services; law enforcement; and, many others. The Choctaw Nation has operated under the Self-Governance authority in the Department of the Interior (DOI) since 1994 and in the Department of Health and Human Services' IHS since 1995. As a Self-Governance Tribe, the Nation is able to re-design programs to meet tribally specific needs without diminishing the United States' trust responsibility. Self-Governance is now a permanent reality for many tribes.

The Choctaw Nation has improved the health status of our people by operating a healthcare system that is responsive and designed to meet the increasing complex needs of our users. We have benefitted from access to resources that have enabled us to succeed in the challenging healthcare field. We owe much to Self-Governance which authorized flexibility to use Federal appropriations in a way that supports the expansion and growth of the healthcare system we are continuing to build for our people.

A. $24 MILLION—JOINT VENTURE PROJECT STAFFING FOR CHOCTAW NATIONAL REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

The Joint Venture Construction Program (JVCP) is a unique opportunity for the Indian Health Service to partner with tribes and make scarce Federal dollars stretch much farther than in the traditional Federal construction programs. Under the JVCP, the Choctaw Nation will use non-IHS funds to construct a tribally owned healthcare facility that meets IHS design criteria and approval. The IHS will enter into a 20-year nominal lease for the facility and agrees to request appropriations for the operation and maintenance during the lease period.

Choctaw recently settled our past contract support cost claims in both the IHS and BIA; although we have only received payment for the IHS settlement. These funds have contributed greatly to our ability to continue to cultivate a healthcare system. We have enjoyed partnering with the IHS on two JVCP projects; the first was the Idabel Indian Health Care Center in Idabel, Oklahoma in 2005 and a new

Choctaw National Regional Medical Center opening in January 2017. The Choctaw Regional Medical Clinic is a new facility at a new location that will serve Bryan County. It will be equipped with advanced technology which will require new staffing to operate an expanded health system to meet the healthcare needs of the user population.

As new space, the Choctaw Regional Medical Clinic must meet operational and facility readiness. We will have 284 new staff and we have projected that it will take 2 months to orientate, educate and train them so that nothing is new about their jobs on day one. This includes staff orientation, proper operating sequences, appropriate staff alignment, technology integration/implementation and equipment education and implementation. The question remains how will the Choctaw Nation prepare new staff for operational and facility readiness with funding?

Language in the fiscal year 2016 consolidated appropriations bill and in the 2017 budget proposal will put a strain on negotiations between the Nation and IHS to fund the necessary costs to get the staff in place, trained and ready to open. We have been working with IHS to include sufficient funding in the fiscal year 2017 budget request to satisfy their commitment to fund the operational cost of the facility. It is imperative that we are prepared to open the clinic as scheduled with fully orientated, educated and trained staff for operational and facility readiness.

For tribes seeking to offer, improve and/or expand access to healthcare, the JCVP partnership is an added value mutually beneficial partnership between a tribe, its members and the Federal Government. Limitations such as the proviso in the appropriations bill will impede the progress and success of the benefits of this effort.

B. SPECIAL DIABETES PROGRAM FOR INDIANS—SUPPORT 5 YEAR REAUTHORIZATION AT $200 MILLION/YEAR

The Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) has been a top priority for the Choctaw Nation since it was initially authorized in 1997. SDPI is currently reauthorized through March 31, 2015 at a flat-line rate of $150 million/year (since 2004). A flat budget for more than the past decade with the annually rising costs of healthcare translates to a significant reduction in the purchasing power of these appropriations since 2004. Continuing support of the SDPI will maintain critical momentum in diabetes research and care to help bring diabetes-related costs under control. The permanency of SDPI would be a great asset to promoting stability for this important health program and for reversing the trend of Type 2 diabetes in Indian Country. In addition it will provide for staff retention, programmatic long-term planning which increases and improves patient care, and more stable outside contracts with vendors and suppliers.

Congressional funding remains the critical factor in the battle against diabetes and we request that as we continue to work for permanent authorization and mandatory program status, that you urge your colleagues to extend the reauthorization to five (5) years and increase funding to $200 million/year for the SDPI program.

C. CONTRACT SUPPORT COSTS—INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE AND BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

We applaud this subcommittee for its foresight, leadership and creativity in finding a workable solution to fully pay CSC within a difficult budget environment.

1. $800 million for IHS full funding ($82 million above 2016 enacted); Reclassify CSC funding as Mandatory for 2018–2020—The President's budget request for CSC proposes to fully fund the estimated need for IHS CSC at $800 million, an increase of $82 million above fiscal year 2016. The estimated increase also includes a long-term proposal to fully fund CSC by reclassifying IHS CSC to mandatory funding beginning in fiscal year 2018. All tribes agree that the payment of CSC, which is a legal obligation, should not be achieved by reducing directly services to any tribes.
2. $278 million for BIA full funding ($1 million above 2016 enacted)
3. Remove Provisions from all future appropriations "amounts obligated but not expended by a tribe or tribal organization for the current fiscal years shall be applied to CSC otherwise due for such agreements for subsequent fiscal years"

D. Purchased and Referred Care ((PRC) (formerly contract health services). The President's fiscal year 2017 budget includes $48.2 million increase. The PRC program pays for urgent and emergent and other critical services that are not directly available through IHS and tribally operated health programs.

E. IHS mandatory funding (maintaining current services)—provide an increase of $482.4 million over the fiscal year 2016 President's proposed budget. Current services calculate mandatory cost increases necessary to maintain those serv-

ices at current levels. These "mandatories" are unavoidable and include medical and general inflation, pay costs, contract support costs, phasing in staff for recently constructed facilities, and population growth. If these mandatory requirements are not funded, tribes have no choice but to cut health services, which further reduces the quantity and quality of healthcare services available to American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) people.

F. Provide funding increases to support the Office of Tribal Self-Governance (IHS) to fully staff to support the number of tribes entering Self-Governance. In 2003, Congress reduced funding for this office by $4.5 million, a loss of 43 percent from the previous year. In each subsequent year, this budget was further reduced due to the applied congressional rescissions. As of 2015, there are 351 Self-Governance (SG) tribes. This represents slightly over 60 percent of all federally recognized tribes. The Self-Governance process serves as a model program for Federal Government outsourcing, which builds tribal infrastructure and provides quality services to Indian people.

The Choctaw Nation supports the budget requests of the National Congress of American Indians and the National Indian Health Board.

Thank you.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE CHOOSE CLEAN WATER COALITION

Dear Chair Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

The undersigned members of the Choose Clean Water Coalition request continued support for programs that are essential to maintaining and restoring clean water to the rivers and streams throughout the Chesapeake Bay region and to the Bay itself. Two-thirds of the 18 million people in this region get their drinking water directly from the rivers and streams that flow through the cities, towns and farms throughout our six State, 64,000 square mile watershed. This water quality is critical to both human health and to the regional economy.

The efforts to clean the Chesapeake began under President Reagan in 1983. In his 1984 State of the Union speech President Reagan said, "Preservation of our environment is not a liberal or conservative challenge, it's common sense."

To follow a common sense path to maintain healthy local water and restore Chesapeake Bay, which is critical for our regional economy, we request funding for the following programs in fiscal year 2017:

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Chesapeake Bay Program—$73.0 million

We support level funding of $73.0 million for the base budget of the Chesapeake Bay Program, which coordinates Chesapeake Bay watershed restoration and protection efforts. The majority of the program's funds are passed through to the States and local communities for on-the-ground restoration work through programs such as the Small Watershed Grants, Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants, State Implementation Grants, and the Chesapeake Bay Regulatory and Accountability Program grants.

We strongly support the $12 million for the Chesapeake Small Watershed Grants and the Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants—$6 million each—that Congress appropriated in fiscal year 2016. These are two well-run, competitive grant programs that have contributed significantly to water quality improvements throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. These are the Bay Program's only grants that go directly to on-the-ground restoration efforts by local governments and communities. Without specific congressional direction, EPA has, in the past, reallocated this grant money for purposes other than local restoration. This is not the time to stop local implementation of restoration work. We strongly support the language in last year's 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act, where Congress protected these critical local grant programs: "The Committee recommends $73,000,000 for the Chesapeake Bay program. From within the amount provided, $6,000,000 is for nutrient and sediment removal grants and $6,000,000 is for small watershed grants to control polluted runoff from urban, suburban and agricultural lands." We urge you to retain the same language in the fiscal year 2017 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.

Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) —$1.448887 billion

This program is critical to the 1,779 local governments throughout the Chesapeake region. The funding level has eroded over the years as the clean water needs

of local communities have increased dramatically. The Choose Clean Water Coalition supports efforts to close the gap between Federal infrastructure investment in clean water and the known need. For instance, legislation has been recently introduced which would authorize the Clean Water State Revolving Fund grant program at a level of $5.96 billion for fiscal year 2017. This is the direction in which we should be going, but at a minimum, appropriations should not fall below $1.44887 billion the level appropriated in fiscal year 2014 and 2015, when Congress stabilized this critical program. Congress restored most of the President's cuts last year, but the $1.394 billion was 3.7 percent below the fiscal year 2014 and 2015 level.

These low interest loans are critical for clean water and for ratepayers in the Chesapeake region and nationwide. We urge you to support the $1.448887 billion funding level that provided $311 million in low interest loans to local governments in Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. The President's 2017 budget request would cut $102.146 million from those six Chesapeake watershed States and the District of Columbia—a drastic 31 percent cut for our region from the fiscal year 2016 level. We do however, strongly support the provision in the President's budget request that targets 20 percent of the Clean Water SRF funds for "green infrastructure and innovative projects including those to manage stormwater, which helps communities improve water quality while creating green space, mitigating flooding, and enhancing air quality."

The Clean Water SRF allocates money to the States based on a set formula, which is then used for low interest loans to local governments for critical capital construction improvement projects to reduce nutrient and sediment pollution from wastewater treatment and stormwater facilities; nonpoint sources of pollution, such as farms and development; and other sources. The Clean Water SRF enables local governments in the Chesapeake watershed to take actions to protect their local waters to meet Clean Water Act requirements. As the list of clean water infrastructure needs in the Chesapeake region continues to expand, we request that Congress restore funding for the Clean Water SRF at least to its fiscal year 2014 and 2015 levels.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)—Chesapeake Bay Studies—$12.491 million

We support the President's 2017 budget request of $12.491 million for the USGS to provide the critical science necessary for restoration and protection efforts in the Chesapeake Bay region, and to implement the 2014 Chesapeake Watershed Agreement. This includes $500,000 for USGS to collect and use Light Distance and Ranging (LIDAR) data to produce high-quality elevation information needed for the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay in Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. The results will help the Chesapeake Bay Program to develop high-resolution land cover information to more effectively place conservation practices to improve water quality and help conserve healthy watersheds.

The USGS will focus on: (1) understanding the factors affecting freshwater fisheries and streams, including the effects of shale gas drilling; (2) identifying sources and effects of endocrine-disrupting compounds and other contaminants that threaten fisheries and wildlife; (3) assessing the effects of sea level rise and development on coastal wetlands important for waterfowl; (4) forecasting the potential effects of land and climate change to inform land conservation; and (5) monitoring and explaining water quality change to inform nutrient and sediment reduction efforts.

National Park Service—Chesapeake Regional Programs—$3.05 million

The National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office runs a number of small, but very important programs that focus on increasing public access and the use of ecological, cultural and historic resources of the Chesapeake region. Expanding access and public awareness fosters stewardship and protection efforts.

The key programs in the President's fiscal year 2017 budget request that we support are: Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Trails ($2.02 million); Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail ($391,000); Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trail ($151,000); and, support for coordinating these programs through the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office ($488,000).

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR/U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

National Park Service/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/Bureau of Land Management/U.S. Forest Service—Rivers of the Chesapeake Collaborative Landscape Planning Projects—Land and Water Conservation Fund—$28.261 million

We support the President's 2017 budget that calls for the strategic use of funds for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and, for the second consecutive year,

requests funding for the Rivers of the Chesapeake Collaborative Landscape Planning initiative. This effort targets conservation funds for priority landscapes throughout the country; the Rivers of the Chesapeake is one such priority area. These projects will enhance public access and education, preserve key historic and heritage sites and will protect important freshwater and tidal habitat areas critical to an array of fish and wildlife species.

—Bureau of Land Management—Nanjemoy National Resource Management Area (Maryland)—$1.6 million *
—Bureau of Land Management—Nanjemoy National Resource Management Area (Maryland)—$1.668 million
—Bureau of Land Management—Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area (Virginia)—$1.4 million *
—Bureau of Land Management—Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area (Virginia)—$2.8 million
—U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge (Maryland)—$1.2 million *
—U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—James River National Wildlife Refuge (Maryland)—$0.9 million
—U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—Rappahannock River National Wildlife Refuge (Virginia)—$8.5 million
—U.S. Forest Service—George Washington–Jefferson National Forests (Virginia)—$1.0 million
—National Park Service—Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (Virginia)—$2.1 million *
—National Park Service—Appalachian National Scenic Trail (Virginia)—$2.0 million *
—National Park Service—Piscataway Park (Maryland)—$0.55 million
—National Park Service—Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County National Military Park (Virginia)—$4.543 million

* Indicates projects with Current/Discretionary Authority

National Park Service —Land Protection in Maryland through the Land and Water Conservation Fund—$794,000

We support the President's 2017 budget that calls for the strategic use of funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to protect and preserve key assets in the National Park System at Piscataway Park ($794,000) in Maryland. This project will enhance public access and education, preserve key historic and heritage sites and protect key habitat areas critical to an array of fish and wildlife species.

Thank you for your consideration of these very important requests to maintain funding for these programs which are critical to clean water throughout the mid-Atlantic region.

Sincerely,

American Rivers
Anacostia Watershed Society
Audubon Naturalist Society
Blue Heron Environmental Network Inc.
Blue Ridge Watershed Coalition
Blue Water Baltimore
Cecil Land Use Association
Chapman Forest Foundation
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage
Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future
Clean Water Action
Coalition for Smarter Growth
Conservation Pennsylvania
Conservation Voters of Pennsylvania
Delaware Nature Society
Earth Forum of Howard County
Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation
Environment America
Environment Maryland
Environment Virginia
Friends of Accotink Creek
Friends of Dyke Marsh
Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River
Green Muslims
Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake
Izaak Walton League of America
James River Association
Lackawanna River Conservation Association
Lynnhaven River NOW
Maryland Conservation Council
Maryland League of Conservation Voters
Mattawoman Watershed Society
Mehoopany Creek Watershed Association
Middle Susquehanna Riverkeeper
National Aquarium
National Parks Conservation Association
National Wildlife Federation
Nature Abounds
Natural Resources Defense Council
Otsego County Conservation Association
Otsego Land Trust
PennEnvironment

Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Piedmont Environmental Council
Potomac Conservancy
Potomac Riverkeeper
Potomac Riverkeeper Network
Rivanna Conservation Society
Rock Creek Conservancy
Sassafras River Association
Savage River Watershed Association
Shenandoah Riverkeeper
Shenandoah Valley Network
Sidney Center Improvement Group
Sierra Club—Maryland
Sierra Club—Pennsylvania
Sierra Club—Virginia
Sleepy Creek Watershed Association
South River Federation
St. Mary's River Watershed
Stewards of the Lower Susquehanna
Trout Unlimited
Upper Potomac Riverkeeper
Upper Susquehanna Coalition
Virginia Conservation Network
Virginia League of Conservation Voters
Water Defense
West & Rhode Riverkeeper
West Virginia Rivers Coalition

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE CIVIL WAR TRUST

INTRODUCTION

Madame Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony. My name is James Lighthizer, and I am the president of the Civil War Trust. I come before you today to respectfully request that the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee for Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies fund the Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants Program at its authorized amount of $10 million. The program is administered by the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP).

The Civil War Trust is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving America's remaining Civil War, Revolutionary War, and War of 1812 battlefields. Thanks to the generosity of our 200,000 members and supporters, the Civil War Trust has protected more than 42,500 acres of critically important battlefield land in 23 States.

The ABPP Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants Program is an authorized competitive matching grants program that requires a 1-to-1 Federal/non-Federal match, although on most occasions the Federal dollars are leveraged much more than 1-to-1. The program promotes cooperative partnerships between State and local governments and the private sector to protect high priority battlegrounds outside National Park Service boundaries.

BATTLEFIELD LANDS ARE OUR SHARED AMERICAN HERITAGE

America's battlefields are an irreplaceable part of our shared national heritage. When preserved, these battlefields serve as outdoor classrooms to educate current and future generations about the defining conflicts in our country's history. They are living monuments, not just to the men who fought and sacrificed there, but to all who have proudly worn our Nation's uniform. Preserved battlefields are also economic drivers for communities, generating tourism dollars that are extremely important to State and local economies. When these hallowed grounds are lost, they are lost forever.

ORIGINS OF THE PROGRAM

In 1990, Congress created the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission (CWSAC), a blue-ribbon panel composed of lawmakers, historians and preservationists, to examine the status of America's Civil War battlefields. Three years later, the Commission released a report identifying the most important Civil War battlegrounds, prioritizing them according to preservation status and historic significance. In addition, the Commission also recommended that Congress establish a Federal matching grant program to encourage the private sector to invest in battlefield preservation. The Commission's proposal for Federal matching grants was the genesis of today's ABPP Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants Program.

The National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2015 (Public Law 113–291) reauthorized the battlefield acquisition grants program and expanded its eligibility to include Revolutionary War and War of 1812 battlefields, in addition to Civil War battlefields. Similar to the Civil War grants, which are awarded for priority battlefield land identified in the CWSAC report, funding for Revolutionary War and War of 1812 battlefields will target sites listed in a landmark 2007 study by the National Park Service. Among the battlefields that could potentially benefit from the expanded program are: Bennington, New York, and Vermont; Brandywine, Pennsyl-

vania; Cowpens, South Carolina; Caulk's Field, Maryland; Guilford Courthouse, North Carolina; Princeton, New Jersey; River Raisin, Michigan; Saratoga, New York; and Yorktown, Virginia.

Since the program was first funded in fiscal year 1999, grants have been used to protect more than 24,500 acres of hallowed ground in 17 States. Among the many battlefields that have benefited from this program are: Antietam, Maryland; Bentonville, North Carolina; Champion Hill, Mississippi; Chancellorsville, Virginia; Chattanooga, Tennessee; Gettysburg, Pennsylvania; Harpers Ferry, West Virginia; Mill Springs, Kentucky; Prairie Grove, Arkansas; and Wilson's Creek, Missouri. It is important to note that grants are awarded for acquisition of lands from willing sellers only; there is—and never has been—any eminent domain authority.

URGENT NEED FOR FUNDING

The Civil War Trust wishes to thank the subcommittee for its previous support for this valuable program. We recognize that these are difficult economic times and appreciate the constraints on this subcommittee. However, we must point out that the clock is ticking on the remaining battlefields of the Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and Civil War. The Civil War Trust estimates that, in the next decade, most unprotected battlefield land will be either developed or preserved. Full funding for the Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants Program at its authorized level of $10 million a year will enable nonprofit groups like the Trust to protect as many key battlefield lands as possible in the limited time remaining.

CONCLUSION

The Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the Civil War were defining moments in our country's history. Our forbearers secured our independence from Great Britain and forged our democratic ideals during the Revolutionary War and War of 1812. During the Civil War, the great armies of the North and South clashed in hundreds of battles that reunited our union and sounded the death knell for slavery. Preserved battlefields help insure that the sacrifices of these turbulent periods in our Nation's history are never forgotten.

Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall, I sincerely hope you and your subcommittee will consider our request to provide funding of the ABPP Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants Program at its authorized level of $10 million. We look forward to working closely with you as we continue our important work to preserve America's sacred battlefield lands. Thank you for the opportunity to address the subcommittee.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE COALITION AGAINST FOREST PESTS

The Coalition Against Forest Pests consists of non-profit organizations, for-profit entities, landowners, State agency associations and academic scholars who have joined together to improve our Nation's efforts to address forest health threats. We write to ask your support for adequate funding for the Forest Health Management programs—both Federal and cooperative lands—and the Forest and Rangeland Research programs in the USDA Forest Service (USFS). We respectfully request your support in funding the Forest Health Management programs at $100 million—$52 million Federal Lands and $48 million Cooperative Lands—and the Forest and Rangeland Research program at $303 million in fiscal year 2017.

Forested landscapes cover approximately one-third of the total land area of the United States, including 136 million acres in urban environments. Our Nation's forests and trees provide numerous benefits in both rural and urban areas. These benefits include wood products, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, clean water and air, and aesthetic enjoyment. Harvest of numerous woodland products and forest-associated recreation provide hundreds of thousands of jobs and generate considerable economic activity across all 50 States.

These benefits are at risk to attacks by non-native insects and diseases. While most of the monetized losses occur in cities, the threat is to all forests. The Asian longhorned beetle kills trees in 15 botanical families—especially maples and birches which constitute much of the forest reaching from Maine to Minnesota. The polyphagous and Kuroshio shot hole borers now spreading in southern California threaten more than 300 plant species, including tree species that anchor the region's riparian areas as well as half of the trees planted in urban areas of the region. The beetles might also threaten forests in other warm regions of the country such as the Gulf Coast, where some of the host trees grow. In 16 coastal California and Oregon counties, sudden oak death has killed over one million tanoaks as well as hundreds of

thousands of coast live oaks and other trees. Sudden oak death attacks a wide range of trees and shrubs native to eastern forests, including northern red, chestnut, white, and pin oaks; sugar maple; black walnut; mountain laurel; rhododendrons; and viburnum. The emerald ash borer has already killed untold millions of ash trees in 25 States, with resulting damage to wetland and riparian areas and posing a potential threat to dependent invertebrates.

The cost to urban areas and homeowners is staggering: municipal governments across the country spend more than $2 billion each year to remove trees on city property killed by non-native pests. Homeowners spend an additional $1 billion to remove and replace trees on their properties and are absorbing an additional $1.5 billion in reduced property values.

Nor are these pests' damages confined to urban areas. Once a newly introduced species has established a beachhead in the city, it spreads—to suburban woodlots and then into the forest. This phenomenon is illustrated by the spread of the Asian longhorned beetle in Massachusetts, the emerald ash borer across 25 States, and the redbay ambrosia beetle in the southeast.

The risk to forest systems and the benefits we receive from them continues to grow. At least 28 new tree-killing pests have been detected over the last decade. Every day, an estimated 35 shipping containers from abroad carry to our shores a tree-killing pest.

The USFS Forest Health Management Program is a critical resource supporting Federal, State, municipal and landowner efforts to prevent, contain, and eradicate these costly and dangerous pests. The Program has supported Oregon's efforts to slow the spread of sudden oak death; Plains States' strategies to address the threat from emerald ash borer; whitebark pine restoration plantings in the Mountain States; and the decades-old, successful program to slow the spread of the gypsy moth. This program has been cut by 10 percent over the last 5 years, reducing its reach and effectiveness. It is particularly essential that funding for work on "cooperative" lands—that is, State, municipal, and private lands—be restored to $48 million. We ask further that the subcommittee instruct program managers to allocate a higher proportion of total funds to projects targeting non-native insects or pathogens. In recent years, such projects have received only about $12 million, or 13 percent of total program funds.

The USFS Forest and Rangeland Research program provides the scientific foundation for developing effective tools to detect and manage forest pests and the pathways by which they are introduced and spread. As America's forests face increasing pressure from the growing number of non-native pests, a greater research engagement is critical. For example, tools are desperately needed to detect and contain the polyphagous and Kuroshio shot hole borers. Promising research to support breeding ash trees resistant to the emerald ash borer needs to be taken to its conclusion so breeders can begin restoring ash trees. Pathways of introduction and spread require additional analysis, e.g., wood packaging, nursery stock and firewood. To support these efforts, we respectfully request that the subcommittee fund the USFS Forest and Rangeland Research program at $303 million in fiscal year 2017. We ask further that the subcommittee recommend that a higher proportion of these funds be allocated to projects specifically targeting non-native insects or pathogens. In recent years, such projects have received only $5 million—less than 2 percent of total research funding.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE COALITION FOR HEALTHIER SCHOOLS

Dear Senators:

On behalf of more than 150 participating parent, public health, environment, and education groups in the Coalition, we urge you to make healthy children and healthy indoor environments a priority in the final fiscal year 2017 Department of Interior, environment and related agencies appropriations. Specifically, we ask that you ensure that EPA's Office of Children's Health Protection and EPA's Indoor Air and Radiation have $16 million over fiscal year 2016 enacted. It is a small sum which can lead to major improvements in the lives of small children in our Nation's PreK–12 schools.

Some 55 million children attend public and private schools every day, yet our Nation's schools—places where 20 percent of Americans who are 95 percent women and children learn and work every day—are woefully unaware or under-prepared to manage their facilities, as numerous studies on schoolhouse neglect have shown. Research also shows that environmentally healthy learning places that are clean, dry

and quiet, and have good ventilation, have lower absenteeism and higher test scores.

As CDC and EPA both know, asthma is the leading cause of school absenteeism, yet CDC's 2012 School Health Policy and Practices key informant survey found too few States and districts with policies that are known to boost attendance and achievement:

—only 42.9 percent of States reported helping schools with Indoor Air Quality; and,

—only 36.3 percent of districts reported having a policy to purchase low-emitting products which reduce contaminants in indoor air.

We urge you to ensure that EPA's Office of Children's Health Protection receive $6 million over fiscal year 2016 enacted to advance children's health and support its voluntary grants for State agencies and for pediatric environmental health services. And we urge that EPA's Office of Air and Radiation/Indoor Environments (Reducing the Risks from Indoor Air) be allocated $10 million over fiscal year 2016 enacted for voluntary grants to reduce children's indoor exposures and asthma in homes, schools, and child care centers, as well as to help schools' address resiliency to severe weather events.

Sincerely,

Alaska Community Action on Toxics
American School Health Association
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Association of School Business Officials International
Asthma Regional Council of New England
Center for Cities + Schools, University of California, Berkeley
Children's Environmental Health Network
Connecticut Foundation for Environmentally Safe Schools
Empire State Consumer Project
Health and Education Alliance of Louisiana
Health Resources in Action
Healthy Schools Network
hellmuth + bicknese architects
Improving Kids' Environment (Indiana)
Maryland Children's Environmental Health Coalition
Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health
Massachusetts Healthy Schools Network
Moms' Clean Air Force
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Center for Environmental Health Strategies
National Education Association—Healthy Schools Caucus
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
Parents for Students' Safety (Tennessee)
School-Based Health Alliance
Sheet Metal Occupational Health Institute Trust (SMOHIT)
Take Care of Your Classroom Air (Texas)
Toxics Information Project (Rhode Island)
Twenty-first Century Schools Fund
U.S. Green Building Council
West Harlem Environmental Action

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE COLORADO RIVER BASIN SALINITY CONTROL FORUM

Waters from the Colorado River are used by nearly 40 million people for municipal and industrial purposes and used to irrigate approximately 5.5 million acres in the United States. Natural and man-induced salt loading to the Colorado River creates environmental and economic damages. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has estimated the current quantifiable damages at about $382 million per year. Congress authorized the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program (Program) in 1974 to offset increased damages caused by continued development and use of the waters of the Colorado River. Modeling by Reclamation indicates that the quantifiable damages would rise to approximately $614 million by the year 2035 without continuation of the Program. Congress has directed the Secretary of the Interior to implement a comprehensive program for minimizing salt contributions to the Colorado River from lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). BLM funds these efforts through its Soil, Water and Air Program. BLM's efforts are an essential part of the overall effort. A funding level of $1.5 million for salinity specific projects in 2017 is requested to prevent further degradation of the quality of the Colorado River and increased downstream economic damages.

EPA has identified that more than 60 percent of the salt load of the Colorado River comes from natural sources. The majority of land within the Colorado River Basin is federally owned, much of which is administered by BLM. In implementing

the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act in 1974, Congress recognized that most of the salts in the Colorado River originate from federally owned lands. Title I of the Salinity Control Act deals with the U.S. commitment to the quality of waters being delivered to Mexico. Title II of the Act deals with improving the quality of the water delivered to users in the United States. This testimony deals specifically with Title II efforts. In 1984, Congress amended the Salinity Control Act and directed that the Secretary of the Interior develop a comprehensive program for minimizing salt contributions to the Colorado River from lands administered by BLM. In 2000, Congress reiterated its directive to the Secretary and requested a report on the implementation of BLM's program (Public Law 106–459). In 2003, BLM employed a Salinity Coordinator to increase BLM efforts in the Colorado River Basin and to pursue salinity control studies and to implement specific salinity control practices. BLM is now working on creating a comprehensive Colorado River Basin salinity control program as directed by Congress. Meaningful resources have been expended by BLM in the past few years to better understand salt mobilization on rangelands. With a significant portion of the salt load of the Colorado River coming from BLM administered lands, the BLM portion of the overall program is essential to the success of the effort. Inadequate BLM salinity control efforts will result in significant additional economic damages to water users downstream.

Concentration of salt in the Colorado River causes approximately $382 million in quantified damages and significantly more in unquantified damages in the United States and results in poor water quality for United States users. Damages occur from:

—a reduction in the yield of salt sensitive crops and increased water use to meet the leaching requirements in the agricultural sector,
—increased use of imported water and cost of desalination and brine disposal for recycling water in the municipal sector,
—a reduction in the useful life of galvanized water pipe systems, water heaters, faucets, garbage disposals, clothes washers, and dishwashers, and increased use of bottled water and water softeners in the household sector,
—an increase in the cost of cooling operations and the cost of water softening, and a decrease in equipment service life in the commercial sector,
—an increase in the use of water and the cost of water treatment, and an increase in sewer fees in the industrial sector,
—a decrease in the life of treatment facilities and pipelines in the utility sector, and
—difficulty in meeting wastewater discharge requirements to comply with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit terms and conditions, and an increase in desalination and brine disposal costs due to accumulation of salts in groundwater basins.

The Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum) is composed of gubernatorial appointees from Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming. The Forum is charged with reviewing the Colorado River's water quality standards for salinity every 3 years. In so doing, it adopts a Plan of Implementation consistent with these standards. The level of appropriation requested in this testimony is in keeping with the adopted Plan of Implementation. If adequate funds are not appropriated, significant damages from the higher salinity concentrations in the water will be more widespread in the United States and Mexico.

In summary, implementation of salinity control practices through BLM is a cost effective method of controlling the salinity of the Colorado River and is an essential component to the overall Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program. Continuation of adequate funding levels for salinity within the Soil, Water and Air Program will assist in preventing the water quality of the Colorado River from further degradation and significant increases in economic damages to municipal, industrial and irrigation users. A modest investment in source control pays huge dividends in improved drinking water quality to nearly 40 million Americans.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE COLORADO RIVER BOARD OF CALIFORNIA

This testimony is in support of fiscal year 2017 funding for the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) associated with the sub-activity that assists Title II of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act of 1974 (Public Law 93–320). This long-standing successful and cost-effective salinity control program in the Colorado River Basin is being carried out pursuant to the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act and the Clean Water Act (Public Law 92–500). Congress has directed the Secretary of the Interior to implement a comprehensive program for

minimizing salt contributions to the Colorado River from lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). BLM funds these efforts through its Soil, Water and Air Program. BLM's efforts are an essential part of the overall effort. A funding level of $1.5 million for salinity specific projects in 2017 is requested to prevent further degradation of the quality of the Colorado River and increased downstream economic damages.

The Colorado River Board of California (Colorado River Board) is the State agency charged with protecting California's interests and rights in the water and power resources of the Colorado River system. In this capacity, California participates along with the other six Colorado River Basin States through the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum), the interstate organization responsible for coordinating the Basin States' salinity control efforts. In close cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and pursuant to requirements of the Clean Water Act, the Forum is charged with reviewing the Colorado River water quality standards every 3 years. The Forum adopts a Plan of Implementation consistent with these water quality standards. The level of appropriation being supported in this testimony is consistent with the Forum's 2014 Plan of Implementation. The Forum's 2014 Plan of Implementation can be found on this Web site: http://coloradoriversalinity.org/docs/2014%20Final%20REVIEW%20-%20complete.pdf. If adequate funds are not appropriated, significant damages associated with increasing salinity concentrations of Colorado River water will become more widespread in the United States and Mexico.

The EPA has determined that more than 60-percent of the salt load of the Colorado River comes from natural sources. The majority of land within the Colorado River Basin is federally owned, much of which is administered by BLM. Through passage of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act in 1974, Congress recognized that much of the salts in the Colorado River originate on federally owned lands. Title I of the Salinity Control Act deals with the U.S. commitment to efforts related to maintaining the quality of waters being delivered to Mexico pursuant to the 1944 Water Treaty. Title II of the Act deals with improving the quality of the water delivered to U.S. users. In 1984, Congress amended the Salinity Control Act and directed that the Secretary of the Interior develop a comprehensive program for minimizing salt contributions to the Colorado River from lands administered by BLM. In 2000, Congress reiterated its directive to the Secretary and requested a report on the implementation of BLM's program (Public Law 106–459). In 2003, BLM employed a Salinity Coordinator to coordinate BLM efforts in the Colorado River Basin States to pursue salinity control studies and to implement specific salinity control practices. BLM is now working on creating a comprehensive Colorado River Basin salinity control program as directed by Congress. With a significant portion of the salt load of the Colorado River coming from BLM-administered lands, the BLM portion of the overall program is essential to the success of the entire effort. Inadequate BLM salinity control efforts will result in significant additional economic damages to water users downstream.

Over the 32 years since the passage of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act, much has been learned about the impact of salts in the Colorado River system. Currently, the salinity concentration of Colorado River water causes about $382 million in quantifiable damages in the United States annually. Economic and hydrologic modeling by Reclamation indicates that the quantifiable damages could rise to more than $614 million by the year 2035 without the continuation of the Salinity Control Program. For example, damages can be incurred related to the following activities:

—a reduction in the yield of salt sensitive crops and increased water use to meet the leaching requirements in the agricultural sector,
—an increase in the amount of imported water,
—an increased cost of desalination and brine disposal for recycling water in the municipal sector,
—a reduction in the useful life of galvanized water pipe systems, water heaters, faucets, garbage disposals, clothes washers, and dishwashers, and increased use of bottled water and water softeners in the household sector,
—an increase in the cost of cooling operations and the cost of water softening, and a decrease in equipment service life in the commercial sector,
—an increase in the use of water and the cost of water treatment, and an increase in sewer fees in the industrial sector,
—a decrease in the life of treatment facilities and pipelines in the utility sector,
—difficulty in meeting wastewater discharge requirements to comply with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit terms and conditions, and

—an increase in desalination and brine disposal costs due to accumulation of salts in groundwater basins.

The Colorado River is, and will continue to be, a major and vital water resource to the nearly 20 million residents of southern California, including municipal, industrial, and agricultural water users in Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura Counties. The protection and improvement of Colorado River water quality through an effective salinity control program will avoid the additional economic damages to users in California and the other States that rely on Colorado River water resources.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) is pleased to share its view on the Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) fiscal year 2017 budget. We have specifically identified the following funding needs and one request for review:

1. $9.95 million for Columbia River Fisheries Management under Rights Protection Implementation, ($5.3 million above fiscal year 2016), to meet the base program funding needs of the Commission and the fisheries programs of our member tribes;
2. $4.8 million for U.S./Canada Pacific Salmon Treaty under Rights Protection Implementation, ($520,000 above fiscal year 2016) to implement obligations under the recent agreements adopted by the U.S. and Canada;
3. $8.0 million for Tribal Climate Resilience under Rights Protection Implementation to assist tribes in climate change adaptation and planning (supporting the POTUS request);
4. $10.4 million for Fish, Wildlife and Parks Projects, (supporting the POTUS request);
5. $352.5 million for Public Safety and Justice, of which $943,000 supports enforcement of Federal laws at In-Lieu and Treaty Fishing Access Sites on the Columbia River.

History and Background

CRITFC was founded in 1977 by the four Columbia River Treaty Tribes: Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, and the Nez Perce Tribe. CRITFC provides coordination and technical assistance to these tribes in regional, national and international efforts to protect and restore our shared salmon resource and the habitat upon which it depends. Our collective ancestral homeland covers nearly one-third of the entire Columbia River Basin in the United States, an area the size of the State of Georgia.

In 1855, the U.S. entered into treaties with the four tribes[1] whereupon we ceded millions of acres of our homelands to the U.S. In return, the U.S. pledged to honor our ancestral rights, including the right to fish in all Usual and Accustomed locations. Unfortunately, a perilous history brought the salmon resource to the edge of extinction with 12 salmon and steelhead populations in the Columbia Basin listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The CRITFC tribes have arrived as globally-recognized leaders in fisheries restoration and management working in collaboration with State, Federal and private entities. We are principals in the region's efforts to halt the decline of salmon, lamprey and sturgeon populations and rebuild them to levels that support ceremonial, subsistence and commercial harvests. To achieve these objectives, our actions emphasize 'gravel-to-gravel' management including supplementation of natural stocks, healthy watersheds and collaborative efforts.

The programs in this testimony are carried out pursuant to the Indian Self-Determination and Assistance Act. Our programs are integrated as much as possible with State and Federal salmon management and restoration efforts.

Columbia River Fisheries Management Within Rights Protection Implementation

We are succeeding. The salmon, returning in greater numbers, tell us so. But along with success, management increases in complexity, requiring greater data collection and enforcement. Funding shortfalls prohibit the achievement of tribal self-determination goals for fisheries management, ESA recovery effort, protecting non-

[1] Treaty with the Yakama Nation, June 9, 1855, 12 Stat. 951; Treaty with the Tribes of Middle Oregon, June 25, 1855, 12 Stat. 963; Treaty with the Umatilla Tribe, June 9, 1855, 12 Stat. 945; Treaty with the Nez Perce Tribe, June 11, 1855, 12 Stat. 957.

listed species, conservation enforcement and treaty fishing access site maintenance. We request an increase of $4.4 million over fiscal year 2015 for a new program base of $8.95 million for Columbia River Fisheries Management.

The BIA's Columbia River Fisheries Management line item is the base funding that supports the fishery program efforts of CRITFC and the four member tribes. Unlike State fish and game agencies, the tribes do not have access to Dingell-Johnson/Pittman-Robertson or Wallop-Breaux funding. The increase will be directed to support the core functions of the fisheries management programs of the Commission's member tribes, namely enforcement, harvest monitoring and renegotiation support for four primary agreements including Columbia River Treaty modernization.

In 2008, CRITFC and its member tribes struck three landmark agreements: (1) the Columbia Basin Fish Accords with Federal action agencies overseeing the Federal hydro system in the Columbia Basin,[2] (2) a 10-Year Fisheries Management Plan with Federal, tribal and State parties under U.S. v OR, and (3) a new Chinook Chapter of the Pacific Salmon Treaty.[3] These agreements establish regional and international commitments on harvest and fish production efforts, commitments to critical investments in habitat restoration, and resolving contentious issues by seeking balance of the many demands within the Columbia River basin. While through these agreements the tribes have committed to substantial on-the-ground projects with some additional resources from the Bonneville Power Administration, the overall management responsibilities of the tribal programs have grown exponentially without commensurate increases in BIA base funding capacity. For example, the tribes' leadership in addressing Pacific Lamprey declines is this species' best hope for survival and recovery. The tribes' are also addressing unmet mitigation obligations, such as fish losses associated with the John Day and The Dalles dams.

The funding provided through the BIA to support tribal fishery programs is crucial to the tribes' and CRITFC's ability to successfully carry out tribal rights protection, including these agreements, by providing sound technical, scientific and policy products to diverse legal, public and private forums. Rights Protection Implementation funding takes on even greater importance as funding for State co-management agencies has become inconsistent or decreased. Below are priority need areas for CRITFC and our member tribes.

Youth Program Initiatives

The Columbia River Treaty Tribes place an emphasis on preparing our youth for careers in Natural Resources Management. However, our tribes, like tribes nationwide, struggle to overcome barriers to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics achievement, high dropout rates, and low percentages of students pursuing natural resources majors. Our Place-Based Workforce Development Initiative seeks to address these barriers through a blend of technical assistance, intern and externship opportunities and a summer Salmon Camp.

Columbia River Treaty Modernization

The Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission's member tribes are part of a coalition of 15 Columbia Basin tribes whose rights, as well as management authorities and responsibilities, are substantially affected by the implementation of the Columbia River Treaty. In order for treaty modernization to succeed, the Columbia Basin tribes need to continue to coordinate internally and with other regional and national entities, as well as continue their analytical evaluation of the treaty including the impacts of climate change, while the State Department evaluates the Regional Recommendation and completes their national interests review.

U.S./Canada Pacific Salmon Treaty Under Rights Protection Implementation

The U.S. and Canada entered into the Pacific Salmon Treaty in 1985 to conserve and rebuild salmon stocks, provide for optimum production, and control salmon interceptions. The treaty established the Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC) as a forum to collaborate on intermingled salmon stocks. The U.S. Section of the PSC annually develops a coordinated budget for tribal, State and Federal programs to ensure cost and program efficiencies. Congress increased funding in 2000 in order to implement the 1999 Agreement, but funding has significantly eroded since then. In 2008, the U.S. and Canada adopted a new long term treaty agreement after nearly 3 years of negotiations. Both parties agreed to significant new management research and monitoring activities to ensure the conservation and rebuilding of the shared salmon resource.

---

[2] The Nez Perce Tribe is not a Columbia Basin Fish Accord signatory.

[3] *See* "Salmon Win A Triple Crown" at http://www.critfc.org/text/wana__109.pdf.

For tribal participants in the Pacific Salmon Treaty, the U.S. Section has identified a program need of $4.8 million for the 25 participating tribes. These funds provide for direct tribal participation with the Commission, panels and technical committees. The funding enables the tribes to assist in treaty implementation and facilitates management protecting trust resources. This funding maintains tribal resource assessment and research programs structured to fulfill required treaty implementation activities. The fiscal year 2017 recommended level for this program is an increase of $520,000 above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level. Our request correlates to the U.S. Section's recommendation.

Tribal Climate Resilience

The Columbia River Treaty Tribes are feeling the effects of Climate Change. Shifts are occurring in salmon run timing, and berry and root ripening cycles. In 2015, climate-related stress in the form of historic forest fires and the loss of up to 400,000 sockeye salmon due to elevated water temperatures illustrate our climate crisis. We support the President's request of an increase of $2.5 million to implement Tribal Climate Resilience. CRITFC is concerned about the underlying lack of fairness in the distribution of climate change funding with Rights Protection Implementation since the fund's appearance in 2014. Attempts at a collaborative process have not yielded a consensus. We conditionally support the President's directive of a "competitive process" as a means to an end. This process could lead to a better assessment of treaty-based climate needs and metrics to best put dollars on the ground.

Fish, Wildlife and Parks Projects

We support the President's request to support Federal facilities maintenance.

Public Safety and Justice, Criminal Investigations and Police Services

Public safety continues to be a high priority for CRITFC and our tribes. Our conservation and criminal enforcement officers are the cornerstone of public safety in the popular and heavily used Columbia Gorge area patrolling 150 miles of the Columbia River, including its shorelines in Oregon and Washington. In this area we are the primary provider of enforcement services at 31 fishing access sites developed pursuant to Public Law 87–14 and Public Law 100–581 for use by treaty fishers. CRITFC's officers have obtained BIA Special Law Enforcement Commissions to aid our efforts protecting and serving tribal members and Federal trust properties along the Columbia River. We are also very pleased that the BIA has created OJS District 8 and housed it in Portland. CRITFC entered into a Public Law 93–638 contract with BIA in February 2011 for enforcement services along the Columbia River. That contract currently provides funding for two enforcement positions.

Our immediate priority is to add two patrol officers, one sergeant, one investigator and one dispatcher. Full funding for this Enforcement need is $943,000 which would support a total of four officers, one sergeant, an investigator and a dispatcher.

A Request for Review of Salmon Mass-Marking Programs

CRITFC endeavors to secure a unified hatchery strategy among tribal, Federal and State co-managers. To that end, we seek to build hatchery programs using the best available science, regional expertise and supported by adequate, efficient budgets. A congressional requirement, delivered through prior appropriations language, to visibly mark all salmon produced in federally funded hatcheries circumvents local decisionmaking and should be reconsidered. We have requested that Federal mass-marking requirements, and correlated funding, be reviewed for compatibility with our overall objective of ESA delisting and with prevailing laws and agreements: U.S. v Oregon, Pacific Salmon Treaty and the Columbia Basin Fish Accords.[4] Salmon managers should be provided the latitude to make case-by-case decisions whether to mark fish and, if so, in the appropriate percentages.

In summary, through the combined efforts of the four Columbia River Treaty Tribes, supported by a staff of experts, we are proven natural resource managers. Our activities benefit the region while also essential to the U.S. obligation under treaties, Federal trust responsibility, Federal statutes, and court orders. We ask for your continued support of our efforts. We are prepared to provide additional information you may require on the Department of Interior's BIA budget.

---

[4] Letter from Bruce Jim, Chairman, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission to U.S. House of Representatives Chairmen Frank Wolf, Mike Simpson and Doc Hastings, July 11, 2011.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE CONGRESSIONAL FIRE SERVICES INSTITUTE, THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS, AND THE NATIONAL VOLUNTEER FIRE COUNCIL

Dear Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall, and members of the subcommittee:

On behalf of the Congressional Fire Services Institute, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, and National Volunteer Fire Council, thank you for the opportunity to offer written comments on appropriations levels for fiscal year 2017. Our organizations urge you to fund the Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) grant program at $16 million, the fiscal year 2010-enacted appropriations level, for fiscal year 2017.

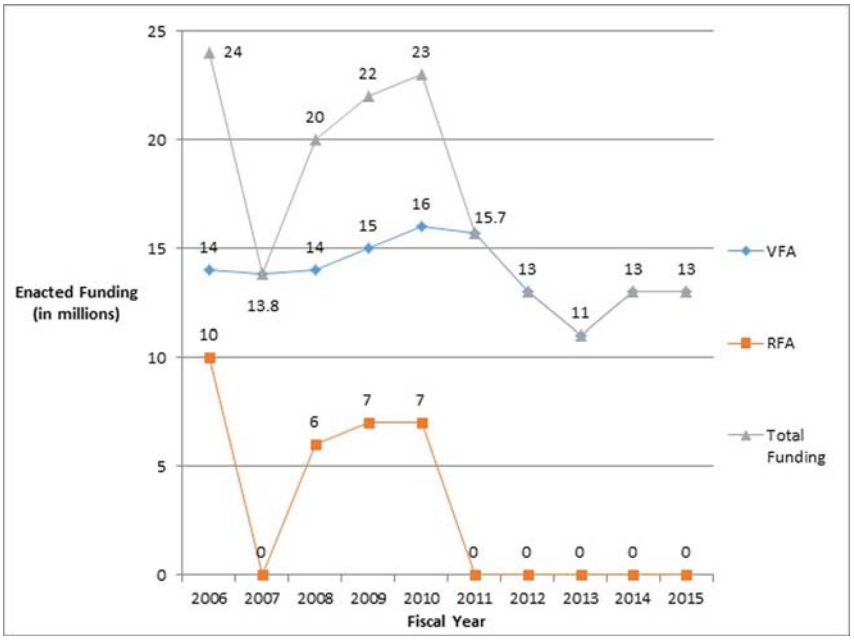
As you are aware, the United States is facing an alarming trend with the growth of wildland fires. The cost of suppressing these fires is reaching new heights as more than 50 percent of the U.S. Forest Service's (USFS) annual budget now goes to fighting wildland fires. Local fire departments play a key role in assisting the USFS extinguish wildland fires. More than 80 percent of wildland fires are extinguished on initial attack by local fire departments. The USFS estimates that the value of the service provided by local fire departments exceeds $36 billion per year. Despite the significant value of service provided by our Nation's fire and emergency service, the Federal Government's commitment to supporting these agencies has dwindled since fiscal year 2006.

The VFA program is an extremely successful and effective program aimed at supporting fire departments that protect communities with a population of 10,000 or less. VFA grants are provided on a 50/50 matching basis and are generally used to help budget-strapped departments procure new equipment, refurbish old fire apparatus, and train personnel. According to the USFS, in fiscal year 2015, the VFA program assisted 9,318 communities by providing training to 22,272 firefighters, expanding and organizing 20 fire departments, and facilitating the purchase, rehabilitation, and maintenance of $8.1 million in equipment. While these are impressive accomplishments for the VFA program, even more communities could be supported if VFA received a proper funding level of $16 million.

The chart below illustrates the dramatic decrease in funding for rural fire departments. Just 10 years ago, in fiscal year 2006, the USFS' VFA program was funded at $14 million and the Rural Fire Assistance (RFA) program, which was a similarly operated grant program at the Department of the Interior (DOI), was funded at $10 million. Together, these programs provided $24 million to America's rural fire departments. Though these amounts fluctuated over the years, these grants provided an average of nearly $21 million per fiscal year to rural fire departments. Sadly, the RFA program was eliminated in fiscal year 2011 and has not been funded since. In addition to the elimination of RFA, VFA received deep cuts of nearly 30 percent in the three fiscal years following the elimination of RFA. While VFA has received slight funding increases since fiscal year 2013, VFA is still funded at nearly 20 percent less than it was in fiscal year 2010—a year when $7 million in RFA funding also was available to support America's rural fire departments.

The decrease in funding for VFA, coupled with the complete elimination of RFA in fiscal year 2011, has significantly hampered the ability of local fire departments to partner with the USFS and protect at-risk communities. In July 2015, the House unanimously adopted an amendment to their fiscal year 2016 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies bill that attempted to provide a modest increase of $1 million for VFA. Unfortunately, the Senate did not concur with this amendment and the VFA program was funded at $13 million for fiscal year 2016.

With the elimination of RFA in mind, restoring the VFA program to its fiscal year 2010 funding level will allow a greater level of operational readiness and capability for thousands of rural fire departments across the Nation. Improving the capabilities of these fire departments will not only benefit their communities but also the USFS as local fire departments will be more effective partners in extinguishing wildland fires. Our organizations firmly believe that an investment in the VFA program will yield savings for the USFS' Wildland Fire Management account.



Thank you for your support of our Nation's rural fire departments and for the opportunity to offer these recommendations. We look forward to working with you to restore the VFA program to a funding level of $16 million and protecting our Nation from the dangers of wildland fire.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE CONSERVATION FUND

Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall, and Members of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, thank you for this opportunity to submit outside witness testimony on behalf of The Conservation Fund (TCF). TCF supports full funding of the President's budget request of $900 million in fiscal year 2017 for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) discretionary and mandatory proposals, which includes the Federal land acquisition programs of the Bureau of Land Management ($88.77 million), National Park Service ($134.457 million), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ($137.622 million), U.S. Forest Service ($128 million), as well as three State grant programs: the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund ($108.495 million); National Park Service's State Conservation Grants ($110.006 million); and the U.S. Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program ($100 million). TCF also supports full funding of the President's request for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's North American Wetlands Conservation Fund ($35.145 million); the U.S. Forest Service's Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program ($5 million); and the Department of Interior's (DOI)—Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program ($9.229 million). TCF requests funding for the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Great Lakes Restoration Initiative ($300 million); EPA's Clean Water State Revolving Funds ($979.5 million) and EPA's Drinking Water State Revolving Funds ($1,020.5 million). Additionally, TCF supports the proposals for the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act reauthorization, the National Park Service Centennial Initiative, and the U.S. Forest Service proposal for a fiscally responsible funding strategy that considers catastrophic wildland fires as disasters (i.e. in line with the Wildland Disaster Fund Act).

TCF is a national, non-profit conservation organization dedicated to conserving America's land and water legacy for future generations. Established in 1985, TCF works with landowners; Federal, State and local agencies; and other partners to conserve our Nation's important lands for people, wildlife and communities. To date, TCF has helped our partners to conserve over 7.5 million acres. These accomplish-

ments are due, in large measure, to the leadership of this subcommittee over many years to appropriate funds to acquire lands for future generations, working forests, recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat, and many other benefits.

Below are highlights of some benefits of the LWCF and land acquisition programs. While these projects show the tremendous diversity of benefits of land acquisition for the public, they have one thing in common—each of these projects is driven by landowners. Many farmers, ranchers and forestland owners have significant financial equity in their land. By enabling a landowner to sell a conservation easement or fee title, the LWCF program provides landowners with funds to stay in business, reinvest in businesses, or meet other financial goals.

As the subcommittee crafts its Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, there are several key points we respectfully request you to consider, listed below.

1. *Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at $900 million ($475 discretionary and $425 mandatory).*—Funding at the recommended $900 million is critical for the Nation's premier conservation program, a bipartisan agreement from 50 years ago. The Conservation Fund supports the President's budget for $475 million in discretionary requests and $425 in mandatory requests. LWCF represents a promise to the Nation that proceeds from offshore oil and gas development will help protect the public trust, and the proposed fiscal year 2017 projects will fulfill that mission.

   The LWCF Budget includes Collaborative Landscape Planning (CLP) areas that we ask you to support: Island Forests at Risk, High Divide, National Trails System, Rivers of the Chesapeake, Florida-Georgia Longleaf Pine, Southern Blue Ridge, and Pathways to the Pacific. In each CLP, several Federal land agencies are partnering with States, local groups, non-profits and private interests to support conservation and make a lasting impact.

   Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Land Acquisition at $88.77 million ($43.595 million discretionary and $44.818 million mandatory).—The BLM and its National Conservation Lands provide some of our Nation's best recreation and historic areas. From exploring ancient petroglyphs in the canyon at Agua Fria National Monument in Arizona to floating the Upper Colorado River Special Recreation Management Area, we request full funding of the agency's discretionary and mandatory project lists.

   National Park Service (NPS) Federal Land Acquisition at $134.457 million ($68.242 million discretionary and $66.215 million mandatory).—Hosting more than 292 million visitors every year, the over 400 National Park units provide an economic boost to their local communities and those employed directly and indirectly. Funding for NPS LWCF will help protect key access points for recreation, historic areas, trails and more, including at Little River Canyon National Preserve in Alabama and Captain John Smith National Historic Trail in Maryland, Virginia, and Delaware. We respectfully request full funding of the agency's discretionary and mandatory project lists.

   U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Land Acquisition at $137.622 million ($58.655 million discretionary and $78.967 million).—National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) are our Nation's protectors of clean water, clean air, abundant wildlife and world-class recreation. Funding for fiscal year 2017 FWS LWCF will help protect water quality in the Chesapeake Bay area, critical wildlife habitat at National Wildlife Refuges in Montana and many other important places. We respectfully request full funding of the agency's discretionary and mandatory project lists.

   U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Land Acquisition at $128 million ($65.653 million discretionary and $62.347 million mandatory).—USFS LWCF funds help with forest management by protecting key inholdings and reducing fire threats. From the Pisgah National Forest in North Carolina to the Caribou-Targhee National Forest in Idaho, we are working with willing landowners at priority project areas and respectfully request full funding of the agency's discretionary and mandatory project lists.

   LWCF State Grant Programs: FWS-Section 6 Cooperative Endangered Species Fund, NPS-State Conservation Grants, and USFS-Forest Legacy.—We encourage the subcommittee to fully fund fiscal year 2017 President's budget request for:

   —*FWS.*—Section 6 Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund: $108.495 million

—*NPS.*—State Conservation Grants: $110.006 million
—*USFS.*—Forest Legacy Program: $100 million

2. *DOI and USFS Land Acquisition Programs.*—TCF encourages the subcommittee to fund:

—*FWS.*—North American Wetlands Conservation Fund: $35.145 million
—*USFS.*—Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program: $5 million

3. *Department of Interior—Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program at $9.229 million.*—The Restoration Program leads the national response for recovery of natural resources that have been injured or destroyed as a result of oil spills or releases of other hazardous substances. Recoveries from responsible parties can only be spent to implement restoration plans developed by the Trustee Council for each incident. These funds are one hundred percent private and represent the amount needed to restore environmental resources or compensate for lost public use since the damage in question. The fiscal year 2017 funds would allow the Program to add carefully targeted staff allocated to Interior bureaus and offices through its Restoration Support Unit in order to accelerate restoration activities.

4. *Environmental Protection Agency—Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GRLI) at $300 million.*—TCF urges funding of GLRI at $300 million. The Initiative provides critical support for on-the-ground restoration programs and projects targeted at the most significant environmental problems in the Great Lakes ecosystem. Over the past 5 years, the Initiative has opened up fish access to more than 3,400 miles of rivers, expanding recreational opportunities. It has also accelerated the cleanup of toxic hotspots, resulting in the delisting of three formerly contaminated sites.

5. *Environmental Protection Agency—State Revolving Funds.*—TCF encourages the Committee to fund:

—Clean Water State Revolving Fund: $979.5 million
—Drinking Water State Revolving Fund: $1,020.5 million

6. *Reauthorization of the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act.*—We support the fiscal year 2017 President's budget request to reauthorize the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA). FLTFA is a western Federal lands program that facilitates strategic Federal land sales by the BLM in order to provide funding for high-priority land conservation within or adjacent to Federal lands in the eleven contiguous western States and Alaska. Over 165 groups are working together to support Congress' efforts to reauthorize FLTFA. FLTFA expired in 2011, and reauthorization will enhance the lands and economy by facilitating Federal land sales and conservation transactions, at no cost to the taxpayer.

7. *Wildlife Disaster Funding Act (S. 235 and H.R. 167) and Avoiding Transfers to Wildland Fire Suppression.*—We support the proposal in the President's budget that would avoid transferring funds Congress appropriates to other priority programs to fund wildland fire suppression. Unfortunately and again in fiscal year 2015, the 10-year average was not enough to meet the USFS suppression needs, forcing the agency to transfer $700 million from non-suppression accounts to make up for the shortfall. In fiscal year 2016, we are thankful to the subcommittee for the full transfer repayment and increased suppression funding in—however, we understand this is not expected to occur every year, and DOI and USFS need a long-term fire funding solution that would result in stable and predictable budgets. We support language mirroring the bipartisan Wildfire Disaster Funding Act (S. 235 and H.R. 167), which is needed to prevent future transfers and ensure that the USFS and DOI can achieve their land management objectives by implementing activities needed to address the growing buildup of hazardous fuels on Federal lands. This language provides the structure to fund a portion of the USFS and DOI wildfire suppression costs through a budget cap adjustment under the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended. The funding structure is similar to that used by other agencies who respond to natural disaster emergencies. We respectfully request a bipartisan fire funding solution that would: (1) access disaster funding, (2) minimize transfers, and (3) address the continued erosion of agency budgets over time, with the goal of reinvesting in key programs that would restore forests to healthier conditions.

The Conservation Fund stands ready to work with you to secure full and consistent funding for the LWCF, Forest Legacy, and the other critically important programs that help protect the environment, economies, forests, and community values across our Nation. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony and your consideration of our request.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE CONSOLIDATED TRIBAL HEALTH PROJECT, INC.

The requests of the Consolidated Tribal Health Project, Inc. (CTHP) for the fiscal year 2017 Indian Health Service (IHS) budget are as follows:

—Provide mandatory funding for contract support costs, and eliminate language that may be misread to conflict with the carryover funding authority in the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act.
—Shield the IHS from sequestration in fiscal year 2017 and beyond.
—Place IHS funding on an advance appropriations basis.
—Provide funding for built-in costs.
—Provide the requested $25 million increase for behavioral health.

The Consolidated Tribal Health Project, Inc. is an intertribal consortium of nine tribes in Mendocino County in Northern California. We serve more than 3,200 patients, more than three-quarters of whom are American Indian and Alaska Native. We provide comprehensive medical, dental, and behavioral healthcare to our patients, as well as traditional healing and cultural events each month, home visits, and health screenings, and—through the Purchased and Referred Care program—manage care for our patients when they need services beyond that which CTHP provides. We operate under a self-governance agreement with the IHS under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA).[1]

As an intertribal organization providing healthcare services via an ISDEAA agreement, we wish to highlight structural changes in the budget of the IHS that we believe are necessary to ensure the agency's programs and healthcare outcomes for Native people can continue to improve.

Contract Support Costs Mandatory Funding. We wish to thank Congress for fully funding Contract Support Costs (CSC) in fiscal year 2016. For fiscal year 2017, we support the President's request for an appropriation of "such sums as may be necessary," with an estimated $800 million for CSC for the IHS, provided in a separate account in the IHS's discretionary budget. We strongly disagree with the proviso that was included in both the fiscal year 2016 appropriations language and the administration's proposed fiscal year 2017 budget, which states: "amounts obligated but not expended by a tribe or tribal organization for contract support costs for such agreements for the current fiscal year shall be applied to contract support costs otherwise due for such agreements for subsequent fiscal years." This proviso is concerning to us because it could be misread to effectively deny the carryover authority granted by the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. We thus ask that the proviso be removed for fiscal year 2017 and not included in future appropriations for CSC.

We also support the administration's proposal to fully fund CSC on a mandatory basis in fiscal years 2018–2020, though we would prefer that begin in fiscal year 2017 and, of course, that it be a permanent, indefinite appropriation.

We understand that Member-to-Member communications are incredibly important. You have had a lot of experience in the past speaking with Native leaders about their frustrations regarding the inequity of tribes and tribal organizations who contract to assume administration of Federal programs without being paid for the costs to administer them. We ask for your active help in working with the Budget Committee and any others on this proposal for mandatory CSC funding.

Protect the IHS from Sequestration. We are glad that Congress took action to avert a sequestration of IHS funds in fiscal years 2014, 2015, and 2016. However, we are concerned that the IHS's funding may be subject to sequestration in future years. The IHS was subject to sequestration in fiscal year 2013 of roughly 5 percent of its overall budget, even though other health programs—such as the Veterans Administration (VA), State Medicaid grants and most of Medicare—were not. The VA was made fully exempt from sequestration for all programs administered by the VA. *See* § 255 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act (BBEDCA), as

---

[1] Our consortium includes the Cahto Indian Tribe of the Laytonville Rancheria, Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians, Guidiville Rancheria, Hopland Band of Pomo Indians, Pinoleville Pomo Nation, Potter Valley Tribe, Redwood Valley Rancheria, Sherwood Valley Rancheria, and an ex oficio member from the Yokayo Provisional Council Tribe. We serve both Native and non-Native patients in our area.

amended by Public Law 111–139 (2010). We strongly urge Congress to fully exempt the IHS from any future sequestration, just as the VA and other health programs are exempt.

IHS Advance Appropriations. We ask to Committee to transition the IHS budget to an advance appropriations basis. We know you are sympathetic to our frustrations caused by the funding of IHS and other Federal agencies via Continuing Resolutions. Over the past several fiscal periods, appropriations have been enacted well after the beginning of the Federal fiscal year. The current (fiscal year 2016) fiscal year funding was enacted two and half months after the beginning of the fiscal year. In fiscal years 2015 and 2014 it was 2.5 and 3.5 months, respectively. In fiscal year 2013 it was 6 months after the start of the fiscal year before the appropriations were enacted. This significantly harms our ability to provide healthcare services. We want to do the best job possible in planning, decisionmaking and administering programs, but are limited by not knowing how much funding will be available or when it will be available. It also requires us to constantly modify our budget—time and resources that would be better devoted to providing healthcare services, improving the efficiency of service delivery, or pursing third party reimbursements.

The Veterans Administration (VA) funding is on an advance basis, and the Budget and Appropriations Committees have provided the necessary support for that authority. We and others in Indian Country were struck by the justification in the proposed fiscal year 2016 budget (fiscal year 2017 advance appropriations) for the VA:

> For 2017, the Budget requests $63.3 billion in advance appropriations for the three medical care appropriations: Medical Services, Medical Support and Compliance, and Medical Facilities. This request for advance appropriations fulfills the administration's commitment to provide reliable and timely resources to support the delivery of accessible and high-quality medical services for veterans. This funding enables timely and predictable funding for VA's medical care to prevent our Nation's veterans from being adversely affected by budget delays, and provides opportunities to more effectively use resources in a constrained fiscal environment. (Appendix, Budget of the U.S. Government, p. 1058).

The fiscal year 2017 budget proposal continues to discuss VA funding in light of the need to provide "timely, high-quality healthcare for the Nation's veterans." Our need is no less great and the promise made for our healthcare is no less solemn. We ask for parity in this regard.

Funding for Built-in Costs. We appreciate the administration's fiscal year 2017 request of $159 million for built-in costs consisting of $75.4 million for medical inflation at a 5.8 percent rate; $26 million for pay costs; and $43.2 million to partially fund population growth. Built-in costs are often sacrificed in the budget negotiation process, and when they are not includes, it affects all programs. Inflation (both medical and non-medical), essential pay raises for employees, and population growth are real facts of life that affect our ability to provide sufficient healthcare services. We urge Congress to fund this request.

Funding for Behavioral Health. We support the administration's much-needed request of a $25 million increase for a Behavioral Health Integration Initiative. The goal of that Initiative is to integrate behavioral health services into the primary health systems and to collaborate with services that may be provided outside the primary healthcare delivery system, such as substance abuse and mental health services. A portion of the funds ($3.6 million) are to be used for tribes and tribal organizations to establish Zero Suicide programs focusing on the role of medical and behavioral health systems in the prevention of suicide. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that American Indian/Alaska Native youth have the highest rates of suicide-related fatalities in the Nation, and we know it is something we struggle with in our communities; we see this funding as essential.

Thank you for the consideration of the concerns and requests of the Consolidated Tribal Health Project.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE COOPERATIVE ALLIANCE FOR REFUGE ENHANCEMENT

Chair Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall, and members of the subcommittee:

The National Wildlife Refuge System stands alone as the only Federal land and water conservation system with a mission that prioritizes wildlife and habitat conservation alongside wildlife-dependent recreation. Since 1995, the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE) has worked to showcase the value of the Refuge System and to secure a strong congressional commitment for conserving these special landscapes.

Found in every U.S. State and Territory, national wildlife refuges conserve a diversity of America's environmentally sensitive and economically vital ecosystems, including wetlands, coasts, forests, prairie, tundra, deserts, and oceans, and provide Americans with an opportunity to encounter and engage with these areas.

We ask that the subcommittee provide a funding level of $506.6 million for the Operations and Maintenance accounts of the National Wildlife Refuge System for fiscal year 2017. We also thank you for the much needed $7 million funding increase for fiscal year 2016—the continued support of the subcommittee for refuges will be much appreciated by all of our organizations.

This testimony is submitted on behalf of CARE's 23 member organizations, which represent over 16 million American hunters, anglers, bird and wildlife watchers, scientists, managers, and concerned citizens passionate about wildlife conservation and related recreational opportunities.

American Birding Association
American Fisheries Society
American Sportfishing Association
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Defenders of Wildlife
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
Izaak Walton League of America
Marine Conservation Institute
National Audubon Society
National Rifle Association
National Wildlife Federation
National Wildlife Refuge Association
Safari Club International
Sportsmen's Alliance
The Corps Network
The Nature Conservancy
The Wilderness Society
The Wildlife Society
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Trout Unlimited
Wildlife Forever
Wildlife Management Institute

The National Wildlife Refuge System, established by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903, protects approximately 150 million acres on 563 national wildlife refuges and 38 wetland management districts in every State and Territory in the United States. An additional 418 million acres of water within the Pacific marine monuments round out the total of 568 million acres within the management jurisdiction of the Refuge System. From the Virgin Islands to Guam to Alaska to Maine, the Refuge System spans 12 time zones and protects America's natural heritage in habitats ranging from arctic tundra to arid desert, boreal forest to sagebrush grassland, and prairie wetlands to coral reefs.

A refuge is within an hour's drive from most metropolitan areas, enabling the Refuge System to attract a growing number of visitors each year (48.5 million in fiscal year 2015, up from 46.5 million just 2 years before) providing opportunities for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, kayaking, hiking, and outdoor education. In fact, from 2006–2011, during our Nation's greatest economic recession since the Great Depression, visitation to our national wildlife refuges increased by 30 percent, showcasing the value Americans place on the Refuge System.

CARE welcomes recreational use of our refuges. Refuge visitors generate $2.4 billion annually to local and regional economies—on average returning $4.87 in economic activity for every $1 appropriated—and support 35,000 U.S. jobs.[1] In addition, refuges provide major environmental and health benefits, such as filtering storm water before it is carried downstream and fills municipal aquifers; reducing flooding by capturing excess rainwater; and minimizing the damage to coastal communities from storm surges. Refuges generate more than $32.3 billion in these ecosystem services each year, a return of over $65 for every $1 appropriated by Congress.[2]

The Refuge System budget is now $77 million below the level needed to keep pace with inflation plus salary increases, relative to the fiscal year 2010 budget of $503.2 million. Workforce has declined in that time by over 500 positions, who provided services such as administration, maintenance, fire management, wildlife management, and research support. That is a loss of 1 out of 7 refuge positions. As a result, refuges are struggling to be maintained and provide the adequate visitor services, environmental education, access for hunting, and law enforcement that will ensure healthy habitat and a safe and enjoyable visitor experience.

Unfortunately, inadequate funding threatens the System's ability to carry out its mission, which is mandated by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997. Between fiscal year 2010 and fiscal year 2013, Refuge System funding

[1] *Banking on Nature,* U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, October 2013, http://www.fws.gov/refuges/about/refugereports/pdfs/BankingOnNature2013.pdf.

[2] *The Economics Associated with Outdoor Recreation, Natural Resources Conservation, and Historic Preservation in the United States,* Southwick Associates, October 2011, https://www.fws.gov/refuges/news/pdfs/TheEconomicValueofOutdoorRecreation[1].pdf.

was reduced by $50 million—a 10 percent cut. Even with increased budgets in fiscal year 2016 to $481 million, the Refuge System continues to function at unsustainable levels. CARE estimates that the Refuge System needs at least $900 million in annual operations and maintenance funding to meet conservation targets, including wildlife management, habitat restoration, and opportunities for public recreation.

The fiscal year 2015 Refuge Annual Performance Plan (RAPP) reports revealed falling performance rates in several important System categories—as a direct result of funding shortfalls—including habitat condition, habitat restoration, recreation opportunities, volunteerism, and scientific research. The following measures for which performance declined from fiscal year 2010 to fiscal year 2015:

—Open water acres restored (−63 percent)
—Wetland acres restored (−70 percent)
—Acres of non-native, invasive plants controlled (−58 percent)
—Number of invasive animal populations controlled during the year (−55 percent)
—Acres treated for non-native, invasive plants (−34 percent)
—Riparian miles restored (−30 percent)
—Acres of farming (−30 percent)
—Total refuge acres receiving needed management (−12 percent)
—Number of volunteers (−14 percent)
—Fishing visits (−5 percent)

However, many measures of public use increased for the Refuge System over this same timeframe, despite budget shortfalls. Funding for fiscal year 2017 needs to ensure Americans will be able to continue these valuable recreational activities. These include:

—Hunting visits (+2 percent)
—Waterfowl hunt visits (+7 percent)
—Photography participants (+52 percent)
—Number of boat trail visits (+18 percent)
—Acres of prescribed grazing (+13 percent)
—Wildlife observation visits (+12 percent)
—Number of visitors (+9 percent)

Refuge visitation is growing and is expected to continue. In fact, from fiscal year 2010 to fiscal year 2015, the Refuge System welcomed 9 percent more visitors. However, refuges are losing valuable staff committed to visitors and volunteers. We thank you for the $500,000 increase to the visitor services budget line in fiscal year 2016, which will be helpful in slowing that loss. Volunteers provide numerous benefits to the Systems, from staffing refuge nature stores, maintenance, interpretation, and much more. These volunteer can only work when the System is reasonably staffed and thus able to extend requisite volunteer training and oversight.

Further reductions or stagnation in Refuge System funding will likely show continued declines in the System's conservation work and public use opportunities. If annual operations and maintenance funding does not rise, CARE anticipates further impacts both within and outside of refuge boundaries, including:

—Reduced treatment of invasive plants, reducing habitat quality for wildlife (both game and non-game) and placing nearby private lands at higher risk of infestations;
—Decreased use of prescribed fire, which is used on refuges both to improve habitat for wildlife and to reduce hazardous fuels that pose a wildfire risk to nearby communities;
—Reduced number and quality of visitor programs, with visitor centers operating at fewer hours, and delayed plans to add or expand hunting programs at refuges;
—Lost revenue for local communities as visitor numbers drop. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service fiscal year 2013 budget justification, "Each 1 percent increase or decrease in visitation impacts $16.9 million in total economic activity, 268 jobs, $5.4 million in job-related income, and $608,000 in tax revenue."
—Elimination of ancillary functions like FWS's operation of Henderson Field at Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge, which serves as a critical emergency landing site for trans-pacific flights, as well as the public's main window to the vast marine national monuments.

Challenges abound throughout the system. In California, years of severe drought have caused a dramatic reduction of water deliveries to wildlife refuges, while proposals to change deliveries from higher quality surface water to brackish groundwater threaten the functionality of these refuges as waterfowl habitat. In Min-

nesota, the Morris Wetland Management District has seen a staffing reduction of 70 percent leading to the conversion of native prairie and waterfowl habitat to forest as a result of decreased fire management of wetland habitats. At the Loxahatchee NWR in Florida, instead of healthy takes, alligator hunters found emaciated animals severely impacted by the drastic increase in invasive species on the refuge.

The common denominator to all these challenges is a lack of funding. Adequate staffing and funding are critical to the maintenance of healthy wildlife populations and access for recreational users to a healthy ecosystem.

We understand the budget constraints the subcommittee is working under; however, we see the systemic declines in performance of the Refuge System on a daily basis due to the lack of adequate funding. As stated above, the System needs a minimum of $900 million each year to function the way it was intended, and CARE is dedicated to working with your subcommittee to see that this goal is reached.

CARE is supporting the President's request of $506.6 million for fiscal year 2017, although it is substantially less than what the System needs. Albeit roughly half the optimal funding amount, $506.6 million is a $25 million increase, and we hope it will help the System maintain its ability to manage refuge lands as intended in their purpose for the benefit of the American people. If the requested funding level is satisfied, the Refuge System can better:

—Conduct management and restoration activities to provide healthy habitats that attract wildlife and, in turn, draw visitors and increase economic return to communities;
—Keep refuges open and staffed so quality recreational opportunities continue to be offered to the public;
—Maintain facilities and equipment used to serve the public and manage habitat;
—Provide Federal wildlife officers needed to keep refuge resources and people safe.

CARE is also requesting an additional $6 million necessary to recoup the cost of the occupation of the Malheur NWR in Oregon. For 40 days this winter, armed occupiers took over the refuge, causing injury to infrastructure and habitat. Without these additional funds, all costs currently incurred will be taken out of the Service's operating budget, reducing the amount available to the rest of the System.

We urge Congress to fund the Refuge System at $506.6 m in fiscal year 2017—to bridge the growing gap between what the System needs and what it receives, enabling refuges to continue moving America forward.

On behalf of our more than 16 million members and supporters, CARE thanks the subcommittee for the opportunity to submit comments on the fiscal year 2017 Senate Interior Appropriations bill.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE CORPS NETWORK

Dear Chairwoman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall;

We write to respectfully urge your support for funding the Department of Interior (DOI) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) in fiscal year 2017. As you craft the Interior appropriations bill, we encourage you take into account the significant leveraging of limited Federal resources our Corps accomplish in partnership with these land management agencies, and ensure they have adequate funding to expand on our proven and cost-effective public-private partnerships.

In particular, Corps of the Corps Network around the country support DOI and USFS budgets for operation, maintenance, and construction which are used to engage Corps to help address the billions in backlogged projects and resource management needs on public lands; the Engaging the Next Generation proposals; the Centennial Initiative; and funding for Wildland Fire Management through both DOI and USFS. By partnering with Corps, agencies achieve much more with their budgets and also provide opportunity for youth and veterans to learn job skills and while accomplishing high-priority projects.

Additionally, these accounts help support partnerships with our 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) initiative, which has received bipartisan support in Congress from Senators John McCain and Michael Bennet, and out, from Former Army General Stanley McChrystal and President Bush's Domestic Policy Advisor, John Bridgeland. We're privileged to also have the support of the past four secretaries of the interior—two Republicans and two Democrats—and private sector support from KEEN, the North Face, American Eagle Outfitters, the Outdoor Industry Association, and other organizations like the Vet Voice Foundation, and the American Recreation Coalition.

Thank you for your efforts in ensuring those accounts were strong in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016. With additional support from the 2016 Act, our Corps will help accomplish millions in critical projects and engage the next generation of resource management leaders while also multiplying limited Federal funds. For example, Corps have utilized $150 million in project funding from DOI and USFS over the past 3 years and turned that into millions more in matched funds and service projects, with the added benefit of engaging youth and veterans in meaningful hands-on work experiences outdoors.

In 2015 alone, our Corps around the country have:

—Restored 567,000 acres of ecological habitat
—Removed 365,000 acres of invasive species
—Reduced 32,000 acres of hazardous fire fuel
—Responded to 500 wildfire remediation and response needs
—Built and maintained 11,000 miles of multi-use trails
—Maintained and improved 16,000 parks and public spaces/facilities
—Planted and maintained 2.8 million trees

The Corps Network represents our country's 130+ Service and Conservation Corps. Descended from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), today's Corps provide youth and veterans with the opportunity to advance their education, obtain critical career-readiness and job skills, and earn a stipend while they perform important conservation service projects on public lands. Collectively, our Corps enroll 24,000 Corpsmembers, engage an additional 100,000 volunteers, and complete thousands of service projects valuing hundreds of millions of dollars each year, with volunteer hours valued at nearly $10 million each year.

Project sponsors consistently express a high degree of satisfaction with the quality of work and productivity of Corps. Virtually all Federal project partners (99.6 percent) say they would work with Corps again and an independent study commissioned by the National Park Service found an over 50 percent cost savings in using Corps on projects. In addition, the Corps Model has been rigorously tested and proven to be an effective youth development model and a recent study found that Corpsmembers gained significant career and leadership skills like teamwork, community engagement, critical thinking, and communication through their term of service.

Corps also work to be inclusive and engage many veterans, Native Americans, and disconnected youth who have either dropped out of school or are unemployed. Over half of Corpsmembers are minorities and nearly half are women. In addition to the normal work week, Corpsmembers receive a wide range of personal and professional development including, but not limited to: workforce services; adult and peer-mentoring; academic programming; industry-recognized certificates and credentials; and a modest stipend—all to prepare them for postsecondary education and/or career success.

Fiscal Year 2017 Interior Appropriations Priorities

The Corps Network respectfully urges the subcommittee to support these programs that will allow public land management agencies to engage youth and veterans through Corps to leverage Federal funds to address more backlogged maintenance needs:

—*Department of Interior—Engaging the Next Generation:* $102 million in fiscal year 2017; funded at $64.8 million in fiscal year 2016
—*Department of Interior—Wildland Fire Management:* $1.1 billion in fiscal year 2017; funded at $993 million in fiscal year 2016
—*National Park Service—Operation:* $2.5 billion in fiscal year 2017; funded at $2.3 billion in fiscal year 2016
—*National Park Service—Centennial Initiative:* $730.9 million in fiscal year 2017; funded at $15 million in fiscal year 2016 (includes NPS Centennial Act authorizations—$500 million)
—*Bureau of Land Management—Management of Lands and Resources:* $1.075 billion in fiscal year 2017; funded at $1.072 in fiscal year 2016
—*Bureau of Reclamation—Water & Related Resources:* $813.4 million in fiscal year 2017; funded at $1.18 billion in fiscal year 2016
—*Bureau of Indian Affairs—Construction:* $196 million in fiscal year 2017; funded at $194 in fiscal year 2016
—*Fish and Wildlife Service—Construction:* $23.7 million in fiscal year 2017; funded at $23.6 million in fiscal year 2016
—*U.S. Forest Service—National Forest System:* $1.5 billion in fiscal year 2017; funded at $1.5 billion in fiscal year 2016
—*U.S. Forest Service—Capital Improvement and Maintenance:* $343 million in fiscal year 2017; funded at $364 million in fiscal year 2016

—*U.S. Forest Service—Wildland Fire Management:* $2.45 billion in fiscal year 2017; funded at $2.38 billion in fiscal year 2016

All these programs help Corps leverage Federal dollars to engage thousands of youth and veterans improving and restoring our Nation's lands, water, and recreation assets. The construction and operation accounts are important as they are the main source of project funding, and help the agencies address their backlog maintenance issues. The Centennial Initiative is an innovative approach to addressing the myriad of issues in the national parks and this year's proposal from DOI is targeted toward addressing the deferred maintenance backlog on the NPS' highest priority non-transportation assets.

To build on that work, we also support DOI's Engaging the Next Generation proposal which is intended to promote public-private partnerships to maximize opportunities for youth through visitor and educational programs, partnerships, volunteerism, and our innovative 21st Century Conservation Service Corps Initiative. For example, DOI states that "Collaborative efforts across all levels of government and mobilization of the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps resulted in several high impact initiatives . . . These initiatives enabled significant progress towards Interior's goal to provide 100,000 work and training opportunities to young people and veterans by the end of 2017."

The USFS is a major supporter of our 21st Century Conservation Service Corps Initiative as well, explaining in their budget and strategic priorities that "Our 21st Century Service Corp (21CSC) partnership provides an enormous return on investment, allowing the Forest Service to address critical conservation restoration needs and simultaneously have a deep and lasting impact on the people who participate, thereby building the next generation of natural resource professionals."

These accounts through USFS enable our Corps to help the USFS address important projects. USFS states in their budget that "The 21st Century Conservation Service Corps will continue to provide enhanced and expanded opportunities to work with partners to address trails maintenance needs and provide improved citizen access to all [USFS] trails, including congressionally designated trails."

Corps also partner with USFS on critical wildfire remediation and fighting and see firsthand the damage that is done to the system, and communities, by an outdated budget structure for wildfire needs. We support changes to the budgeting process as included in the President's budget and in the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act—a bipartisan proposal that would fund wildfire suppression in a similar manner to how the government currently funds the response to other natural disasters. As the USFS notes in its budget justification, "The cost of fire management has grown from 16 percent of the agency's budget in 1995 to—for the first time in the agency's 110-year history—to over 50 percent of the budget in 2015. It is subsuming the agency's budget and jeopardizing our ability to successfully implement our full mission."

As you can see, our Corps work with DOI and USFS in numerous capacities to help them better manage our natural resources while providing high quality service and work experience outdoors to engage thousands of youths and veterans. We understand the fiscal constraints placed upon the subcommittee which is why ensuring more partnerships and opportunities for our cost-effective public private partnerships is more important than ever. We again respectfully urge your support for these programs. Thank you for your time and consideration.

[This statement was submitted by Mary Ellen Sprenkel, President & CEO.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE COUNCIL OF ATHABASCAN TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

The Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments (CATG) is a consortium of 10 tribal governments located along the Yukon River and its tributaries in northeastern Alaska. We provide a variety of services to our tribal members, including full healthcare services at the Yukon Flats Health Center and village-based clinics in four of our villages. We also have Self-Governance agreements with the Fish and Wildlife Service and with the Bureau of Land Management.

We request that you implement the following measures in the fiscal year 2017 Appropriations cycle:

—Non-BIA Interior Self-Governance Agreements.

—Make full Contract Support Costs funding for the IHS and BIA mandatory, and ensure there are no provisos on indefinite CSC funding that conflict with the carryover funding authority provided by the Indian Self-Determination Act.

—Support the proposed increases in mental health, suicide prevention and substance abuse spending in the IHS and BIA budgets.

—Provide funding for built-in costs.
—Permanently Authorize the Special Diabetes Program for Indians.
—Provide advance appropriations for the IHS.
—Maintain funding for tribal court development in Public Law 280 States.

Non-BIA Interior Self-Governance Agreements

CATG is one of the first tribal consortiums in the country to develop non-BIA DOI Self-Governance Annual Funding Agreements. However, the AFA's are not fully funded for Contract Support Costs that would otherwise cost the agencies if they were to manage the same programs, functions, services, and activities in our scopes of work.

We are also concerned that DOI scopes of work are being limited and the intent of Self-Governance is not being carried out. During 2016 negotiations, for the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge AFA, a summer intern position was inserted into our Scope of Work by the refuge because the agency had not been able to recruit a local intern in years past. However, the position was removed at the regional level. At first we were told that the agency wanted to test our chosen intern for the first year and make sure they were trained by the agency. We agreed that, while employed with CATG, we fully expected that the agency would provide the training and our employee would be integrated into their team of researchers. We were then told that the agency preferred to hire and train interns for their eventual hire by the agency, not CATG. This is counter to the intent and practice of Self-Governance, which is to build tribal capacity to take on increasing levels of responsibility.

Mandatory Funding for Contract Support Costs

We are pleased that the fiscal year 2016 funding for contract support costs (CSC) was for an indefinite amount, which greatly helped to ensure that CSC would be fully funded without having to reprogram funding for critical healthcare services and other programmatic funding to cover the CSC need.

For fiscal year 2017, we support the President's request for an appropriation of "such sums as may be necessary," with an estimated $800 million for CSC for the IHS in a separate account in the IHS's discretionary budget. However, we disagree with the proviso that was included in the fiscal year 2016 appropriations language, which stated as follows: "amounts obligated but not expended by a tribe or tribal organization for contract support costs for such agreements for the current fiscal year shall be applied to contract support costs otherwise due for such agreements for subsequent fiscal years." This proviso is concerning to us because it could be misread to effectively deny the carryover authority granted by the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. We thus ask that the proviso be removed for fiscal year 2017 and in future appropriations for CSC.

We also support the administration's proposal to fully fund CSC on a mandatory basis and we ask for your help in working with the Budget Committee and any others on this proposal for mandatory CSC funding as soon as possible.

Increase Funding for Behavioral Health, Suicide Prevention, and Alcohol & Substance Abuse Treatment

CATG's communities in rural Alaska have a very high rate of suicide and suicide attempts, and a similarly high rate of alcohol and substance abuse that contributes to myriad other problems, including crime, domestic violence, child abuse or neglect. Oftentimes, tribes in Alaska have a difficult time working through the State of Alaska to provide these services, which adds layers of guidelines, regulations, and reduced funding. We strongly believe that tribes and tribal organizations should receive behavioral funds directly, because programs that implement traditional cultural values are more successful than those that do not.

The administration's request includes $25 million in IHS program increases for mental health. Of that amount, $21.4 million would be for a behavioral health integration initiative, for which tribes and tribal organizations would be eligible to seek funding for the expansion of their behavioral health services to areas outside of the traditional healthcare system; training; hiring behavioral health staff; and community-based programs. Another $3.6 million in the proposal would be for funding pilot projects to implement the "Zero Suicide Initiative." We request your support for funding the $25 million program increase for these critical programs.

We also ask for your support in expanding the Generations Indigenous (Gen-I) initiative, which provides increased resources for tribes to address youth behavioral, mental health and substance abuse issues. We appreciate the $10 million appropriated in the IHS budget for Gen-I in fiscal year 2016, which was critical to hiring staff to provide more services and prevention programs for Native youth. For the IHS in fiscal year 2017, the administration is requesting a $16.8 million increase

focused on youth: $15 million to expand Gen-I for additional staffing and $1.8 million for a pilot program that would provide a continuum of care for youth after discharge from a Youth Regional Treatment Center. For the BIA the proposal includes an increase of $21 million to expand the Tiwahe Initiative designed to address the inter-related problems of poverty, violence and substance abuse faced by Native communities, including $12.3 million for social services programs designed to provide culturally appropriate care. We ask for your support for this funding.

Funding for Built-in Costs

We appreciate the administration's fiscal year 2017 request of $159 million for built-in costs consisting of $75.4 million for medical inflation at a 5.8 percent rate; $26 million for pay costs; and $43.2 million to partially fund population growth. Built-in costs are often sacrificed in the budget negotiation process, but lack of them impacts all programs. Inflation—both medical and non-medical, pay raises that must be afforded to employees, and population growth are real facts of life that impact our ability to provide sufficient healthcare services. We urge Congress to fund this request.

SDPI/Advance Appropriations

We again join with Alaska Native tribes and others throughout Indian Country in support of a permanent reauthorization of the Special Diabetes Program for Indians and for placing IHS appropriations on an advance funding basis. We understand that this will involve congressional committees in addition to appropriations and urge your support in working for these goals.

Funding for Village Built Clinics in Alaska

For the last several years, Alaska organizations have submitted testimony to this subcommittee on the need to address chronic underfunding of Village Built Clinics (VBCs) in Alaska. VBCs, which are clinic facilities leased by the IHS from other entities, are a vital component of the provision of basic healthcare services in rural Alaska, as they serve as the clinic space for the Community Health Aide Program (CHAP) under the Indian Health Care Improvement Act. The CHAP, which IHS is directed by the IHCIA to carry out, uses a network of community health aides and practitioners to provide primary healthcare services in rural and isolated areas where access to those services might not otherwise exist.

In 1989, Congress specifically authorized the operation of 170 VBCs in Alaska and provided approximately $3 million in funding for the program for that year. Since then, Congress has not provided amounts specifically for VBCs in the IHS appropriation and IHS has consistently under-funded these leases. The VBCs are IHS facilities acquired by lease in lieu of construction and should thus be eligible for maintenance and improvement funding, but the IHS does not see it that way. The IHS can also access other IHS discretionary funds to fully fund its VBC obligations. For example, the Indian Health Facilities appropriation is a lump-sum appropriation that can be used for construction, repair, maintenance, improvements and equipment, and includes a sub-activity for maintenance and improvement of IHS facilities. IHS nevertheless continues to assert that it provides for VBC leases all of the funds that Congress has appropriated for the program. The chronic underfunding over decades has resulted in deterioration and in some cases closure of VBC facilities, threatening the CHAP itself and access to basic healthcare services for rural Alaskans that hinges on the continued availability of properly maintained VBC space.

Recently, a coalition made up of the regional tribal health organizations in Alaska, the Alaska Native Health Board and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, updated a VBC needs assessment in 2015, and called "Village Built Clinics in Crisis 2015." The report estimates that $12.5 million more per year, in addition to the current VBC allocation from IHS of about $4.5 million, would be needed to maintain and operate Alaska VBCs on a par with similar tribal health facilities elsewhere. This would require a total of $17 million in order to adequately fund the operation and maintenance of the 170 VBCs in Alaska. In addition, the report calls for approximately $14 million annually "to fully fund the replacement reserve and to remove the village clinics from the crisis state they are currently experiencing." CATG therefore urges that Congress appropriate at least an additional $12.5 million to fully fund VBC leases and that IHS be directed to use it to fully fund such leases. We request that you direct the IHS to (1) identify the amount needed to fully fund all Alaska VBCs, (2) ask for that amount in a separate line in the IHS budget, and (3) allocate that amount to the VBC lease program.

Maintain Funding for Tribal Courts in Public Law 280 States

In the fiscal year 2016 appropriations act $10 million was added for the BIA Office of Tribal Justice Support to work with tribes and tribal organizations to, in the words of the Senate Appropriations Committee report, "assess needs, consider options, and design, develop, and pilot tribal court systems for tribal communities including those communities subject to full or partial State jurisdiction under Public Law 83–280." The administration's fiscal year 2017 request would reduce that amount by $8 million. Given the need in Alaska, the tribal jurisdiction provisions of the Tribal Law and Order Act and the Violence Against Women Act, we ask that this funding be maintained at its fiscal year 2016 level.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns and requests. We are happy to respond to questions or provide any additional information you may request.

PREPARED STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE CREATION AND OPERATION OF AN OUTDOOR RECREATION SATELLITE ACCOUNT

Dear Senators Murkowski and Udall:

We request your action in the fiscal year 2017 budget to fund the creation and operation of an Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account (ORSA) to better assess the economic significance of programs and policies under the jurisdiction of your subcommittee, chiefly within the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture.

The Nation's public lands and waters play an essential role for the recreation industry. Virtually all Americans participate in some form of outdoor activity at these places. This activity results in an estimated $650 billion in annual expenditures on RVs and boats, lift tickets and entrance fees, fishing and hunting licenses and surfboards, campground fees and OHVs—and much more. Expenditures on recreation create manufacturing jobs, jobs in retailing and repairs, lifeguard posts at public beaches and guide jobs in the backcountry, jobs at insurance firms and hotels. Federal agencies host more than a billion recreation visits and now tout the direct contributions to local and national economies. The National Park Service claims 10 dollars in spending for each 1 dollar it receives in appropriated funding. The Forest Service notes that its lands supply an estimated 60 percent of all downhill ski and snowboarding activity, all at privately built and operated ski areas.

Many of those signing this letter regularly collect and make available very useful data on the economic activities associated with a specific recreation industry. But this data is not standard in format and often fails to capture the full array of spending linked to recreation activity. A trusted, comprehensive report is needed.

The leadership of the Federal agencies most active on recreation is represented on a multi-departmental body called the Federal Recreation Council (FRC). That Council has made the creation of a Recreation Satellite Account by the Bureau of Economic Analysis its highest priority. Creation of the account is, by national standards, very reasonable. The Department of Commerce, which has recently created similar satellite accounts for the arts, and for travel and tourism, estimates that the account can be in place in 3 years or less at a cost of approximately $3.5 million.

We endorse a recent statement by the FRC:

> "ORSA will directly and efficiently benefit both the private and public sectors, including the outdoor recreation industry and business interests, as well as the public policy community, by providing a ready means to assist in the evaluation of policies, programs, grants and other support or development tools. Creating the satellite account presents an opportunity for detailed and defensible data to inform decisionmaking, improving governance and long-term management of public lands and waters."

The ORSA information is vital to making good choices in allocating Federal funds through the budget process—for your very subcommittee to make strategic decisions. Yet currently available information is not from the best possible public sources. Rather it has been created on an irregular basis by the recreation industry itself.

Yet the implementation of this account is in limbo. Although the funds are a very small portion of existing Federal recreation program funding approved every year by your subcommittee—and about 1 percent of existing Federal recreation fee collections—the money does compete with other popular recreation expenditures.

We call upon the Congress to invest immediately in creating the Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account as a vital tool in assessing Federal program priorities and benefits. We ask that this be done in a way which does not impact highly popular

recreation services, but instead as a vital part of effective governmental program management activities.

We urge that the fiscal year 2017 budget provide for complete implementation of the Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account on a priority basis. The path forward is clear. Congressional action recently created and funded an Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account. Similarly, a Travel and Tourism Satellite Account has been recently created. The data is already being collected. It simply needs to be organized so it can be appropriately aggregated from traditional reporting accounts.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

DERRICK A. CRANDALL, *President, American Recreation Coalition*

MICHAEL NUSSMAN, *President, American Sportfishing Association*

JAY MCANINCH, *President and CEO, Archery Trade Association*

PAUL BAMBEI, *President, ARVC—National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds*

BRAD GROSS, *Chair, Association of Marina Industries*

MARGARET PODLICH, *President, BoatU.S.*

GEOFF BAEKEY, *Managing Director, CHM Government Services*

MARY ELLEN SPRENKEL, *President, The Corps Network*

ED KLIM, *President, International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association*

MATT GRUHN, *President, Marine Retailers Association of the Americas*

TIM BUCHE, *President, Motorcycle Industry Council*

JOHN JOHNSON, *Executive Director, National Association of State Boating Law Administrators*

DOMENIC BRAVO, *President, National Association of State Park Directors*

THOM DAMMRICH, *President, National Marine Manufacturers Association*

TERRY MACRAE, *Chairman, National Park Hospitality Association*

BARBARA TULIPANE, *President, National Recreation and Park Association*

MICHAEL BERRY, *President, National Ski Areas Association*

AMY ROBERTS, *Executive Director, Outdoor Industry Association*

PHIL INGRASSIA, *President, Recreation Vehicle Dealers Association*

FRANK HUGELMEYER, *President, Recreation Vehicle Industry Association*

NICK SARGENT, *President, SnowSports Industries America (SIA)*

RON CHRISTOFFERSON, *President, States Organization for Boating Access*

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE CREATIVE COALITION

[This statement is submitted by Robin Bronk, CEO, and Tim Daly, President.]

Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding the fiscal year 2017 funding level for the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA). We are writing on behalf of The Creative Coalition, the 501(c)(3), non-profit, non-partisan public advocacy organization of the arts and entertainment community to urge Congress to provide $155 million for NEA in the fiscal year 2017 Department of the Interior, environment, and related agencies appropriations bill. We very much appreciate the opportunity to express our views on the need for sufficient funding for the arts.

In 1989, actors Ron Silver, Christopher Reeve, Susan Sarandon, Alec Baldwin, and others established The Creative Coalition to advocate for more significant public investment in America's arts organizations and arts education programs like the NEA. The Creative Coalition's membership includes actors, directors, producers, writers, entertainment industry executives, and others who make their living in theater, film, arts, letters, and television.

The arts help us discover who we are. The leadership of The Creative Coalition is living proof of this. Robin grew up in a small, rural town in South Carolina where

high school plays and community theatre productions were part of the lifeblood of the community. One of the most influential people in her life was a high school chorus teacher who was a master at using the arts to help discover what the curriculum was really all about. Many students at D.W. Daniel High School learned about math and science from building sets, designing light-grids and wiring sound boards. Important lessons about discipline and team work came from being a member of the school band.

Tim grew up in a family of actors and was first on stage when he was 7 years old in a play with his parents and two sisters at the Bucks County Playhouse in New Hope, Pennsylvania. Since those early days on the stage, Tim has played significant roles in three long-running TV series and appeared in more than 75 different movies and television programs as part of an industry that generates millions of jobs and billions of dollars in economic development each year for our country.

We are pleased that over the last couple of years, arts funding, particularly for the NEA, has risen slightly from $146 million in fiscal year 2015; to $148 million in fiscal year 2016; to President Obama's budget request of $149 million for fiscal year 2017. We recognize the significance of these modest funding increases when such an emphasis is currently placed upon fiscal constraint. We encourage you to continue with this trend and call on you to dedicate $155 million in fiscal year 2017 for the NEA in its 50th Anniversary year. This level of funding would adequately celebrate this milestone and better leverage State, local, and private arts funding. Increased funding will help to restore critical Federal arts programming—which supports creativity and innovation, and provides measured cultural, educational, and economic benefits.

We must acknowledge the compelling data supporting Federal investment in the arts. Statistics show that every NEA grant dollar spent will leverage 10 more dollars from private and other public funds. This far surpasses the required non-Federal match of at least one to one. Data also indicates that the non-profit arts industry supports 4.13 million jobs in the arts and related industries. The Bureau of Economic Analysis and the NEA have calculated the arts and culture sector's contributions to the gross domestic product at $698 billion or 4.32 percent. The data is indisputable that Federal funding of the arts is a wise investment.

However, the benefits of Federal funding for the arts are about much more than compelling economic data and leveraging additional dollars. One can easily make a connection between NEA funding and Federal efforts to support strong fathers and families, juvenile justice and delinquency prevention, Federal anti-bullying campaigns, preparing a 21st Century workforce, and Federal economic development programs. Just compare the goals of any of these programs with the outcomes associated with participation in the arts and you will see strong correlations. A recent grant from the NEA to Project STEP in Boston, Massachusetts provides advanced music instruction to minority students from elementary school through high school. These students join chamber music ensembles, perform regularly in recitals and community outreach concerts and attend classes and professional concerts. The program not only provides mentoring and performance opportunities, but it aims to create a network of support for the students, their families, and their communities to allow them to excel in a field of music that is typically underrepresented in African-American and Latino communities. The goal of the program is to expand exposure to classical music so that future classical musicians better reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of our communities.

We know that young people's involvement in the arts has a huge impact on them later in life. They do better on standardized tests, are more likely to graduate from high school, and increase their chances of graduating from college. Data conclusively establishes links between the arts and achievement in science, technology, engineering, and math. Research shows that students with 4 years of arts education score roughly 100 points higher on their SATs. Business leaders no longer look to fill positions with candidates possessing only the strongest science education, but are increasingly seeking out individuals who have a background in the arts as well. It is not only those of us in the arts community who make this claim. James McNerney, Jr., Chairman, former President and Chief Executive Officer, of The Boeing Company. has stated:

> "At Boeing, innovation is our lifeblood. The arts inspire innovation by leading us to open our minds and think in new ways about our lives—including the work we do, the way we work, and the customers we serve."

Speak to anyone of note in the areas of politics, business, media, community leadership, and the entertainment industry and you will find individuals who were drawn into the arts as young people. They were acting in community theater productions and school plays, playing in bands, spending their afternoons and week-

ends at local dance companies. Many members of Congress are known to play musical instruments or even form singing groups like the "Singing Senators." We have no doubt the non-profit arts ecosystem nurtured them into the thought and idea leaders we know today.

Beyond supporting youth and creating dynamic thinkers, the arts are valued for their ability to revitalize communities. They stimulate tourism, attract business investment, foster creative climates, and offer more quality lifestyles. Communities that have embraced the arts entice more young professionals and make them want to stay and raise their families. As a testament to the importance of the arts to State and local communities, the National Governors Association offers guidance on how States can attract, harness, and utilize the arts to create places where people want to live and visit.

NEA and the grants it provides to smaller community arts efforts do more than bring joy to children and adults. These grants enrich their lives and create foundations for more active and responsible citizens, more innovative and critical thinkers, and more inclusive and vibrant communities. The NEA grant to Theatre Squared in Fayetteville, Arkansas will help fund a project that converts an existing parking lot into a thriving hub for artists and audiences. When finished, the theater commons will include a performance venue, rehearsal space, classrooms, studio space and artist housing. This new facility will expand access to tens of thousands of additional community members, while serving as a new institutional anchor for the downtown district. Without the support of NEA grants for arts education and community arts organizations, fewer individuals would have the opportunity to participate in arts and develop the creative skills that often lead to future success.

Survey any of The Creative Coalition's members and you will find individuals who were inspired by the arts at an early age. Our members were motivated to succeed by the visions, confidence, and comradery instilled in them by their exposure to the arts. The essence of why access to the arts is so vital might be best captured in the words of one of our members:

> "When I was 7 years old, I fell in love with the most beautiful thing I ever met . . . Acting. The art of expression has given my heart a permanent smile. I live my life pursuing a dream to make the unbelievable believable. This love has kept me faithful, honest, passionate, happy and peaceful. Growing up in the projects of New York City where there was trouble on every corner, I was fortunate to have the arts to keep me distracted and out of trouble. The arts are the greatest gift I have ever received."
>
> —*Actor Marlon Wayans*

We know that exposure to the arts is not simply about creating professional and amateur artists. It is not just about the economic impact of the arts and entertainment industry. Although these are important contributions, the arts are about discovering the creative inspiration that will allow an individual to reach their full potential. It is about the journey, the creative process invoked, and the inspiration to achieve—no matter what path life takes you.

Adequate Federal funding for the arts is vital to maintaining our arts economy, ensuring American competitiveness in a global market that values creativity, and most importantly, continuing to provide opportunities for young people to find their creative inspiration and reach their full potential. The NEA is often responsible for bringing the arts to individuals and communities who otherwise would not have the opportunity to discover the richness that arts can bring to your life. Therefore, The Creative Coalition urges the subcommittee to increase the funding level for the National Endowment of the Arts to $155 million in fiscal year 2017.

Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DANCE/USA

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the subcommittee, I am grateful for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of Dance/USA, its Board of Directors and its 500 members. We strongly urge the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies in the Committee on Appropriations to designate a total of $155 million to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) for fiscal year 2017. This testimony and the funding examples described below are intended to highlight the importance of Federal investment in the arts, so critical to sustaining a vibrant cultural community throughout the country.

The NEA makes it possible for everyone to enjoy and benefit from the performing arts. Before the establishment of the NEA in 1965, funding for the arts was mostly

limited mostly larger cities. The NEA has helped to strengthen regional dance, opera, theater and other artistic disciplines that Americans enjoy. NEA funding provides access to the arts in regions with histories of inaccessibility due to economic or geographic limitations. The NEA envisions a "nation in which every American benefits from arts engagement, and every community recognizes and celebrates its aspirations and achievements through the arts." The agency has helped the arts become accessible to more Americans, which in turn has increased public participation in the arts.

The NEA is a great investment in the economic growth of every community. Despite diminished resources, including a budget that is $20 million less than it was in 2010, the NEA awarded 2,139 grants in 2015, totaling $103.47 million in appropriated funds. These grants nurture the growth and artistic excellence of thousands of arts organizations and artists in every corner of the country. NEA grants also preserve and enhance our Nation's diverse cultural heritage. The modest public investment in the Nation's cultural life results in both new and classic works of art, reaching the residents of all 50 States and in every congressional district.

The return of the Federal Government's small investment in the arts is striking. In 2013, the American creative sector was measured by the Federal Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). The BEA and the NEA developed an "Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account" which calculated the arts and culture sector's contributions to the gross domestic product (GDP) at 4.2 percent (or $704.2 billion) of current-dollar GDP in 2013. Additionally, the nonprofit performing arts industry generates $135.2 billion annually in economic activity, supports more than 4.13 million full-time equivalent jobs in the arts, and returns $9.59 billion in Federal taxes (*Arts and Economic Prosperity IV,* Americans for the Arts).

On average each NEA grant leverages almost $10 from other State, local, and private sources. Few other Federal investments realize such economic benefits, not to mention the intangible benefits that only the arts make possible. Even in the face of cutbacks in the recent years, the NEA continues to be a beacon for arts organizations across the country.

The return on investments is not only found in dollars. In 2012, 2.2 million people volunteered 210 million hours with arts and cultural organizations, totaling an estimated value of $5.2 billion—a demonstration that citizens value the arts in their communities.

NEA GRANTS AT WORK

Past NEA funding has directly supported projects in which arts organizations, artists, schools and teachers collaborated to provide opportunities for adults and children to create, perform, and respond to artistic works. NEA funding has also made the art form more widely available in all States, including isolated rural areas and inner cities.

NEA grants are awarded to dance organizations through its core programs: Art Works; Challenge America Fast Track Grants; and Federal/State Partnerships. In fiscal year 2015, the NEA awarded 163 grants to the dance field through the Art Works category, totaling $4,235,000.

Nashville Ballet
$15,000
Nashville, Tennessee

To support the creation of a new ballet, *Frank N. Stein.* Artistic Director Paul Vasterling led the conceptualization of this original ballet, overseeing the choreography by company dancer Chris Stuart and music score by Belmont University School of Music. Tailored for youth, support materials for educators—including study guides curriculum plans, and continued learning activities, were created to accompany the performances. The ballet was presented as a free public performance before becoming part of the company's ongoing outreach and educational programming rotation for schools in central Tennessee.

Friends of NORD/NOBA Center for Dance
$30,000
New Orleans, Louisiana

To support tuition-free youth and senior citizen dance education programs. Organized by the NORDC/NOBA Center for Dance, a cultural community partnership of the New Orleans Recreation Development Commission and the New Orleans Ballet Association, the project included dance classes, workshops, intergenerational opportunities, performances, and family activities for senior citizens and students. Center for Dance's (CFD) youth program was offered in underserved communities and offered a program for youth interested in dace and a pre-professional program taught

by local and guest artists. In response to the lack of community programming for seniors following Hurricane Katrina, CFD launched a year-round senior dance fitness. Seniors and youth received intergenerational opportunities to learn, rehears, and perform choreography together. CFD and seniors, along with their families, also had the opportunity to attend CFD main stage performances by professional dance companies.

AXIS Dance Company
$20,000
Oakland, California

To support Dance/Access and Dance/Access Kids! educational and outreach programs in the Bay Area and on a national tour. These activities offered a variety of events for youth and adults with and without disabilities, both locally and nationally. Activities included dance classes, school assemblies, a dance campy for youth, teacher training, a dance apprentice program, workshops for emerging choreographers and professional dancers, community workshops, lecture-demonstrations, and presentations.

DanceAbility International
$10,000
Eugene, Oregon

To support touring performances of "Don't Leave Me," choreographed by DanceAbility founder Alitto Alessi, and associated outreach activities. Performances took place at the National Building Museum in Washington, DC, University of Minnesota, University of Maryland, University of New Mexico, and Cal Poly San Louis Obispo. Accompany each performance was a post-performance discussion, DanceAbility classes, and Space-Movement workshops that brought together university students in dance, architecture, and design with community members along with full spectrum of abilities and disabilities for cross-community interaction.

THE NON-PROFIT PROFESSIONAL DANCE COMMUNITY

America's dance companies perform a wide range of styles and genres. These include aerial, ballet, modern, culturally specific, jazz, and tap companies. Over two-thirds of America's professional dance companies are less than 45 years old; as an established art form with national identity and presence, dance has burst onto the scene almost entirely within living memory. And yet, America can boast some of the greatest dance companies of the world and can take credit for birthing two indigenous dance styles—tap and modern dance.

One key to this spectacular achievement has been the creation of a national marketplace for dance. When the National Endowment for the Arts instituted its Dance Touring Program in the 1970s, great dance became accessible to every community in America. What used to be a handful of professional companies and a scattering of "regional" dance has become a national treasure spread across cities and through communities, schools and theaters in all 50 States. Based on data from over 400 nonprofit dance companies from across the United States, Dance/USA estimates that dance companies:

—Employed over 15,100 individuals in a mix of full-time and part-time positions and supported by more than 19,900 volunteers;
—Paid approximately $346.2 million, or 52 percent of expenses, in wages and benefits;
—Earned $230.7 million, or 36 percent of their income, from performances;
—Received $311.8 million, or 44.8 percent of their income in contributions (including public support, corporate sponsorship and contributions, foundation support, and individual donations);
—Generated more than $600 million in economic activity across the United States.

Dance/USA, the national service organization for the professional dance field, believes that dance is essential to a healthy society, demonstrating the infinite possibilities for human expression and potential, and facilitating communication within and across cultures. Dance/USA sustains and advances professional dance by addressing the needs, concerns, and interests of artists, administrators, and organizations. Dance/USA's membership currently consists of nearly 500 aerial, ballet, modern, culturally specific, jazz, and tap companies, dance service and presenting organizations, individuals, and related organizations. Dance/USA's member companies range in size from operating budgets of under $100,000 to over $50 million.

CONCLUSION

Despite overwhelming support by the American public for spending Federal tax dollars in support of the arts, the NEA has never recovered from a 40 percent budget cut in the mid-nineties, leaving its programs seriously underfunded. We urge you to continue toward restoration and increase the NEA funding allocation to $155 million for fiscal year 2017.

On behalf of Dance/USA, thank you for considering this request.

[This statement was submitted by Amy Fitterer, Executive Director.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE

Mister Chairman, ranking member and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for the record. Founded in 1947, Defenders has more than 1.2 million members and supporters and is dedicated to the conservation of wild animals and plants in their natural communities.

North America is fortunate to have some of the most abundant and diverse wildlife on Earth, more than 200,000 known species in the U.S. alone. This unique and irreplaceable heritage is treasured by all Americans both for its aesthetic value as well as for the very tangible benefits it provides as a resource. For example, a third of our food is pollinated by birds, bats, and insects; wildlife-associated recreation generated $145 billion in economic benefits in 2011;[1] bats provide at least $3.7 billion in pest control services to the agricultural industry annually;[2] and the value of ecosystem services from habitat in the contiguous 48 States is estimated at $1.6 trillion annually.[3] Budget cuts since fiscal year 2010 to Federal programs that conserve wildlife and habitat have severely undermined sound management. Inadequate funding will likely lead to irreparable harm to vulnerable species and habitat. Our Nation's wildlife is a treasure and well worth the investment to properly care for it.

Riders that would have undermined protections for imperiled species and the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and that would have forced construction of a road through the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska were included in the fiscal year 2016 Senate Interior appropriations bill. Defenders strongly opposed these riders and while all should rightfully have been removed from the final omnibus, we appreciate that all but one were stricken.

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is our Nation's premier wildlife conservation agency. FWS needs adequate funding if it is to recover threatened and endangered species and protect migratory birds and fish, species of global conservation concern and other trust species, and stop or prevent wildlife crimes.

Cooperative Recovery.—Defenders supports the requested increases of $1.5 million in Recovery under Ecological Services, $1 million in National Wildlife Refuge System Operations and Maintenance, and $300,000 under Migratory Bird Management. This initiative is supporting more efficient and strategic efforts across landscapes to recover threatened and endangered species on National Wildlife Refuges and surrounding lands and has already supported delisting of two species.

Renewable Energy.—Defenders supports the President's request of $11.1 million to fund renewable energy related Planning and Consultation and Service Science programs. The Service supports approvals of renewable energy projects while ensuring they comply with relevant environmental laws, and conducts research to assess potential impacts of energy development on sensitive lands and wildlife in the West and to identify mitigation strategies.

Ecological Services.—Defenders supports the requested increase of $18.3 million for Ecological Services. The requested increase is critically needed for high priority efforts:

—*Listing.*—The FWS has made substantial progress in listing decisions in recent years and the requested $2.3 million increase will help to continue that progress for the 60 current candidate species and to meet its other listing responsibilities.

---

[1] The 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation, USFWS, 12/12.

[2] http://www.sciencemag.org/content/332/6025/41.summary?sid=853248fd-6760-4341-93d0-2aeeab9ea450.

[3] The Economics Associated with Outdoor Recreation, Natural Resources Conservation and Historic Preservation in the United States, Southwick Associates, 9/29/11.

—*Recovery.*—Defenders strongly supported and appreciates the subcommittee's decision to maintain recovery for threatened and endangered species as a separate program element in responding to the FWS request to restructure the Ecological Services budget. Recovery is the goal of the ESA and transparency in tracking amounts directed to this crucial end is of the highest priority. In general, the average inflation-adjusted dollars per species for recovery has decreased every year since fiscal year 2010; moreover, according to the most recent FWS Recovery Report to Congress, hundreds of listed species have no recovery plans or extremely outdated ones. We therefore strongly support, at the very least, the requested $7.2 million increase for Recovery.

—*Planning and Consultation.*—The $6.6 million increase will support crucial Section 7 consultations under the ESA so that projects can move forward while minimizing harm to listed species. Adequate resources to increase the scientific and technical capacity of FWS to conduct consultations on pesticide registrations is particularly important.

—*Conservation and Restoration.*—The $2.2 million increase will support continued conservation for candidate species as they await listing and also includes an increase to support additional staff to provide technical assistance and other support to landowners in implementing the unprecedented sagebrush steppe conservation plans.

—Defenders opposes the elimination of funding for the Wolf Livestock Loss Demonstration Program that assists livestock owners co-existing with wolves, and we urge its restoration.

National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS).—Our National Wildlife Refuge System is the largest land and water system in the world dedicated to wildlife conservation. Refuges provide enormous benefits to the American people, generating $2.4 billion each year for local economies. Defenders supports the $25.2 million increase in the request, which includes funding for inventory and monitoring, rebuilding lost capacity to manage wildlife and habitat, and pollinator restoration. We also support legislative language proposed by the administration that would provide authority to recover compensation from responsible parties who injure or destroy Refuge System or Hatchery System resources similar to that provided to the National Park Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and allows compensation to be applied directly to the cost of restoration without further appropriation by Congress.

Science Support.—The requested $3.6 million increase will help to answer pressing questions about climate adaptation and other landscape level ecological changes as well as about conservation of monarch butterflies and other declining species, White-Nose Syndrome that is devastating bat populations, and other agency management challenges.

Migratory Bird Management.—U.S. bird populations have experienced precipitous declines in recent years. Defenders supports the $2.5 million requested increase which includes funding for needed upgrades in aviation management and survey and monitoring programs, and for building resilience of bird species and their habitats through the Joint Venture partnerships.

Office of Law Enforcement.—The request is essentially flat despite the fact that only one in five currents ports of entry are staffed with wildlife inspectors. Funding for inspectors is covered by user fees which have not been increased since 2008. Defenders is recommending the inclusion of report language directing the FWS to complete an analysis of possible additional sources of funding required to increase the capacity of the port inspection program.

International Affairs.—Defenders supports the requested $1.1 million increase which includes funding to advance the President's National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking.

Other key grant programs.—Defenders supports the requested funding amounts for the Multinational Species Conservation Fund, the Neotropical Migratory Bird Fund, the Cooperative Endangered Species Fund and State and Tribal Wildlife Grants.

FOREST SERVICE AND BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

The U.S. Forest Service (FS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are essential to the conservation of wildlife and habitat in the U.S., yet funding is inadequate to address significant challenges to sustain these resources. A top priority for Defenders is ensuring that uses proceed in a sustainable way that maintains the ecological integrity of our public lands and waters, conserves wildlife habitat and populations, and contributes to agency efforts to successfully recover our most imperiled wildlife. We urge strong oversight to ensure that any energy development

is done in an environmentally sensitive fashion and in low conflict areas. Given their large land ownerships, it is imperative that both agencies participate fully in landscape level conservation and management efforts. We are encouraged by BLM's innovative efforts in the Western Solar Program and consider it an example of how land management agencies can improve landscape level decisionmaking for energy development.

FS Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat Management/Integrated Resource Restoration (IRR).—Defenders supports the decision to abandon the request for an IRR line item given our concern that wildlife program activities could be marginalized under IRR and that hard timber targets could detract from integrated restoration. The request for Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat Management is flat-funded, a 9.6 percent reduction in real dollars from fiscal year 2010. We support funding the program at least at the fiscal year 2010 level of $143 million to begin to address the loss of biologists at the forest level that has occurred in recent years.

FS Land Management Planning/Inventory and Monitoring.—The request again proposes merging these two programs into a single line item. Defenders is concerned about consolidating these functions unless and until the agency can demonstrate its ability to meet its responsibilities under each program independently. We urge continued funding as separate programs at no less than the fiscal year 2016 level.

FS Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program.—We support the request for continued funding at the current level for this cost-effective program established to stabilize employment, offer a reliable wood supply, restore forest and watershed health, improve wildlife habitat, and reduce both the costs of fire suppression in overgrown forests and the risk of uncharacteristic wildfires.

FS Forest and Rangeland Research (FS R&D).—We urge a $4 million increase for FS R&D, a return to the fiscal year 2015 level which included $27.1 million for Wildlife and Fish R&D. Adequate funding for this program is crucial in providing relevant tools and information to support sustainable management of National Forest System lands as well as non-Federal forest lands. Generally, we are concerned that the Forest Service may lack adequate applied scientific capacity both in R&D and the National Forest System to implement critical planning and management actions, including the 2012 Planning Rule.

BLM Wildlife and Fisheries Management.—Defenders supports the $19.4 million increase requested to support implementation of the 68 resource management plans that were amended to address conservation of the sage-grouse. FWS determined not to list the grouse under the ESA largely due to this effort and associated measures. Success in conserving sage-grouse will depend upon adequate funding for implementing the plans.

BLM Threatened and Endangered Species Management.—According to agency reports, the BLM has funding to implement only about 10 percent of the work it is required to do in recovery plans for ESA listed species on BLM lands, but the administration's request includes just a $131,000 increase for fiscal year 2016. Defenders supports an increase of $1 million over the request which simply restores the budget to the fiscal year 2010 level and will better help move listed species to recovery.

BLM Renewable Energy.—Full funding of the $29.2 million request, essentially flat with fiscal year 2016, will help BLM continue to proceed with renewable energy development on public lands while avoiding areas with natural resource conflicts, including conflicts with sensitive wildlife species.

BLM Resource Management Planning, Assessment and Monitoring.—The $17.1 million increase in the request will support new high priority planning efforts, data collection and monitoring crucial to the sage-grouse conservation strategy and other key initiatives, and continued development of a new geospatial initiative to better monitor ecological conditions and trends on the landscape.

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

The U.S. Geological Survey provides the basic science necessary for conservation of fish, wildlife and habitat. We urge support for the following increases:

National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center/Climate Science Centers.—A $4.5 million increase in the request will support scientific needs in planning for climate change adaptation and building resiliency of ecosystems.

Ecosystems.—A $13.7 million increase in the request will help to support development of crucial scientific information for sound management of our Nation's biological resources including research into declines of native pollinators, threats to sensitive landscapes, such as the Arctic and sagebrush steppe, and impacts of drought and climate change across the country.

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND (LWCF)

Defenders supports the proposal in the request for full and permanent funding of LWCF that will help to save some of the 6,000 acres of open space, including wildlife habitat, that are lost each day in the U.S.[4] Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE DZILTH-NA-O-DITH-HLE COMMUNITY GRANT SCHOOL

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Dzilth-Na-O-Dith-Hle Community School (DCGS) on the Navajo Reservation in Bloomfield, New Mexico. Our school, which has been in continuous service since 1968, operates a K–8 educational program and a dormitory program for students in grades 1–12, serving around 250 students in both programs. DCGS is a tribally controlled grant school is located approximately 170 miles northwest of Albuquerque. DCGS is primarily funded through appropriations received from the BIE, and pass-through funding from the Department of Education.

Our all-Navajo Board operates the DCGS through a Grant issued by the BIE under the Tribally Controlled Schools Act. The DCGS goal is to make a difference in the educational progress of our students and we believe that all of our students are capable of achieving academic success. In fact, despite the challenges I will describe, we are meeting or exceeding our peer-schools in the BIE and New Mexico systems, and sometimes eclipsing national scores. I have included a chart at the end of this statement showing the results of the new test in New Mexico. Yet, we struggle with underfunding of practically every one of our educational and related programs that impacts our ability to fully meet our school goals and our ability to successfully operate our programs under the Indian Self-Determination policy—think of what we could do without the worries we face. Funding increases are desperately needed and are having a significant impact. Thank You.

Our recommendations can be summarized as follows:

—Protect school funding from the proposed Federal bureaucratic expansion.
—Increase ISEP funding to $431 million in fiscal year 2017.
—Fund Student Transportation at $73 million, and BIA Road Maintenance at $40 million.
—Continue to fully fund Tribal Grant Support Costs.
—Provide $85 million for facilities operation and $76 million for facilities maintenance (full funding).
—Embark on a comprehensive 60-year plan for school replacement and upkeep.

1. Protecting School Funding and Programs from Federal Expansion

You have heard over the last year from us and other schools about our concerns with the BIE's "Blueprint for Reform." We do not doubt the administration's commitment to high quality education for Indian students. The administration's focus, along with the strong commitment of this subcommittee signal that we have entered a new era for Indian education. However, coming from the local reservation community, we have a different perspective on what will be the best strategies to use to reach the goals of improvement. We continue to have concerns about centralization of authority at the BIE headquarters, instead of leaving that power at the local level as Congress intended and required by enacting the Tribally Controlled Schools Act. We ask that this subcommittee and your colleagues continue to engage tribal schools with concerns over the BIE reorganization and exercise appropriate oversight as it had done this last year.

2. Increase Funding for Indian School Equalization Programs

The most critical stream of funding for community grant schools like ours is increased funding in the Indian School Equalization Program (ISEP). The ISEP funds are those that schools use for the day to day operation, whether that is paying teachers and staff, purchasing curriculum and supplies, or running student programs. In years past, our ISEP funds were put under pressure by unfunded needs elsewhere in our schools, which could be paying utilities or repairing one of our school buses. This year, we are grateful to see the administration has requested $400.2 million for ISEP funding, an increase of $6.5 million to the program. However, the need in our schools is much greater. The National Congress of American Indians has recommended that Congress appropriate $431 million for ISEP funding, which we think should be this subcommittee's baseline for funding this budget year.

---

[4] http://www.fs.fed.us/openspace/coop__across__boudaries.html.

ISEP is our schools' lifeblood, and we are still struggling to make up for losses in past years.

3. Increase funding for Student Transportation

One of our school's largest challenges is getting our children to school and back home. Maintenance costs for our vehicles are higher than normal for several reasons, including the fact that they travel more miles per day than the average school bus, those miles are often very rough, and the cost of maintaining our buses includes long transport time to garages or parts stores. This is not to mention the cost of fuel to cover those extra miles!

The administration has requested $57.2 million for Student Transportation, a $4 million increase, but that is simply not enough given the challenges of our roads and equipment. We request at least $73 million for student transportation in the BIE system. We also request that this subcommittee fund BIA Road Maintenance at a sustainable level. We echo NCAI's recommendation that the subcommittee appropriate at least $40 million for road maintenance in fiscal year 2017. Such funding will enable us to maintain our six school buses, and will protect other funds that would otherwise be used for this purpose.

4. We support the administration's proposal to continue full funding for Tribal Grant Support Costs.

Tribal Grant Support Costs (TGSC) (formerly known as Administrative Cost Grants) are the BIE analogue to Contract Support Costs, and are necessary for schools like DCGS to operate our schools. Not only do the TGSC funds pay for the administration of the school, but also fund all indirect costs like payroll, accounting, insurance, background checks and other legal, reporting, and recordkeeping requirements. TGSC also enables schools to comply with the increasingly burdensome reporting requirements imposed by BIE or to comply with grant funding.

We are grateful to this subcommittee for fully funding TGSC in fiscal year 2016. This year, the administration has proposed to fully fund TGSC, including funding for schools transitioning from BIE-operated status to local control and grant funding. In years past schools had only received, at most, two-thirds of the TGSC needed to cover overhead costs. DCGS welcomes this long overdue change, and applauds this subcommittee's decision to treat schools' support costs the same as contractors with the BIA and the Indian Health Service. We support the administration's proposal that TGSC and startup costs be fully funded at $75.3 million.

5. Our schools need full funding for Facilities Operation and Maintenance.

The condition of BIE-funded schools is a national disgrace, and has been the subject of national news attention for years. Some schools in the country are forced to teach their students in converted bus barns or go without hot water. We do the best we can with our facilities at Dzilth-Na-O-Dith-Hle, but constantly struggle with the fact that we do not have enough funding for maintenance of our buildings, utilities, and everyday repairs. The operation of our facilities is an important one, not only for the comfort of our students, but one that affects their health and safety. It is hard to learn and progress if you're too cold, or if you're too hot due to radiator problems. In 2010, the BIA listed our school condition as "poor" with a deferred maintenance backlog of over $7.7 million dollars. Our backlog has only grown since, and our students are the ones who suffer as a result.

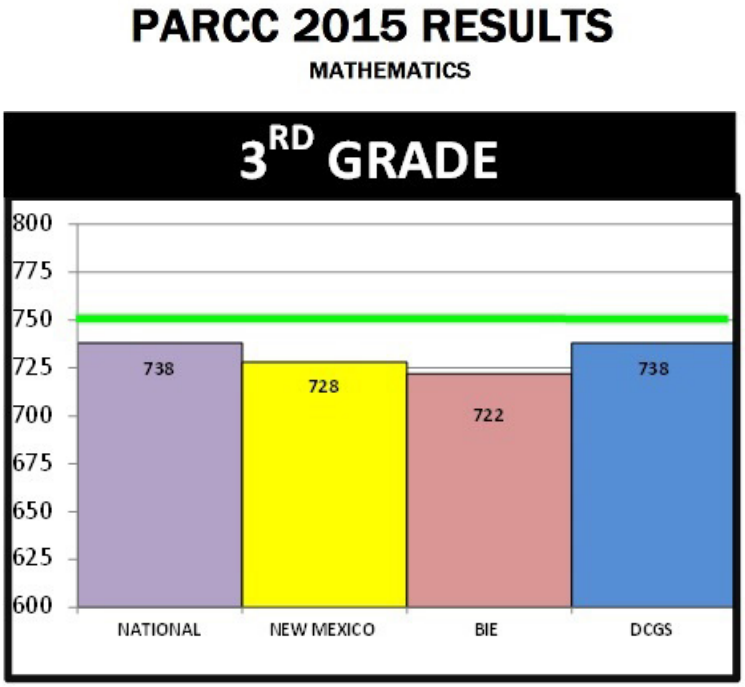
We appreciate that the administration has finally moved to complete the replacement of schools on a list dated from 2004, but we need to stress that these needs are ongoing. We support the BIE's request for school construction, but request that funding for facilities operation and maintenance be increased to $85 million for operations and $76 million for maintenance.

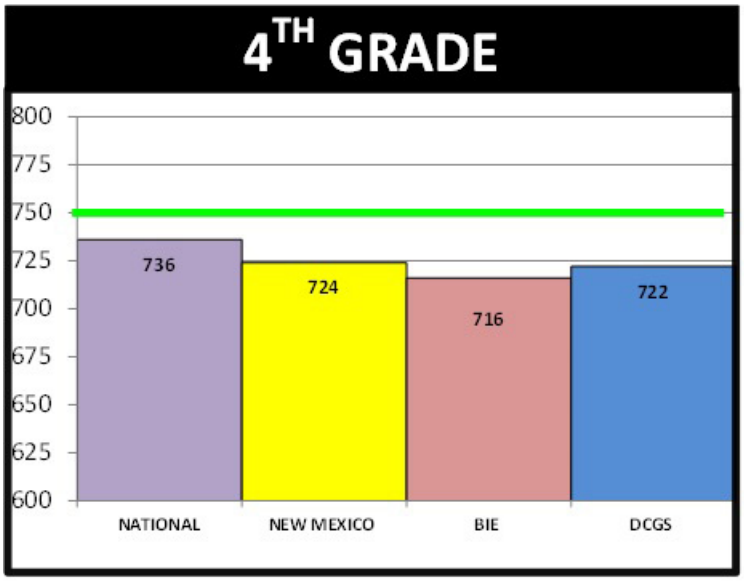
We are very grateful for the substantial increase that this subcommittee provided for Education Construction in fiscal year 2016, allowing the 2004 school replacement list to finally be completed. We are pleased to note that the completion of the 2004 list means that a new round of replacements will begin. In 2015, we were overjoyed to make it on to the top 10 list and present before the school replacement panel; however, we are still waiting to hear whether we will be one of the five schools chosen. Providing consistent funding for this budget category each fiscal year means that our aging schools can be replaced in an orderly, scheduled fashion. To this end, we call on the subcommittee to embark on a 60-year schools replacement plan coupled with adequate funding to maintain buildings throughout their life. Recent testimony from the Government Accountability Office reported that even new construction is starting to fail because of inappropriate maintenance or poor construction oversight. Our schools want to protect the Federal investment in our students' education, and we ask the subcommittee to empower local communities to do so by re-

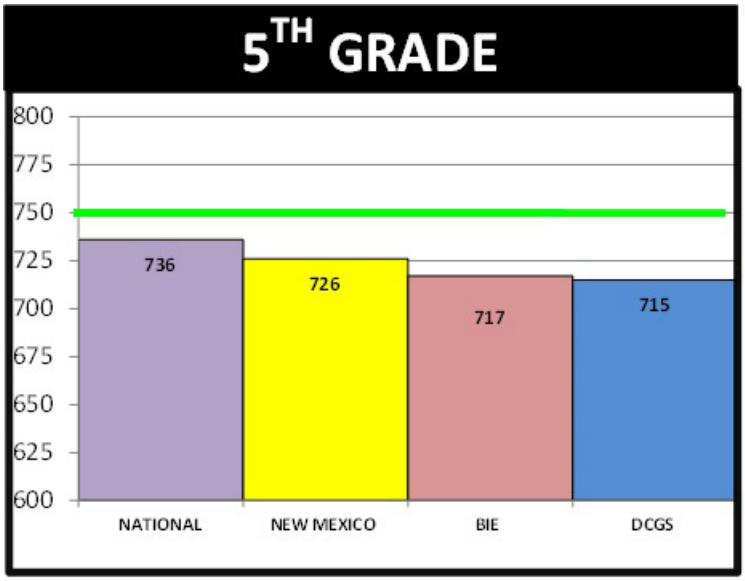
moving bureaucratic hurdles inherent in the BIE facilities system. As school boards, we are the best decision makers.

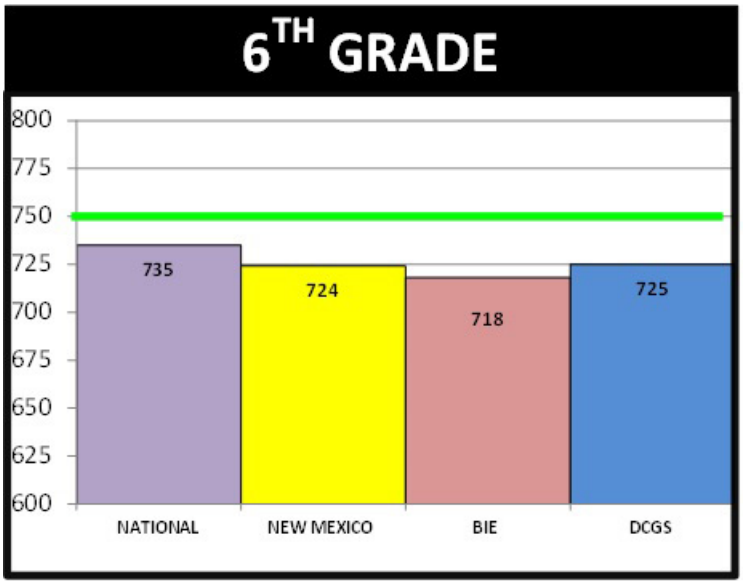
Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

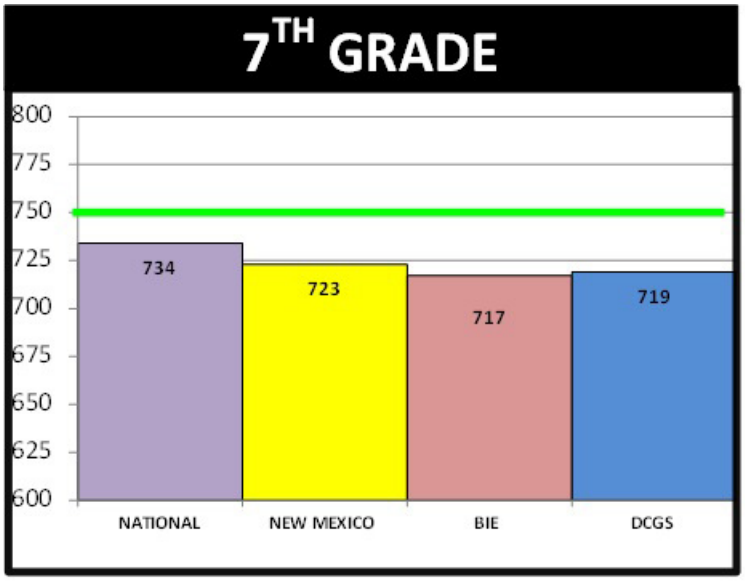
[This statement was submitted by Ervin Chavez, School Board President & Faye BlueEyes, Assistant Executive Director.]

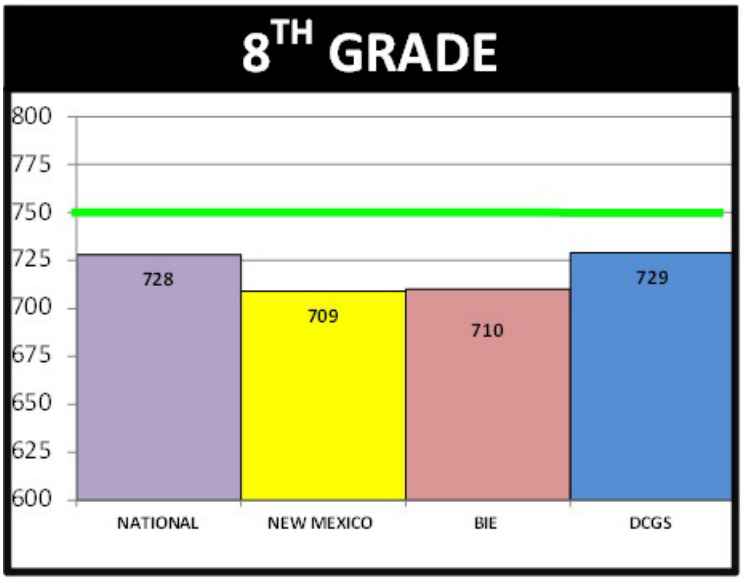





5TH GRADE
800
775
750
725
700
675
650
625
600
736
726
717
715
NATIONAL
NEW MEXICO
BIE
DCGS

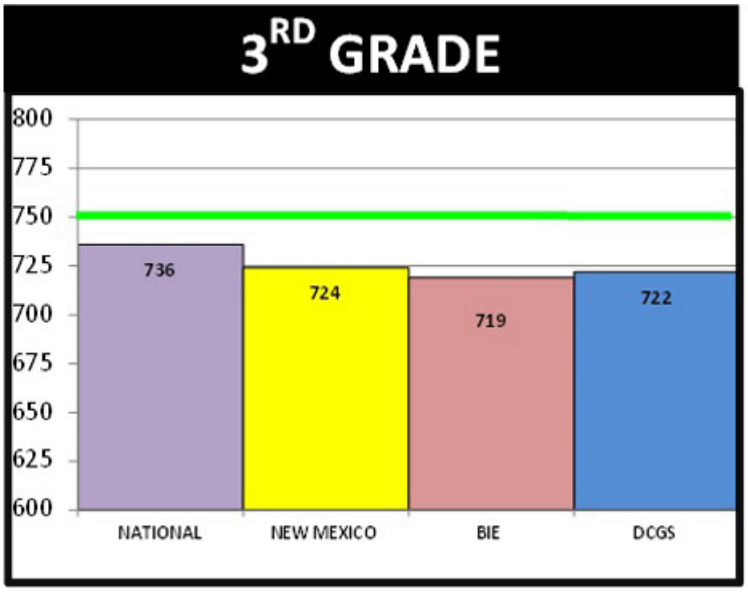

6TH GRADE
800
775
750
725
700
675
650
625
600
735
724
718
725
NATIONAL
NEW MEXICO
BIE
DCGS

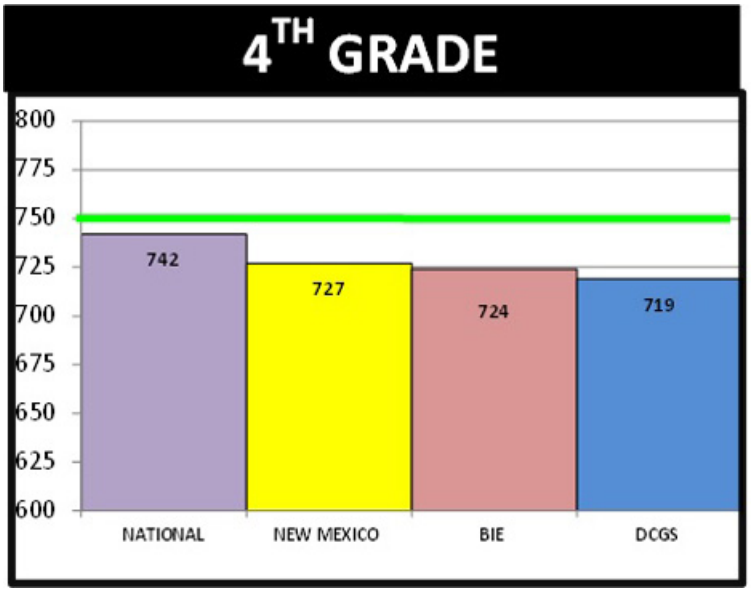

7TH GRADE
800
775
750
725
700
675
650
625
600
734
723
717
719
NATIONAL
NEW MEXICO
BIE
DCGS

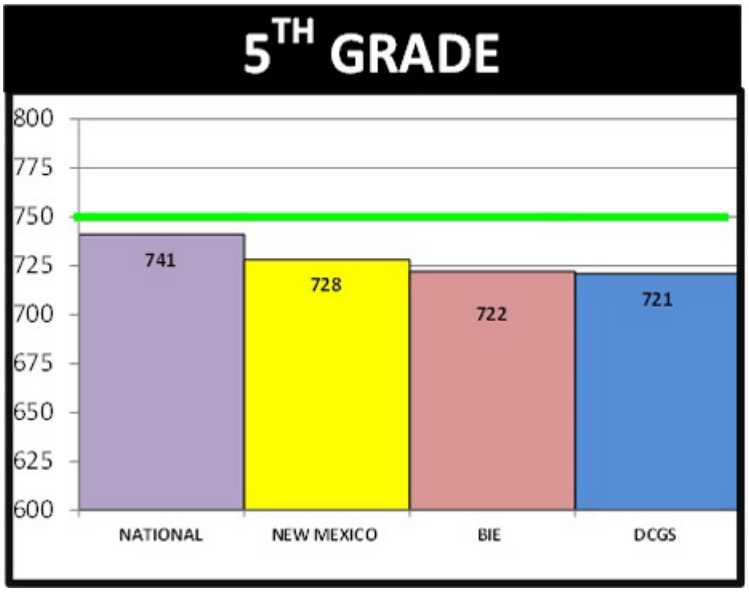

8TH GRADE
800
775
750
725
700
675
650
625
600
728
709
710
729
NATIONAL
NEW MEXICO
BIE
DCGS

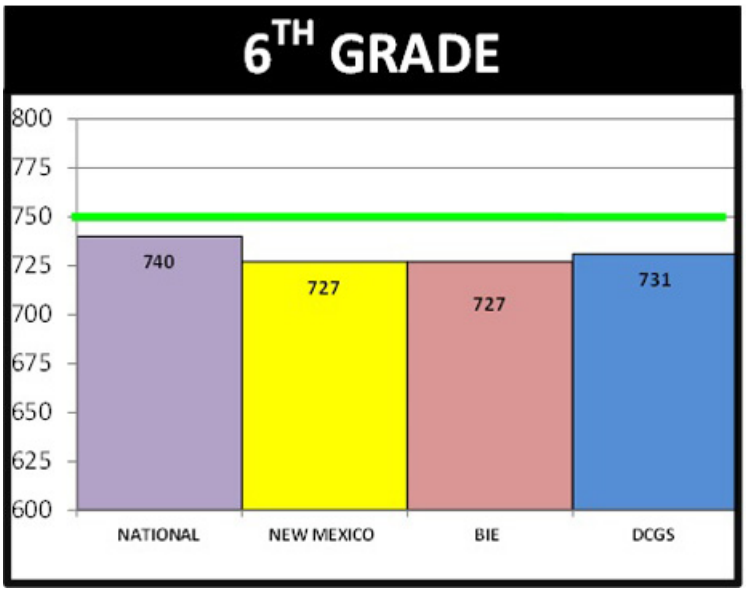
PARCC 2015 RESULTS

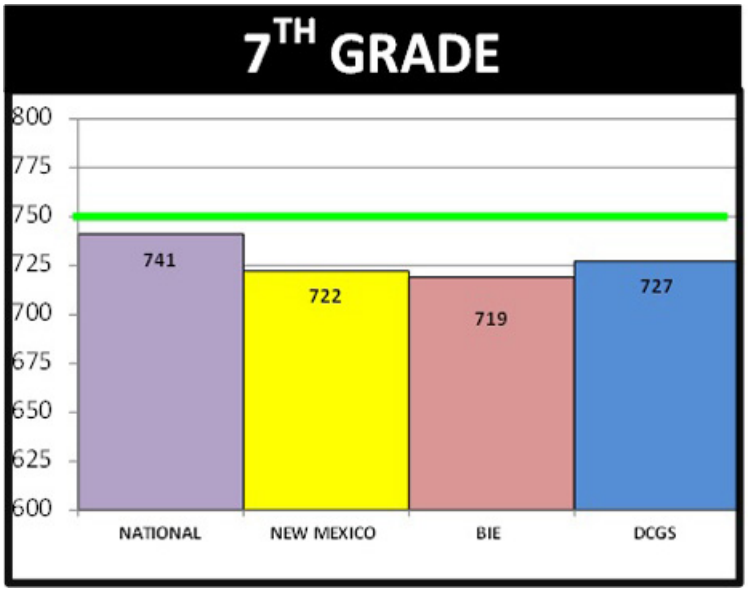
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

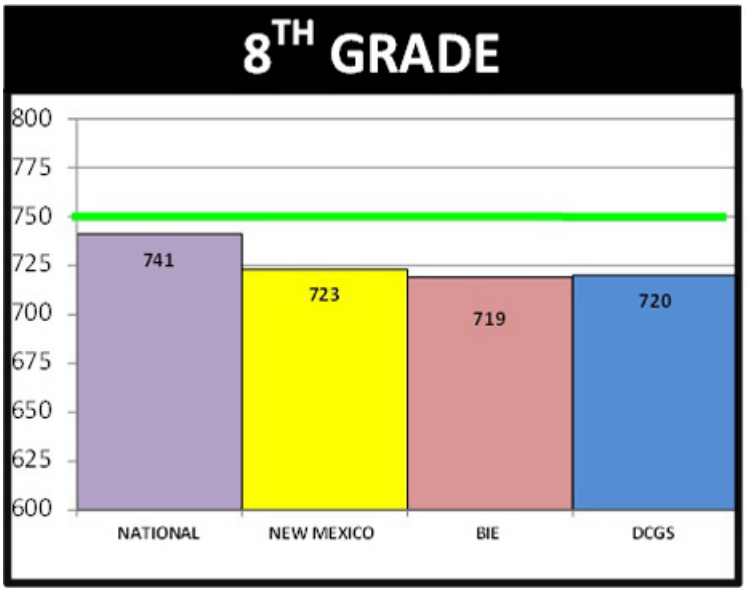





5TH GRADE
800
775
750
725
700
675
650
625
600
741
728
722
721
NATIONAL
NEW MEXICO
BIE
DCGS


6TH GRADE
800
775
750
725
700
675
650
625
600
740
727
727
731
NATIONAL
NEW MEXICO
BIE
DCGS


7TH GRADE
800
775
750
725
700
675
650
625
600
741
722
719
727
NATIONAL
NEW MEXICO
BIE
DCGS


8TH GRADE
800
775
750
725
700
675
650
625
600
741
723
719
720
NATIONAL
NEW MEXICO
BIE
DCGS

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA, THE SOCIETY OF RANGE MANAGEMENT, THE ASSOCIATION OF FIRE ECOLOGY, AND THE FOREST STEWARDS GUILD

The Ecological Society of America, the Society of Range Management, the Association of Fire Ecologists, and the Forest Stewards Guild appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony about the fiscal year 2017 budget U.S. Forest Service (USFS) funding for the Joint Fire Science Program. We are concerned that the administration's 2017 USFS budget request cuts funding for the Joint Fire Science Program's (JFSP) budget by $6.194 million within its Wildland Fire Management budget. Instead, the Service has designated $3 million for the Joint Fire Science Program from the $292 million Forest and Rangeland Research account without increasing its funding. We request that the U.S. Forest Service restore the Joint Fire Science Program budget of $6.194 million under the Wildland Fire Management budget and fully fund the Forest and Rangeland Research program.

We applaud the subcommittee's past leadership in funding wildland fire research within the U.S. Department of Interior and the U.S. Forest Service that is responsive to the needs of fire and fuel managers throughout the country.

As you know, the frequency, severity, and size of fires have increased substantially in the continental United States since the 1980s, and this trend is projected to continue and intensify in the future. The risk to communities, the cost of property loss, and the expense to cover the damage brought by these fires will consequently also grow. Scientific research has been critical to understanding and properly responding to these wildfires in the most productive and cost-effective manner possible.

The JFSP was created by Congress in 1998 as an interagency research, development, and applications partnership between the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The program solicits proposals from scientists who compete for funding through a rigorous peer-review process to ensure the highest quality projects are funded. Over 90 colleges and universities across the United States have collaborated or partnered with JFSP-sponsored research projects. The JFSP also runs a model program in science communication, with very effective efforts to put science in the hands of managers and policy makers.

No other Federal program except the JFSP provides the integration of science and management needed to face the challenges that lie ahead—we will be living in a world with more fire. Research in fire science is crucial to anticipating how ecosystems and landscapes may change in the future, how fire should be managed in both wildlands and developed areas, and where mitigation or adaptation strategies are most appropriate. Reductions in support for JFSP are inconsistent with high-priority national research needs.

For much of the past 10 years, the U.S. Forest Service has had to borrow from other accounts within the Service to cover expenses of mitigating the increasing costs of wildfires nationwide. While the Society understands the need to consolidate resources to improve the effectiveness of Federal fire response efforts, it seems counterproductive to cut funding towards applied research that will help agencies improve wildfire coordination and response efforts.

We appreciate that the Senate Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies has made funding for policy-relevant wildfire science among your highest priorities. We hope you will continue to recognize the critical role the JFSP plays in these efforts.

[This statement was submitted by Monica G. Turner, President of the Ecological Society of America, Dr. Val Anderson, President of the Society of Range Management, Leda N. Kobziar, President of the Association of Fire Ecologists, and Fred Clark, Executive Director of the Forest Stewards Guild.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE EDISON ELECTRIC INSTITUTE

The Edison Electric Institute (EEI) respectfully submits this written testimony for the record to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies. We appreciate this opportunity to share our views on three important rule makings that are underway at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). We also would like to briefly review three activities at the Department of Interior (DOI), which pose challenges for our industry and warrant continued attention by the subcommittee.

WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES

Last August, EPA issued a final rule to revise the definition of "Waters of the United States" (WOTUS) under the Clean Water Act. In October, a Federal appeals court stayed implementation of the rule nationwide. Many believe that the case will find its way to the Supreme Court and, if so, will delay any final resolution on the merits until sometime in 2017.

The final rule violates recent Supreme Court decisions limiting Federal jurisdiction, and would fail to achieve the Agency's stated goal of providing greater continuity, predictability, and clarity. Although EPA's final rule is marginally improved in certain areas that are important to electric power companies, it still objectionably broadens the scope of waters subject to Federal jurisdiction. Implementation of the final rule will affect electric power companies and their customers, and is inconsistent with the administration's stated goals of promoting power grid resiliency and streamlining the permitting of energy infrastructure, including renewable energy facilities.

While legal challenges by State and industry petitioners are pending, EEI supports congressional efforts to obtain withdrawal, delay or modification of the final rule.

COAL COMBUSTION RESIDUAL (CCR) REGULATION

In April 2015, EPA promulgated its final rule to regulate the disposal of CCRs, or coal ash, from electric power companies. The rule, which became effective in October 2015, properly regulates CCRs as non-hazardous waste under Subtitle D of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA).

Despite EPA's non-hazardous waste determination, serious flaws in the final rule remain, including its self-implementing nature, the legal authority of EPA to regulate inactive coal ash impoundments, and the way in which EPA has left the door open to one day regulate coal ash as a hazardous waste, creating additional uncertainty for electric power companies.

Because the CCR rule is self-implementing, affected facilities must comply with the new regulations regardless of whether a State adopts the rule. Even if a State adopts the rule and incorporates its criteria into the State's solid waste management program, the Federal rule remains in place as an independent set of Federal criteria. The rule neither requires regulated facilities to obtain permits nor requires States to adopt and implement the new rules, and cannot be enforced by EPA. The rule's enforcement mechanism is for a State or citizen group to bring a RCRA citizen suit in Federal district court against any facility that is alleged to be in non-compliance with the new requirements.

EEI is currently working closely with the States, our member companies and other stakeholders to achieve cost-effective implementation of the rule. However, we also continue to advocate for legislation that would ensure implementation of the rule in an effective and practical manner.

On July 22, 2015, the House passed H.R. 1734, the "Improving Coal Combustion Residuals Regulation Act." The bill essentially would codify the CCR rule, establish national standards for CCR under RCRA Subtitle D, and allow States to create and enforce their own CCR permit programs. Bipartisan companion legislation, S. 2446, has been introduced in the Senate.

EEI, the American Public Power Association and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association are on record in strong support of this legislation, as it would eliminate the practical and enforcement challenges associated with the self-implementing nature of the final CCR rule. In the absence of congressional action, EEI continues to support member company compliance with non-hazardous waste regulations for CCRs, and will advocate for CCR mine placement regulations that allow for the continued beneficial use of coal ash in mine reclamation activities.

STEAM EFFLUENT ELECTRIC GUIDELINES

In September 2015, EPA finalized its Steam Electric Effluent Guidelines Rule. The final rule, which became effective in January 2016, sets strict technology-based effluent limitations that will force major technological and operational changes and upgrades, particularly at existing coal-based facilities.

The rule has the potential to impact long-term investment decisions companies are making relative to compliance with other EPA regulations, including the final CCR regulation, and may cause marginal units to become unprofitable. EPA estimates the total annual pre-tax industry cost of the rule is $496 million, but this likely is a significant underestimate of the rule's costs.

In short, the final rule presents significant operational and compliance challenges. EPA included important new requirements related to stringent fly ash transport water, bottom ash transport water, flue gas mercury control wastewaters and treatment for flue gas desulfurization wastewater. These requirements are likely to significantly complicate implementation of the rule.

EEI is working to assist member companies in permit proceedings to achieve cost-effective and flexible implementation of the final guidelines. Still, implementation of the rule—particularly concerns over compliance dates and the misalignment of compliance dates with other environmental regulations (i.e., provisions in the CCR rule)—remains an area that may warrant subcommittee attention.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT (ESA)

As the number of new species listings increase and the accompanying critical habitat designations expand, so, too, does the creative use of the ESA by Federal agencies to increase burdens on electric power sector operations. These impacts include electric power companies' ability to site, operate and maintain generation and transmission facilities.

Congress is expected to consider ESA reform legislation this year. As part of these reform proposals, EEI will continue to advocate for ESA implementation in a way that is less burdensome and more responsive to the siting and permitting of electricity generation and transmission facilities. As EEI works to address the growing number of ESA-related challenges facing the electric power sector, we will continue to advocate for improved implementation of the ESA through direct collaboration with your subcommittee.

AVIAN PROTECTION AND SAGE-GROUSE HABITAT PRESERVATION

In addition to ESA, EEI is concerned with avian issues related to the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). Federal agency implementation of these Acts in certain cases is inconsistent across regions, both within individual agencies and among various Federal land management agencies.

Under the MBTA, DOI's Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has proposed establishing programmatic incidental take permits. If properly implemented, such a permit could provide electric power companies with decreased risk from prosecution if companies develop and follow an avian protection plan. However, in September 2015, a decision by a Federal circuit court ruled that the MBTA does not prohibit incidental "take" of migratory birds. Rather than appeal the circuit court decision, FWS is working to develop a redefinition of what constitutes intentional and unintentional take under the MBTA. As a result, the Agency's work on developing the MBTA incidental take permit has slowed, and it is not likely to be finalized before the end of the current administration.

With regard to the BGEPA, FWS developed a permitting program in 2009. Unfortunately, only a handful of BGEPA permits have been issued for transmission and distribution facilities as well as wind energy projects. Industry has met with FWS and the Council on Environmental Quality to explain the difficulties electric power companies and wind energy face in applying for BGEPA permits. FWS is expected to issue a notice of proposed rulemaking later this year to update the BGEPA permitting system, on which we will develop comments and keep the subcommittee updated.

As you are aware, FWS announced last year that the greater sage-grouse does not require protection under the ESA due to the collaborative and "unprecedented conservation planning effort" undertaken by numerous Federal, State, local and private partners. Despite this determination, the land use plans developed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Forest Service to protect greater sage-grouse present significant barriers to the siting and operation of transmission and distribution lines in a cost-effective and reliable manner in the western States. Nevertheless, EEI and our member companies remain committed to avoiding and minimizing impacts of power line construction and maintenance to sage-grouse and their habitat.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ON FEDERAL LANDS

Electric power companies experience significant delays when trying to gain access to their rights-of-ways (ROWs) located on Federal lands to perform vegetation management activities. Consequently, EEI advocates for legislation to remove impediments to vegetative management activities on Federal lands and improve access to ROWs to ensure power line safety.

H.R. 2358, the "Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act," promotes agency consistency, accountability, and timeliness as it relates to permitting vegetation management activities for electricity transmission and distribution lines on Federal lands. The legislation was incorporated into H.R. 8, the "North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act of 2015," which passed the House in December 2015. EEI is committed to passing H.R. 2358 as part of H.R. 8 or as a stand-alone measure. EEI also supports Section 5013 of H.R. 8 to facilitate voluntary partnerships between electric power companies and the Federal land agencies to address vegetation management needs on public lands neighboring a ROW that pose wildlife risks to electricity infrastructure.

In light of Federal electricity reliability guidelines related to vegetative management and the need to reduce the threat of catastrophic forest fires, EEI is also working to ensure that the land management agencies—BLM, FWS, and the National Park Service—have consistent policies and timely decisionmaking when it comes to protecting power lines on Federal lands. Recently EEI reached agreement with the Federal land management agencies to update and renew a 2006 Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate cooperation and coordination among parties regarding vegetation management within, and immediately adjacent to, existing and future electricity transmission line ROWs and associated facilities. The formal signing of this agreement will take place in spring 2016.

CONCLUSION

Thank you, Chair Murkowski, for this opportunity to discuss these significant environmental policies. EEI truly values the partnership that we share with your subcommittee, and we look forward to continuing our dialogue with you on these and other issues that have the potential to impact electricity generation, siting, permitting and construction efforts.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

The Entomological Society of America (ESA) respectfully submits this statement for the official record in support of funding for entomology-related activities at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). For fiscal year 2017, ESA requests the Forest Service be funded at least at the fiscal year 2016 enacted level of $5.68 billion in discretionary funds. Within the Forest Service, ESA requests the Forest and Rangeland Research budget be supported at the President's requested level of $291.982 million to preserve critical research and development on invasive species. The Society also supports continued investment in Forest Health Management programs across the Forest Service in fiscal year 2017. In addition, ESA recommends $8.267 billion for EPA, including support for Pesticides Licensing Program Area activities within its Science & Technology and Environmental Program & Management budgets, and continued support for State & Tribal Assistance Grants for Pesticide Program Implementation. Finally, ESA strongly supports EPA's commitment to work with other Federal agencies to monitor and improve pollinator health, including involvement by EPA to examine the potential impact of pesticides on pollinator health.

Advances in forestry and environmental sciences, including the field of entomology, help to maintain U.S. forests and grasslands and safeguard their contributions to the Nation's public health, economic prosperity, agricultural productivity and safety, social well-being and natural heritage. Through improved understanding of invasive insect pests and development of sustainable approaches to pest management, the science of entomology is critical to reducing or preventing disease epidemics and pest outbreaks that threaten the Nation's communities and ecosystems. Entomological science is also fundamental to the design and implementation of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), which uses science-based, environmentally sustainable, and economically and sociologically compatible methods to take preventative action against pests. In addition, entomology is key to understanding the biology of pollinators and identifying factors affecting their health and viability, helping to protect pollination services for America's agricultural enterprise to provide a safe, reliable food, fiber, and fuel supply for a growing world population.

The U.S. Forest Service sustains the health, diversity, and productivity of 193 million acres of public lands in national forests and grasslands across 44 States and Territories. Serving as the largest supporter of forestry research in the world, the agency employs approximately 35,000 scientists, administrators, and land managers. In addition to activities at the Federal level, the Forest Service provides technical expertise and financial assistance to State and private forestry agency partners.

The Forest Service's Forest and Rangeland Research budget supports the development and delivery of scientific data and innovative technological tools to improve the health, use, and management of the Nation's forests and rangelands. Within Forest and Rangeland Research, the Invasive Species Strategic Program Area provides scientifically based approaches to reduce and prevent the introduction, spread, and impact of non-native invasive species, including destructive insects, plants, and diseases that can have serious economic and environmental consequences for the Nation. For example, Forest Service scientists are working to prevent the destruction of ash trees across North America by the emerald ash borer, an Asian beetle first detected in the U.S. in 2002. Since its accidental introduction, this invasive wood-boring insect has killed tens of millions of ash trees and threatens to eliminate all ash trees from North America. Estimated annual damage inflicted by the emerald ashborer exceeds $1.5 billion, yet it is just one of the exponentially growing list of invasive insects and pathogens that harm the Nation's ecosystems and the human communities that depend upon them.[1] Forest health is also affected by invasive weeds, the management of which often depends on deploying beneficial insect predators and parasites as biological control agents, resulting in permanent and often spectacular control. ESA respectfully requests that Forest and Rangeland Research be fully funded at the President's requested level of $292 million for fiscal year 2017.

Also under the purview of the Forest Service is the Forest Health Management program, which conducts mapping and surveys on public and private lands to monitor and assess risks from potentially harmful insects, diseases, and invasive plants. The program also provides assistance to State and local partners to help prevent and control outbreaks that threaten forest health. According to a 2011 study, invasive forest insects cost local governments alone an average of over $2 billion per year; direct costs to homeowners from property loss, tree removal, and treatment averages $1.5 billion per year.[2] Initiatives within the Forest Health Management program are designed to reduce these costs. The program's "Slow the Spread" activities, for example, have led to a 60 percent reduction in the rate of the spread of the invasive gypsy moth, resulting in an estimated benefit-to-cost ratio of 3:1. Without the program, this destructive insect would likely have infested an additional 50 million acres of oak hardwood forests.[3] To support such vital functions, ESA requests that the subcommittee oppose proposed cuts to Forest Health Management program in fiscal year 2017.

EPA carries out its mission of protecting human health and the environment by developing and enforcing regulations, awarding grants for research and other projects, conducting studies on environmental issues, facilitating partnerships, and providing information through public outreach. Through these efforts, EPA works to ensure that the Nation has clean water, clean air, a safe and secure food supply, and protection from exposure to pollution and toxic chemicals.

EPA's Pesticides Licensing Program Area, supported by EPA's Science & Technology and Environmental Program & Management budgets, serves to evaluate and regulate new pesticides to ensure safe and proper usage by consumers. Through the mandate of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), EPA utilizes scientific expertise and data, including knowledge gained from entomological science, to set maximum tolerated residue levels and to register pesticide products as effective and safe. By controlling insects that act as vectors of diseases of humans and domesticated animals and invasive insect species that threaten virtually every kind of natural or managed biological community and the human activities that depend on those communities, pesticides registered by EPA help protect public health and the Nation's food supply. EPA's activities in this area also include the development of educational information and outreach to encourage the use of IPM and other reduced-risk methods of controlling pests. For example, EPA continues to support programs aimed at protecting children from pesticide exposure used in and around schools, helping to promote cost-effective strategies that reduce student exposure to pesticides and pests. IPM strategies used in schools reduce student exposure to pesticides as well as allergens from pests themselves. Therefore, ESA supports continuing the modest funding that EPA has invested in school IPM.

Among EPA's State & Tribal Assistance Grants, categorical grants in the area of Pesticides Program Implementation help to facilitate the translation of national pesticide regulatory information into real-world approaches that work for local commu-

---

[1] Aukema, J.E.; Leung, B.; Kovacs, K.; [et al.]. 2011. Economic impacts of non-native forest insects in the continental United States. PLoS ONE 6(9): e24587.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Forest Service Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Overview: http://www.fs.fed.us/sites/default/files/FY-2017-FS%20-budget-overview.pdf.

nities. For example, these grants fund efforts to reduce health and environmental risks associated with pesticide use by promoting, facilitating, and evaluating IPM techniques and other potentially safer alternatives to conventional pest control methods. ESA requests that the subcommittee support the proposed modest increase for Pesticides Program Implementation grants.

ESA is in favor of increased funding for scientifically based studies of pollinator populations and health. Pollinators play a vital role in the Nation's agricultural enterprise. The honey bee, for example, provides pollination services for more than 90 crops in the United States, which collectively are valued at more than $17 billion per year.[4] To ensure a healthy honey bee population, more research is needed to understand the complexities of annual colony losses that regularly exceed 30 percent and to examine the diverse factors that endanger bee health. Challenges to the health of honey bees and other pollinators include, among others, parasites, pathogens, poor nutrition, and pesticides; of these, pesticides also have agricultural benefits, against which risks to pollinators must be assessed, and the balance between risk and benefit varies among crop types, crop-producing regions, and pest identity. EPA is well-positioned to guide the development of methods for protecting pollinator health; the agency has, for example, previously awarded agricultural IPM grants to three universities to aid in the development of IPM practices that reduce risks to bees and other pollinators while protecting crops from pests and human populations from insect disease vectors.[5] For this reason, ESA supports EPA's participation in multi-agency efforts to investigate pollinator health and implementing plans to prevent pollinator population decline.

ESA, headquartered in Annapolis, Maryland, is the largest organization in the world serving the professional and scientific needs of entomologists and individuals in related disciplines. Founded in 1889, ESA has nearly 7,000 members affiliated with educational institutions, health agencies, private industry, and government. Members are researchers, teachers, extension service personnel, administrators, marketing representatives, research technicians, consultants, students, pest management professionals, and hobbyists.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer the Entomological Society of America's support for Forest Service and EPA programs. For more information about the Entomological Society of America, please see http://www.entsoc.org/.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL OF THE STATES

Dear Chairwoman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall, and members of the subcommittee,

I am Martha Rudolph, Director of Environmental Programs at the Colorado Department of Health and Environment, submitting this testimony as president and on behalf of the members of the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) on the fiscal year 2017 budget for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

We are pleased to provide this testimony in support of the President's budget request of $3.28 billion in appropriations for the State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG). Within STAG, there is a proposed $1.158 billion for categorical grants, which advance, in part, core State work to carry out responsibilities under the major environmental laws. The administration's STAG request also includes $2 billion for the important clean water and drinking water State revolving funds (SRFs), $90 million for brownfields projects, $10 million for diesel emission reduction grants, and $22 million for several focused assistance programs. States welcome the President's request for $77 million more in funding for categorical grants than the enacted fiscal year 2016 budget for these programs. We see great value in the $15.7 million requested increase for environmental information categorical grants, which help support the critical E-Enterprise for the Environment collaborative State and Federal work to improve regulatory processes for the regulated community and increase data availability to the public. The E-Enterprise for the Environment effort between States and EPA continues to support the ushering in a new era of efficient, effective, and renewed collaborative Federalism—with benefits for all who interface with, or administer, our Nation's environmental programs.

---

[4] Calderone, NW. 2012. Insect Pollinated Crops, Insect Pollinators and US Agriculture: Trend Analysis of Aggregate Data for the Period 1992—2009. PLoS ONE 7(5): e37235. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0037235, http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0037235.

[5] EPA. 2014. "EPA Awards Almost Half a Million in Funding to Three Universities for Projects to Reduce Pesticide Risk Including Risks to Bees," https://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/6427a6b7538955c585257359003f0230/a5c495f5bc4d4ba285257c5a005aaa35!OpenDocument.

States continue to face obstacles as we work to keep pace with the cost of implementing core and new programs. When limited funding is combined with new regulatory requirements and variability in the timing and the amount of Federal funds, States' ability to meet their delegated commitments becomes increasingly challenging. As States are responsible for the implementation of over 95 percent of the Nation's Federal environmental laws, it is essential that States are given flexibility and financial support so that we can work with EPA and other partners to ensure effective protection of human health and the environment.

While States seek ways to save resources through efficiency efforts, our work is difficult to conduct in a flat or reduced fiscal state. We urge Congress to recognize the States' crucial role in delivering environmental protection and services by funding the STAG at the requested $3.28 billion level. Following, we offer and elaborate upon several reasons why this investment in States will deliver many times over.

States are Primary Implementers of the Nation's Environmental Laws

The States are co-regulators with EPA in the implementation of the Nation's environmental laws and corresponding programs. Congress included provisions in the major Federal environmental statutes—including the Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, Clean Air Act, and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act—for States to assume authority over the Federal programs and to provide financial assistance to States to operate these Federal programs. A State match is usually required under these statutes, and States provide on average well over half and in many States, three-quarters of the funds to operate federally delegated programs.

States perform much of the work set out in the President's budget request through these delegated programs, making Federal funding essential. States use a combination of Federal and State funding, and fees assessed on regulated entities, to issue permits, conduct inspections and enforcement, gather and manage data, set standards, remediate sites, monitor ambient conditions, and other important activities. In order to ensure the long-term strength and viability of EPA and the States' joint efforts to implement these programs, it is essential that the States receive sufficient Federal funding through STAG.

The Reality of the STAG Request

States are encouraged that the President's budget request increases ten categorical grants and that overall, categorical grants receive a $77 million requested increase. When divided nationally, this is a proposed increase of just over $1 million per State for the implementation of national programs, and every Federal dollar will matter—particularly as States do more to maintain the delegated programs.

We acknowledge that the budget request was prepared in continued challenging fiscal climate, and that proposed increases may come from reductions to valued programs. In many of these areas, EPA has proposed alternative ways to support the sectors affected by the proposed reductions though programs on the Agency's side of the ledger. For example, while a reduction is proposed for the Clean Water SRF, the administration's proposal calls for a $1.6 million increase in funds for the Water Infrastructure and Resiliency Finance Center to help communities identify and develop water financing. ECOS still has concerns with reductions to the revolving loan funds below needed and historic amounts. ECOS Resolution 08–1, renewed in 2014, refers to estimates—continually increasing—that over $700 billion is required to address wastewater and drinking water needs over the next 20 years. While the $157 million increase proposed for the Drinking Water SRF is without question an overdue and needed response to long acknowledged shortfalls, it appears to come at the expense of the Clean Water SRF—which is proposed at $414 million less than fiscal year 2016 enacted. Given the great needs for investment in water infrastructure across the Nation, we encourage Congress to fund the SRFs at the President's increased drinking water request level without taking funds away from the clean water SRF. These investments are essential in order to advance critically needed and important work to protect the environment and public health in communities across the Nation.

Modernizing the Business of Environmental Protection

Among the categorical grant increases, we especially encourage you to appropriate the requested $15.7 million increase to the Environmental Information Categorical Grant to States. Streamlining processes and technological investment are essential to enhancing how States deliver permits, monitoring, inspections, and public information. When leveraged with State resources it is essential to bringing State environmental business models into the modern age, and often supports development of shared services for States. These funds will facilitate States' continued efforts to implement electronic permitting and reporting systems proactively which will allow information to be processed, reviewed, shared between States and EPA, and acted

upon more quickly. This facilitates job creation, contributes to improved public health, and creates a more efficient and transparent government system that brings more and more regulated entities into compliance while creating incentives for all facilities to perform at high levels. We are committed to joint governance, to better decisionmaking, and to increasing transparency and efficiency through the E-Enterprise for the Environment initiative. Your support for this Categorical Grant, and for EPA's request for funding its work on E-Enterprise for the Environment aligned projects, will make a meaningful difference to the States, private entitles, and the public.

Rescissions

We commend the administration for proposing no rescissions in prior STAG funds. The States need every dollar that Congress can give, and rescinding prior year funds is detrimental to achieving environmental progress. We are working with EPA to improve administrative processes to ensure that funds are dispersed in a timely manner so that they can be efficiently and effectively put to use by States. We urge you not to include any rescissions of unobligated STAG funds in the fiscal year 2017 enacted budget. If rescissions must occur due to hard choices you must make, rescissions should be taken equitably from one or more of the Agency's budget accounts and the STAG account.

The Value of Flexibility

State Environmental Agencies have seen budget cuts at the State level and are managing reductions in part by leaning our business processes and by strategically applying practices that improve efficiency, such as targeting inspections to priority areas and implementing technological advancements.

Within each State, needs and priorities can vary in part from priorities set by EPA at the Federal level. State commissioners require maximum flexibility to direct the Federal resources in ways that suit their unique needs and circumstances. While the States may agree with and appreciate funding for specific efforts, States need flexibility to budget for and implement work activities most effectively. Directed funding undermines State flexibility and needed support for on-going every day implementation of the Nation's environmental laws. The States, as co-regulators with EPA, wish to preserve and expand State flexibility to address State and regional priorities within EPA's national framework. Fewer funding directions should help streamline State-EPA discussions about the work to be accomplished.

Reducing spending directives within a Categorical Grant expedites State utilization of funds. States have worked closely with EPA over the last several years to quickly award and then efficiently utilize valuable Federal funding. Fewer instructions allow States to move more quickly to turn Federal dollars into positive results.

ECOS and the States are very supportive of the $21 million multipurpose grant program that Congress created in the fiscal year 2016 omnibus budget. The President's budget does not include a request to fund this program. In providing these funds for EPA to apportion to States and tribes for the implementation of priorities within environmental programs generally, Congress has given States and tribes the ability to direct the funds where they can most effectively be leveraged and deliver tangible results. We believe flexible funds provide States the best opportunity to make progress in advancing environmental goals and protecting human health, and we strongly encourage Congress to provide additional funding in the enacted budget so that this much-needed grant program can continue.

ECOS and its members value our work with the Appropriations Committees, and are appreciative of the continued consideration of our views. We are confident the funding allocated will be well used to implement the Nation's environmental enterprise with EPA. With this funding, States will continue their dedicated efforts to deliver the clean environment all Americans want and deserve in the most efficient, modern, and results-oriented way possible.

We welcome the opportunity to answer any questions or provide any further information.

We thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective, and remain willing to provide the subcommittee with any input in the future.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE EVERGLADES COALITION

Dear Chairwoman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

On behalf of the 61 members of the Everglades Coalition committed to the protection and restoration of America's Everglades, we want to thank you for your subcommittee's long-time support for Everglades restoration. Your continued support,

along with the strong commitment from the last four Florida Governors, has kept restoration on a strong and steady path. This strong partnership between the Federal Government and the State of Florida has resulted in many successes with more on the horizon.

To build on this progress, we respectfully request the amount of $62.7 million for fiscal year 2017 for agencies within the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), as recommended in the President's budget. This amount will allow key projects under the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and others, such as combatting invasive species like the Burmese python and numerous plant species, to move forward.

There is little question that the restoration of America's Everglades has been one of the highest priorities of this and previous administrations. The National Park Service (NPS), which is celebrating its centennial this year, listed the Everglades among their high priority parks. Everglades restoration is critical for the Interior bill because it is helping 17 federally protected lands—including National Parks and National Wildlife Refuges—that are currently in distress from the lack of clean water. We have a national responsibility to preserve this special and unique ecosystem for future generations, and agencies within DOI are taking a lead role to fulfill the goals of CERP and their commitment to manage the resources of the Greater Everglades Ecosystem in the Federal interest.

We are very pleased that NPS is working closely with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and has funding committed to begin construction on the 2.6-mile bridge segment of the Tamiami Trail Next Steps project in spring 2016—making this a centennial project for the National Park Service. This bridging will enable long-blocked water to flow under this highway and bring badly needed water to Everglades National Park and Florida Bay. NPS intends to use funds from the Federal Lands Transportation Program to fulfill its commitment, in addition to $90 million committed from FDOT and $20 million from DOT's Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) competitive grant program.

Last week, the Florida Legislature overwhelmingly passed "Legacy Florida," which will dedicate at least $1 billion of Amendment 1 funds over the next 10 years for planning, design, engineering, and construction of Everglades restoration projects outlined in CERP. This legislation will dedicate even more funds for restoration projects beyond CERP that will improve the health of the greater Everglades ecosystem. The passage of this legislation ensures that reliable State dollars will be directed each year to these vital infrastructure projects. We look forward to working with your subcommittee to build on this State commitment to ensure a more predictable path for advancing Everglades projects.

We greatly appreciate your continued support and commitment to Everglades restoration as we move forward with this monumental restoration effort, fulfilling our promise to future generations.

[This statement was submitted by Cara Capp, National Co-Chair, and Jason Totoiu, State Co-Chair.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE FEDERATION OF STATE HUMANITIES COUNCILS

Madam Chairwoman and members of the subcommittee, I thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the State humanities councils, the State affiliates of the National Endowment for the Humanities, requesting $155 million for the National Endowment for the Humanities and $46 million for the Federal/State Partnership for fiscal year 2017.

As full partners of the NEH, the State humanities councils receive their core funding through the Federal/State Partnership line of the NEH budget, which they use to leverage additional support from foundations, corporations, private individuals, and State governments. For the past several years, councils have leveraged, on average, $5.00 in local contributions for every dollar of Federal funding awarded through their grants, and they have further extended their resources in recent years by forming partnerships with more than 9,000 organizations throughout their States. But demand continues to increase. While Federal funding for council programs has remained roughly level for the past several years, councils have continued to expand their programs to reach new populations and to meet growing needs in their States.

At the heart of every humanities council discussion is a fundamental question: How can we make life better for the citizens of our communities? The multiple responses to this question can be seen in an array of council programs, conducted in nearly every congressional district in the Nation, which serve families, students, veterans, educators, rural Americans, medical personnel, immigrants and refugees,

adult new readers, and a host of others. The State councils in each of the 50 States, five Territories and Washington DC work from a deep understanding of the unique identity of their States and of the needs of their citizens and communities. Their programs reach the tiniest and most remote towns as well as densely populated urban neighborhoods, creating bridges between academic research and public citizens hungry for substantive conversation about issues that matter.

Councils steward their modest Federal resources not only by forming partnerships and leveraging other funding, but also by carefully studying the civic, cultural, demographic, and educational profile of their States, assessing the challenges their citizens and communities face, and making informed decisions about where and how their programs will have the greatest impact. Four areas of council activity offer particularly striking and significant illustration of the ways lives are changed through council work. These include programs that (1) support and help reintegrate veterans, (2) contribute to the economic and civic health of communities, (3) provide resources to underserved rural populations and (4) increase literacy and strengthen K–12 education.

Supporting veterans and their communities.—In 2014, the National Endowment for the Humanities, through its newly launched initiative, "Standing Together: The Humanities and the Experience of War," invited councils to submit proposals for $10,000 grants to develop or continue programs to help veterans reintegrate into civilian life and deepen community understanding of the challenges faced by returning veterans. Through these grants, councils created programs and partnerships that have continued well beyond the conclusion of the grant period and expanded far beyond the original design. Councils learned early that sustaining relationships forged with veterans and veterans groups was critical, so they stretched their resources to continue the initial programs as long as possible, while also using the grants to leverage other funds based on a strong record of high quality, reliable programs. NEH offered councils several program models but also gave them a free hand, under the terms of the grant, to shape programs they believed would best serve the veterans in their States.

Veterans' experiences can be communicated in a variety of ways, as evidenced by a California Humanities program called "War Ink," through which veterans shared their stories of war and homecoming with each other and the general public through an online interpretive exhibit of tattoos, a widespread form of communication among veterans. Initiated by a veteran and a program fellow at the Contra Costa County Library with a modest $10,000 grant from the humanities council, the site has received more than 50,000 visits since it was launched on Veterans Day in 2014. The 24 stories from men and women located in every part of the State reflect the diversity of experience in California, home to more than 2 million veterans. The project was created through the cooperative efforts of an unusual array of partners including public and private funders, tattoo parlors, veteran-serving organizations, libraries, college campuses, and media professionals.

The New Mexico Humanities Council is one of a dozen councils serving veterans through a reading and discussion program, "Talking Service," a partnership between participating councils and the Great Books Foundation, with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The project enables participants to discuss their experiences and challenges with fellow veterans, drawing on the literature chosen specifically for its relevance to veterans. The Vermont Humanities Council also offers reading and discussion programs for veterans, based on a model developed by the Maine Humanities Council. Session facilitator Michael Heaney, retired American history professor and Vietnam veteran, said of these discussions, "The participants get to read stuff that bubbles up memories, provokes them sometimes, and then talk about it in a group that's safe for them. And for some of them, it's the first time they've ever had that opportunity."

Strengthening economic and cultural structures.—In addition to giving context and meaning to the lives of individuals and communities, the humanities strengthen the economic, cultural, and educational foundations of communities. Council-sponsored book festivals in Kentucky, Nebraska, Nevada, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and West Virginia bring thousands of residents and visitors together around the love of books and reading, while also contributing to local economies. Humanities Tennessee's Southern Festival of Books has been bringing the public together with more than 200 nationally prominent authors every October since 1989. The 3-day festival, centered in Nashville, promotes reading and lifelong learning among the thousands of attendees each year, while also boosting the city's businesses.

Other councils bring dollars to local communities by helping to strengthen local tourism. The Missouri Humanities Council's newest initiative brings the council into partnership with local governments and community organizations to highlight the

State's most cherished historical and cultural treasures. In its first phase, the project will focus on the State's German heritage, identifying a series of sites that will illuminate the story of this important group, educating Missourians about their own history while also drawing tourism dollars to communities along the heritage tour route.

The Rhode Island Council for the Humanities is creating a model for encouraging community vitality and prosperity through its 3-year "Catalyzing Newport" project, which brings organizations and citizens together "to address challenges and constraints, add value, and create the basis for resilient, sustainable, and innovative communities." The project will enlist experts to engage with citizens during residencies in which they will help to define and address challenges and work with community leaders to shape a future "rich in culture, civic life, and economic opportunities."

Serving rural communities.—Our Nation's rural communities are a rich tapestry of vibrant American life, but many of these communities hunger for the kinds of cultural resources that connect them with their own histories and with the larger world. Humanities council programs meet this need yearly in thousands of communities in every corner of their States. From Chautauqua portrayals of historic figures to reading and discussion programs in local libraries to humanities speakers who traverse the State to deliver presentations on topics ranging from "Paul Revere's Ride" to "Cowboys and Cowgirls: Icons of the American West," humanities council programs offer live, intellectually substantive programs otherwise unavailable to residents of these rural communities.

In a State of vast distances and small population centers, Humanities Montana has created a unique program that provides sustained support for a different community each year to become the site of intensive humanities programming including community conversations, writing workshops, lectures, poetry events, and reading and discussion series. Communities apply to be selected for this year-long project, which includes, in the course of the year, dozens of local events and several visits from humanities council staff members, who meet with community officials, cultural and educational leaders, and other local planners. The creation of strong local networks and partnerships within each community, along with the development of programming expertise, ensures that the impact will extend well beyond the designated year.

The successful 25-year partnership between the State humanities councils and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) has brought high-quality, lightweight, portable Smithsonian exhibits to small towns in 46 States and Guam through a project known as Museum on Main Street (MoMS). Over its history, MoMS has stimulated partnerships among the councils, SITES, and local institutions in more than 900 communities, with an average population of 8,000. Recent exhibit topics have included "Hometown Teams," looking at the way American sports have both reflected and influenced the culture; "The Way We Worked," which traces changes in our workforce and work environments over 150 years; and "Water/Ways," exploring the impact that water has on our landscape, our climate, and our communities. In each community, the MoMS exhibit is accompanied by a local exhibit and by cultural and educational activities planned and carried out by the host community, with financial and professional support from the humanities council and SITES.

Councils in both Mississippi and Kentucky, for example, will tour "Hometown Teams," the newest MoMS exhibition, in 2016 and 2017, respectively. In both States, the exhibit will visit several communities, and the council will work with a local planning group to shape a local exhibit and accompanying programs. Programs in Mississippi, where the tour began this spring, will include a panel discussion among three former governors, all from small towns in Mississippi, talking about the impact of sports on their communities growing up. In addition, a world-renowned sports architect and Jackson native will talk about baseball stadium design across the country.

Supporting education at all levels.—The State humanities councils, at their core, are all about contributing to the education of our citizens, from the youngest children to the most senior adults. Council programs help low-income and immigrant families improve their children's school readiness and the parents' reading skills through family literacy program models, such as Prime Time and Motheread. Council-supported programs for K–12 students, such as the National History Day competition, Center for the Book writing programs, Speakers in the Schools programs, and humanities camps and conferences for youth, improve student learning and engagement.

The Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, for example, 25 years ago launched a family literacy program, "Prime Time," which was adopted by a number

of other councils throughout the country. The program has a proven track record of improving school performance for students from underserved families, while also strengthening family ties. Through a 6-week series, families listen to a storyteller read award-winning children's literature and then discuss substantive humanities concepts and ideas together. Serving a different age group, the Alaska Humanities Forum offers an array of educational programs tailored to the unique circumstances of a State that is sharply divided between urban centers and very remote rural towns. One of these programs, the "Sister School Exchange," provides support for five middle and high school students and a teacher from a rural community to change places with counterparts in Anchorage to promote cross-cultural understanding. "Take Wing Alaska" provides support for rural Native Alaska students to make the transition from their home communities to urban secondary schools, where they will gain the education needed to assume leadership positions back in their home villages. The program focuses not only on academic skills but also on the inherent Native skills that students can draw on to help them succeed in their new environment.

"Idea Lab," a summer program created by Oregon Humanities, offers professional development for teachers and college preparation for "high-curiosity" students through a 3-day residential institute, looking at the pursuit happiness and its meaning in relation to such concepts as consumer culture, religion, politics, education, and civic engagement. The program welcomes teens from a wide variety of economic and social backgrounds with a particular focus on students who lack financial and family support for their college aspirations.

These are only a few of the hundreds of programs through which councils help fulfill the mandate of the founding legislation, which eloquently reminds us that "democracy demands wisdom and vision in its citizens . . . ." We urge you to support our request for $155 million for the NEH and $46 million for the Federal/State Partnership, so humanities councils can continue to partner with the citizens of their States all across the country in pursuit of this wisdom.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE FIREFIGHTERS UNITED FOR SAFETY, ETHICS, AND ECOLOGY

Oppose "Disaster" Funding for Forest Service Wildfire Suppression Operations

As you are well aware, suppression spending has been soaring in recent years—rising well above the rate of inflation and consuming a majority of the Forest Service's budget. Even during years when wildfire activity has been relatively low, suppression spending has kept going up. The fire services have long passed the point of diminishing returns whereby increased spending on wildfire suppression yields any benefit in terms of increased firefighting safety or effectiveness.

Giving Federal bureaucracies discretion to spend hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars per year beyond their annual appropriations (as the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act proposed to do) is not only fiscally irresponsible, it is environmentally irresponsible and will raise safety risks for firefighters for generations to come. We strongly urge you to reject efforts to include the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act or any other similar legislative proposal, rider, or amendment.

There is a serious problem with the Forest Service overspending its annual appropriated budgets on firefighting operations, and then transferring funds from other non-fire programs to pay for firefighting costs. We share the wide concern of many other organizations to cease these "fire transfers" and have the Forest Service budget become more stable, predictable, and above all accountable. We are glad that Forest Service Chief Tidwell has promised not to do that this year, especially since Congress has increased its fiscal year 2016 suppression appropriations by several hundred million. This means that there should be no self-induced crisis over fire transfers this year, giving Congress time to craft a bill that is fiscally sound and sustainable. Indeed, there are better ways to stop fire transfers than simply changing the budgetary source of those transfers, such as taking funds from FEMA.

The problem with the mechanism proposed by the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act is that it does not target emergency funds to the large-scale "megafires" that are truly fiscal disasters because they consume 30 percent of the agency's suppression budget. Instead, the agency can start accessing emergency funds after they've spent 70 percent of their suppression budget. This system could set up a system of perverse incentives causing the agency to spend the 70 percent portion of their appropriated budget as soon as possible—sending crews out aggressively fighting early season wildfires in remote wildlands and at all costs—so they can gain disaster funding. This system is a ticket to promoting wildfire disasters, not preventing them!

Unfortunately, Congress has traditionally given a "blank check" to Federal agencies when they overspend their appropriated budgets on suppression, rarely asking them hard questions about how they spent that money, what impacts that spending had on fire or the land, and what taxpayers actually get in return. This has led to the agency fire managers often choosing high-cost suppression strategies or tactics—which may look good to the media—while neglecting other more cost-efficient and effective fire management actions. Giving Federal agencies access to billions of more taxpayer dollars from disaster accounts will lead to suppression spending on steroids!

Worse, allowing agencies to declare wildfires as disasters simply to lift budget caps and access near-unlimited emergency funding for suppression operations will undermine efforts that have been long in the making to shift agencies toward alternative proactive strategies in fire preparedness and planning, fuels reduction and forest restoration. Why bother with those activities that might actually prevent disasters, but must be paid for by appropriated budgets, when the agency can simply continue fighting all fires and get fully funded with no questions asked? And the definition of a wildfire disaster ultimately has nothing to do with the effects of a given wildfire, only the amount of money spent fighting it! Again, this is will simply incentivize disastrous management choices to spend more taxpayer dollars for no real benefit in reducing future fire risks, restoring fire-adapted ecosystems, or improving firefighter safety.

We regret that many, perhaps most Members of Congress fail to understand the nature of the "firefighter's dilemma," a term from business management that refers to the inability of businesses to invest in long-term cost-saving operations because they are so caught up in avoiding short-term losses. In the case of Federal agencies spending ever more taxpayer dollars on reactive wildfire suppression actions while neglecting proactive research, planning, and fuels management projects, the firefighter's dilemma is a literal, not metaphorical term. Allowing the agencies to access disaster accounts will become a bigger dilemma to the point of fiscal disaster.

We strongly urge you to reject any efforts to include the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act or any other similar language in the fiscal year 2017 Interior appropriations bill. Congress has already added hundreds of millions of extra dollars in the fiscal year 2016 Forest Service budget for suppression, and the Chief has pledged not to do any fire transfers this year, so there should be no crisis this year.

Congress should take this time to come up with a more effective solution to suppression overspending. The real task Congress needs to do is to contain Federal suppression costs, not simply find a novel "off-budget" way to pay for escalating expenditures.

[This statement was submitted by Timothy Ingalsbee, Ph.D., Executive Director.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE FOND DU LAC BAND OF LAKE SUPERIOR CHIPPEWA

I am Wally Dupuis, Chairman of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. On behalf of the Band, I would like thank this subcommittee for the opportunity to submit testimony on fiscal year 2017 appropriations for Indian programs funded through the Interior Department, Indian Health Service, and Environmental Protection Agency. The Fond du Lac Band occupies a small reservation in northeastern Minnesota. We have approximately 4,200 members and provide health, education, social services, public safety and other governmental services to more than 6,700 Indian people who live on and near our reservation. We strive to find solutions that will break the cycle of poverty and meet the unmet needs of our community. We are proud of the steps that we have taken to do this, including partnerships with the public and private sectors. But while we are beginning to address these longstanding problems, much remains to be done. Federal funding is essential.

Bureau of Indian Education. BIE funding is the primary source of funding for the Fond du Lac Ojibwe School. This school serves approximately 340 students in pre-K through grade 12. Our students come from very low-income households; more than 90 percent of our students qualify for free or reduced rate lunches. While we are making progress in improving the educational attainment of our students, we are handicapped by limited resources. There are still significant disparities between American Indians and the population statewide on education that correlate with poverty levels. Data compiled for Minnesota in 2015 illustrates this:

	Living below Poverty	3rd Grade Students at 3rd Grade reading level	8th Grade Students at 8th Grade math level	High School graduation rates
Statewide	11.50%	58.7%	57.8%	81.9%
Minnesota Indian	32.20%	40.5%	30.8%	51.9%

From: Minnesota Compass, http://www.mncompass.org/education/overview. Most recent data is as of 2015 except poverty rates are as of 2014.

We very much appreciate the Federal efforts to improve opportunities for American Indian youth, and the recognition that education is a key component to improve the life trajectories of Native youth. We support the President's budget, which would increase overall education funding by $60 million over the fiscal year 2016 enacted level, including increases in funding for: Johnson O'Malley, so we can assist Indian children in public schools, as well as Early Childhood Development funds (FACE), which is critical to providing preschoolers with skills to be school-ready. As to other elements of the budget for education funding, we urge the following:

—*ISEP.* Increase ISEP to $574 million as requested in the President's budget. ISEP is the primary source of school funding. It covers salaries for teachers, teacher aides, and administrative personnel and is essential to our ability to recruit and retain qualified teachers and to cover shortfalls in other budget areas, such as transportation, facilities and maintenance.

—*Tribal Grant Support Costs (TGSC).* Increase to $75 million funding for TGSC. This helps pay the costs of accounting, insurance, background checks, legal and record-keeping.

—*School Facility Operations and Maintenance.* Increase School Facility Operations to $66,219,000, and School Facility Maintenance to $79,000,000. We need these funds to keep the building safe, pay for preventative maintenance, and cover insurance and utility costs.

—*Student Transportation.* Increase Student Transportation to $57,245,000 as set out in the President's budget as these funds allow us maintain, repair, and replace buses.

—*School Construction and Repair.* Appropriate $138 million for School Construction and Repair. Students and staff are put in jeopardy if deferred maintenance is not addressed.

BIA: Public Safety and Justice. We disagree with the President's proposal to decrease funding for BIA's Public Safety and Justice. We urge Congress to increase those funds above fiscal year 2016 levels. Although we are a small community, we are combating major crimes. Alcohol, illegal prescription drug use, methamphetamine, and gang-related activity create huge demands on our law enforcement. In addition, we face a significant increase in heroin use. Many in our community are the victims of assaults and robberies that are drug-related. Our officers must respond to increasing drug overdoses and deaths, as well as juvenile offenses involving drugs, alcohol, thefts, assaults and burglaries. They also respond to a wide range of other matters, including domestic disputes, disturbances, disorderly conduct, property damage, theft, medical emergencies, fire, neglected children, runaways, suicide threats, as well as numerous traffic-related matters. In 2015, our Law Enforcement responded to more than 8,000 incidents and calls for service. This is a substantial increase from past years, where incidents and calls for service from our Department were: 6,000 in 2014; 5,342 in 2013; 5,100 in 2012; and 4,900 in 2011.

We use a combination of tribal and available Federal funds and cooperative agreements with local law enforcement agencies to meet law enforcement needs. To ensure effective law enforcement coverage 24/7, we need to have sufficient law enforcement staff and equipment. We are very fortunate that as a result of a COPS grant in 2015, we were able to employ 20 sworn officers—the number we need to effectively patrol the reservation. But our officers still need equipment. We do not yet have a sufficient number of patrol cars. We regularly need to acquire and replace other basic law enforcement equipment, like binoculars, video cameras, digital recorders and other surveillance tools. Federal funding is essential to meet those needs.

Although I am pleased that we have been able to employ 20 sworn police officers, we have outgrown our current office space. With the lack of available building space, we have had to share building space with the reservation's Housing Department. We moved into our current space in 2004 with a total of 11 sworn officers. The space was tight with 11 officers. Needless to say, we desperately need a new modern building. As of right now we work in an area that consists of 5 offices, a squad room barely capable of holding everyone for a department wide meeting and

an evidence room. A new building would allow us to work more efficiently and allow for further growth in the future.

BIA: Trust-Natural Resources Management. We support the President's budget proposal, to fund BIA Natural Resources Management at $215.6 million in fiscal year 2017, including funding for Tribal Climate Resilience. Climate change impacts are especially significant in Indian country, where the basic subsistence needs of Indian people often depend on natural resources. This is certainly true at Fond du Lac. By treaties made in 1837, 1842 and 1854, the United States acquired our aboriginal territory but, to ensure that we could sustain ourselves and our families, expressly promised that we retained rights to hunt, fish and gather natural resources within and outside our reservation. Our members depend on and exercise these treaty-protected rights to put food on the table and for ceremonial practices that serve as the foundation for our culture. The stewardship of those natural resources—through scientific study, resource management, and enforcement of Band laws that regulate tribal members who hunt, fish and gather those resources—are an important source of employment for many of our members. Funding increases for Trust-Natural Resources Management allows us to protect, enhance, and restore natural resources. Significant stable funding is the most effective way to provide ecosystem services in a climate change driven environment. Healthy ecosystems will be best able to tolerate the stresses of climate change if they are in the best condition possible.

Fond du Lac forest resources are an important asset to the Fond du Lac Band. The Intertribal Timber Council's third assessment of Indian forestry completed in 2013 found that Indian forestry is woefully unfunded when compared to other Federal, State, and private industrial forests. Working towards funding parity should be a goal nationally. Protecting the forest from wildfire and maintaining a fire resilient forest is also a goal of the Fond du Lac Band. Fire preparedness funding is below the most efficient level (MEL) and now 20 percent of the fuels funding is proposed to be stripped away from Indian forestry. Fire preparedness and fuels funding provide a basis for workforce development in Indian forestry. Tribal communities are within tribal fire protection areas. Other Federal agencies have communities adjacent to their protection areas. Provide adequate funding to manage tribal forests, protect forests from wildfire, create fire resilient communities and forests, and provide workforce development.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is a valued partner of the Fond du Lac Band in wildlife and fisheries research and restoration programs. We request that the overall budget of the Fish and Wildlife Service be increased, with a particular increase to the Native American Liaison program. We support the President's requested increase to the Tribal Wildlife Grant Program, but urge that this program be funded at 5 times its current level, since current funding levels allow few grants to be awarded.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The drastic funding cuts to EPA in past years threaten long-term damage to the Nation. We support, at a minimum, the $8.6 billion in funding recommended in the President's budget, as well as the President's recommended increase in State and Tribal Assistance Grants, but urge that more be appropriated for these important programs.

—*Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.* The Band fully supports this initiative, and asks that it be funded at $500 million, two times what is requested in the President's budget. This initiative has broad-reaching benefits to resources of importance for all stakeholders (State, tribal and private) in the Great Lakes region. It is also an example of where EPA's modest investment in tribal capacity support has resulted in substantial outcomes, both in a more visible presence and active participation in Great Lakes restoration and protection—a true 'seat at the table'—and in tangible outcomes from successful projects.

—*Water Quality.* The Fond du Lac Band has a federally approved water quality standards program that has seen annual funding declines, while the Band's responsibilities have increased. Given the current threats to water resources in our region from the expansion of iron and copper mining, we urge that tribal section 106 funding be doubled. Not only has the universe of tribes authorized for section 106 funding expanded, but tribes with mature programs like the Band are struggling to cover additional activities related to our multiple Clean Water Act authorities with shrinking funds.

—*Air.* In conjunction with our water quality monitoring responsibilities, the Band has a long-standing air monitoring program that has also faced a steady decline in Federal funding. We request that air quality program funding for tribes be increased.

—*Wetlands.* One-half of our reservation is made up of wetlands. Proper management and restoration of this valuable resource is impossible without adequate

and consistent Federal funding. We request sustained wetland monitoring and protection program funding.

Indian Health Service. We fully support the President's proposed increase in funding for IHS and appreciate the commitment that the administration and Congress have made to address the funding needs for healthcare in Indian Country. The President's proposed increase is essential to address the high rates of medical inflation and the substantial unmet need for healthcare among Indian people. Indians at Fond du Lac, like Indians throughout the Nation, continue to face disproportionately higher rates of diabetes and its associated complications, than the rest of the population. Heart disease, cancer, obesity, chemical dependency and mental health problems are also prevalent among our people. All Indian tribes should receive 100 percent of the Level of Need Formula, which is absolutely critical for tribes to address the serious and persistent health issues that confront our communities. The Band serves over 7,000 Indian people at our clinics, but the current funding level meets only 42 percent of our healthcare funding needs.

As the epidemic of prescription drug abuse grows across the country, the IHS needs resources to expand its treatment and community education capacity. We are especially disappointed with the Pharma-driven position SAMHSA has followed for the past several years regarding Methadone Assisted Therapy (MAT). Many poorly administered MAT programs are pouring unprecedented amounts of cheap, liquid Methadone into Indian communities with very destructive results. In 2012, nearly 40 percent of the babies delivered by Fond du Lac Nurse-midwives were born to Methadone dependent mothers. Although those numbers improved in 2013, nearly 35 percent of all pregnant women seen by Fond du Lac primary care providers use illicit drugs, mainly opiates. Research shows that methadone users are cognitively impaired, and more recent research has shown that children born to methadone users are more likely to have low birth weight, neural tube defects, spina bifida, congenital heart defects and gastroschisis. In Minnesota, Indian moms on Medical Assistance are 8.7 times more likely than non-Indian moms to give birth to an infant suffering with NAS. Meanwhile, thousands of American Indians are falling victim to the chemical slavery now sponsored by SAMHSA. Additional funding for the Methamphetamine, Suicide Prevention Initiative should be made available to tribes and the IHS so that this "new sickness" can be addressed. Best practices in pharmacy inventory and prescription monitoring need to be modeled and replicated throughout Indian Country. The need is compounded by the fact that more government agencies expect local units of government, including tribes, to address these problems and the increasing number of individuals who become homeless as a result of them, through the operation of supportive housing. But Fond du Lac's ability to establish new program initiatives, like supportive housing, depends on assistance from the Federal Government. We urge Congress to support programs that would fund supportive housing for tribes in every area of the country. Miigwech. Thank you.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE FOREST CLIMATE WORKING GROUP

Adelante Consulting • American Forest Foundation • American Forests

Binational Softwood Lumber Council • Hardwood Federation

L&C Carbon • National Alliance of Forest Owners

National Association of University Forest Resources Programs

Society of American Foresters • The Forest Stewards Guild

The Trust for Public Land • Weyerhaeuser

Rationale: Forests and forest products currently sequester and store 13 percent of annual U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. The trend, for now, is up—U.S. EPA reports that land-based sequestration has increased 13.5 percent in the past decade. It is important to maintain this important resource by addressing rising threats to forest health and slowing forest conversion to non-forest uses. Through implementation of USDA's Building Blocks for Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry, we can take steps to protect and increase this carbon benefit, and accelerate the ability of U.S. forests to provide a sustained level of climate mitigation service to the Nation. Many of these same investments are leveraged to strengthen the resiliency of the Nation's forests and thus protect additional public services beyond carbon such as watersheds, wildlife habitat, recreational resources and economic prosperity for rural and urban communities.

FISCAL YEAR 2017 BUDGET ITEMS

The FCWG recommended funding levels below focus on program needs to implement USDA's Building Blocks for Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry. The actions outlined in the forest-related building blocks are major positive steps in conserving and enhancing climate resilience and carbon sequestration and storage on public and private lands. Below are FCWG's recommendations and the linkage to the USDA Building Blocks.

Fix How Wildfire Fighting is funded in Federal Budget: Currently, wildfires are budgeted within the USFS and Department of the Interior through regular appropriations. This has created two issues for the USFS and DOI budgets. First, in this limited budget environment, non-fire spending has decreased, as the annual appropriated levels for wildfire fighting has increased. Secondly, when wildfire fighting funds run out, non-fire and fire prevention program budgets are tapped to cover fire suppression expenditures, creating disruptions and in some case discontinuing key program activities. This has led to overall decreases in restoration and management programs that improve climate resiliency and mitigation through forests and ultimately help reduce wildfire risks. The FCWG supports revisions in budget structure that allow the expenses for large, extreme fires to be paid for from emergency funds, to reverse both the "borrowing" and the gradual decline of key agency programs.

Invest in Sound Science and Data (Foundational Support for All Building Blocks)

—*USFS Forest Inventory and Analysis Program:* FIA is the foundational measure for our forests nationwide and is essential to monitoring our progress. The fiscal year 2016 enacted budget included a necessary increase in funding for this program which we believe should at least be maintained, but an investment of at least 83 million in fiscal year 2017 is warranted. We remain concerned about the low level of funding for the program relative to established needs for the information it provides and the negative impact of constrained budgets on data gathering, geographic scope, and sampling return interval and national consistency that is vital for evaluating forest carbon and resilience problems and potentials. This additional Federal investment should be accompanied with language calling for improvements in this program efficiencies to justify additional investment in 2017 and in future fiscal years to enable further program impact and ensure that FIA fully delivers on the congressional mandate set in previous Farm Bills and the needs for forest owners, managers, and communities. Additional support for the FIA program is needed to ensure that we have improved data regarding carbon sequestration rates and storage and the impact of disturbance in forests to support growing data and analysis needs for climate mitigation, forest protection, and bioenergy.

—*The McIntire-Stennis (M–S) Cooperative Forestry Research Program:* This program has continued to provide fundamental support for creating and strengthening forestry research and graduate training efforts at colleges and universities across the Nation for more than 50 years. M–S funding has helped produce thousands of forest scientists and other research professionals. Its support has provided national capacity for both basic understanding and applied solutions to the emerging problems of forests and related rangelands. In the face of declining State and Federal budgets for forestry research, M–S program support plays a critical role in sustaining and advancing new knowledge and solutions, and producing the next generation of forestry professionals. We recommend at least $35.5 million investment into the M–S program.

—*USDA Climate Hubs and Related Investments in Applied Climate Science:* The USDA Climate Hubs have now been running for close to 3 years and have demonstrated the capacity to provide useful science-based guidance for private landowners and other land managers. The Hubs assure that investments in science are returned to the taxpayer in the form of usable knowledge and tools that millions of forest landowners and managers can apply to climate adaptation and mitigation problems. Continued investment in these Hubs, integrated into various program funding, to assist both public and private land managers is critical to cross-boundary success.

—*The Renewable Resources Extension Act (RREA):* This was enacted in 1978, with a mandate to provide for an expanded and comprehensive extension program for forest and rangeland renewable resources. This is the only USDA program focused specifically on forest and rangeland Extension programs across the full spectrum of landscapes and represents an important part of USDA's commitment to forest and rangeland owners and managers. Activities under this program are a critical component to achieving long-term conservation and resource protection. The RREA, through its systematic, objective, and research-based ini-

tiatives at colleges and universities across the Nation are helping participants understand and undertake appropriate management alternatives relating to Biomass for Energy, Climate Variability, Ecosystem Services, Fish and Wildlife Resources, Food Production, Safety and Security, Intergenerational Land and Other Land Ownership Changes, Invasive Species, Urbanization, and Water and Wetlands. We recommend at least $4.06 million investment into RREA program.

Promote the Use of Forest Products—Utilization in Building Construction (USDA Building Block: Promotion of Wood Products and Energy Generation and Efficiency)

USFS Forest Products Laboratory

—*Woodworks:* We recommend at least $2 million investment through the USFS, or other funding source, into the initiative Woodworks, which promotes wood use in building construction through technology transfer, especially in non-residential buildings. This program has demonstrated the potential to create an 18M metric ton carbon benefit by 2018—a good investment at $.28 per metric ton of carbon sequestered.

—*Life Cycle Assessment Research on Wood Products:* We recommend a $1 million investment in LCA Research through USFS FPL to ensure the most updated information about the environmental impact of wood products, with a particular focus on climate related information and the role of wood in sustainable forest management systems.

Enhance Resources for Private Forest Owners—Reforestation, Afforestation, and Restoration

—*USFS Forest Stewardship Program:* The Forest Stewardship Program helps landowners plan sustainable management, including carbon friendly and climate-smart practices, and to implement reforestation. We recommend an appropriation of at least $29 million to advance carbon mitigation through this program, including funds to support tree-planting assistance on private lands. (USDA Building Block: Private Forest Growth and Retention)

—*USFS Landscape Scale Restoration:* We recommend $23.5 million this program, to stimulate cross boundary, landscape scale work that will measurably improve climate mitigation and resilience in our forests. We feel that the landscape restoration approach taken by the Forest Service effectively leverages public investments and creates scale and efficiency that allows climate and carbon public and private benefits to be both cost-effective and sustainable. Climate-induced stressors like wildfires and insects and diseases, don't stay within ownership boundaries and thus, a landscape approach is needed. (USDA Building Block: Stewardship of Federal Forests)

—*NRCS Forest Landowner Cost Share—EQIP, WHIP, CSP, CRP, WRP, HFRP:* This suite of Farm Bill programs under NRCS are in the aggregate the largest source of funding for landowners to implement the stewardship and restoration actions needed to increase carbon sequestration. This ranges from forest stand improvement to restoration of carbon-rich forest types like bottomland hardwoods. We recommend maintaining funding levels currently authorized, as well as providing discretionary funding for HFRP. (USDA Building Block: Conservation of Sensitive Lands)

—*USFS Urban and Community Forestry Program:* Urban and community forests are an integral part of a community's infrastructure and they have significant benefits for clean water, clean air, energy conservation, and human health. Urban and community forests should be recognized as "green infrastructure" for the purposes of community planning and preparation for the impacts of climate change. We recommend an appropriation of at least $31 million to advance the important climate benefits associated with growing and maintaining urban and community forests. (USDA Building Block: Urban Forests)

Utilize Existing Grant Programs to Retain Forests—Diverse Tools for Different Partners and Contexts

—*USFS Forest Legacy Program:* We recommend $62 million for the Forest Legacy Program in current discretionary funding and $38 million for the Program from mandatory Land and Water Conservation Funds, the most flexible and widely applicable Federal program for permanent conservation of forestland from development. We recommend at least maintaining or strengthening funding for this program to capture the many opportunities for State, local, and private forest conservation in carbon-rich forest systems, including extensive working for-

est conservation easements. (USDA Building Block: Private Forest Growth and Retention)

—*USFS Community Forest Program:* The Community Forest Program is a relatively new 50/50 matching grant program that is helping local governments, tribes, and non-profits to acquire and manage forestland threatened with conversion. We recommend $5 million for this program, to fully tap the potential of these local and tribal entities to contribute carbon mitigation through forests. (USDA Building Block: Private Forest Growth and Retention)

PREPARED STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE FOREST INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS PROGRAM

Dear Chairwoman Murkowski and Ranking Tom Udall,

The undersigned organizations are strong supporters of the Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program funded by the USDA Forest Service (Forest Service). We rely on the inventory data and analysis of America's forests provided by the program, which make up the backbone of scientific knowledge on the current state of the Nation's forests. This critical information is needed to support sound policy and forest management decisions, both public and private, and is increasingly important for decisions regarding new and expanding markets. We urge the Congress to support the FIA program and request funding for the program in fiscal year 2017 of at least $83 million to move the program toward providing an accurate and timely inventory of America's forests. We also urge the inclusion of language ensuring that this funding would, at minimum, maintain historic remeasurement cycles—every 7 years in the east and every 10 years in the west—as referenced by the administration.

The data and information collected by FIA serves as the basis for: identifying trends in forest ownership; measuring carbon stocks; assessing fish and wildlife habitat; evaluating wildfire, insect, and disease risk; predicting the spread of invasive species; determining capital investment in existing forest products facilities and selecting locations for new forest product facilities; and identifying and responding to priorities identified in State Forest Action Plans.

The FIA program is utilized by a large set of diverse stakeholders interested in the state of America's forests. These include forest resource managers at mills, land managers, conservation groups, university students and faculty, and State and Federal agencies, such as the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The undersigned organizations would like to work with Congress to further explore program potential. An annual funding level of $83 million would support a 7 year annualized program in the east, and a 10 year program in the west as recommended in the Forest Service's 2007 FIA Strategic Plan. In 2015 the Forest Service released an updated FIA Strategic Plan, which outlines a variety of potential program deliverables at funding levels. While we are supportive of at least $83 million in funding for fiscal year 2017, the 2015 Strategic Plan calls for $103 million to implement the 5 year annualized program called for in the 1998 Farm Bill. This reduction in cycle length would provide more accurate data to support important forest resource decisions. As engaged partners, we are interested in working with Congress and the Forest Service to make program delivery as efficient as possible and to support additional Federal investment to implement many of the useful tools outlined in the new FIA Strategic Plan—including full urban inventory, increased plot density, and improved carbon and biomass estimates.

There is a need to make FIA data more robust and more useful for emerging uses, such as accurate information regarding carbon stocks, forest sustainability monitoring, wildlife habitat assessments, and much more. Given the increasing pressures facing our forests—from wildfire, insects and disease and development—the FIA program is more important now than ever before. Funding the FIA program at $83 million for fiscal year 2017 would move toward providing for our growing data needs.

Sincerely,

Alabama Forestry Association
Allegheny Hardwood Utilization Group, Inc.
American Forest & Paper Association
American Forest Foundation
American Forests
American Wood Council
Arkansas Forestry Association
Arkansas Timber Producers Association
Black Hills Forest Resource Association
California Forestry Association
Empire State Forest Products Association
Environmental Defense Fund

Forest Business Network
Forest Products Industry National Labor Management Committee
Forest Landowners Association
Forest Products Industry National Labor Management Committee
Forest Resources Association
Hardwood Federation
Hardwood Plywood and Veneer Association
Kentucky Forest Industries Association
Louisiana Forestry Association
Maine Forest Products Council
Minnesota Forest Industries
Minnesota Timber Producers Association
Mississippi Forestry Association
Montana Wood Products Association
National Alliance of Forest Owners
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Association of Forest Service Retirees
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of State Foresters
National Association of University Forest Resources Programs
National Wild Turkey Federation
National Woodland Owners Association
North Carolina Forestry Association
Northeastern Loggers' Association
Northeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association
Ohio Forestry Association
Oregon Forest & Industries Council
Oregon Women in Timber
Pennsylvania Forest Products Association
Pinchot Institute for Conservation
Pulp and Paperworkers' Resource Council
Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests
Society of American Foresters
South Carolina Forestry Association
South Carolina Timber Producers Association
Sustainable Forestry Initiative
Texas Forestry Association
The Nature Conservancy
Treated Wood Council
United Steelworkers
Virginia Forest Products Association
Virginia Forestry Association
Western Wood Preservers Institute
Wisconsin Paper Council

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KATHLEEN FOWLER

Dear Senators:

As an American citizen and taxpayer, I strongly oppose the BLM's proposal to conduct dangerous sterilization experiments on wild mares at the Wild Horse Corral Facility in Hines. According to the Environmental Assessment (EA), the BLM is deciding whether or not to proceed with one or more of the proposed sterilization procedures. The weight of scientific evidence and public opinion clearly supports a BLM decision NOT to proceed with any of these sterilization procedures.

The sterilization procedures that BLM is proposing to conduct on federally protected wild mares are dangerous, costly and impractical for use in the field, due to the serious health risks they pose to the horses and their unborn foals, and also due to the great expense of purchasing the equipment and training the number of veterinarians necessary to implement these procedures on the range.

It makes no sense to spend millions of taxpayer dollars on these risky invasive experiments when proven, humane, and relatively inexpensive fertility control technology in the form of the PZP vaccine is readily available but vastly underutilized by the BLM.

The EA is completely inadequate in analyzing the impacts of these experimental procedures on mares. In addition, the BLM has deliberately avoided public opposition to this controversial and grotesque research proposal by skipping the scoping stage of the environmental analysis process. As a result, the public has been deprived of the opportunity to provide input into the impacts of and alternatives to these procedures that must be analyzed under the rules of the National Environmental Policy Act.

1. Ovariectomy via Colposcopy

This is an outdated and archaic procedure that has been supplanted by more modern laparoscopic surgery. The EA fails to analyze the impacts of and alternatives to this procedure to mares and never once mentions the availability of more modern techniques! This proposed sterilization experiment is an intra-vaginal complex surgical procedure, which is hardly ever performed in domestic horses (never mind in wild ones), due to its inherently dangerous risks.

—The blind nature of this surgery increases the risk of intra-abdominal hemorrhage, but the EA never even addresses this issue or the availability of more modern laparoscopic techniques that allow the surgeon to visualize the abdominal structures.

—The lack of a sterile environment subjects the mares to a high risk of infection, something that is ignored by the EA.
—The procedure carries with it a significant risk of hemorrhage and evisceration (protrusion of the intestines through the surgical incision), which is why it requires strict follow-up care when used in domestic horses, including pain relief and 4-7 days of stall rest, the first 48 hours of which is spent in crossties to prevent the mare from lying down. It is not possible to provide this required post-operative care to wild mares, yet the EA minimizes the impacts of this fact, citing the opinion of an un-named veterinarian, instead of the published science and National Research Council review, which clearly indicate the risks and impacts of this outdated procedure on wild mares.
—The procedure will cause mares in early stages of pregnancy to abort their fetuses and may cause loss of pregnancy for mares in the mid-stage of pregnancy as well. This is unacceptable.

This pursuit of ovariectomy research is directly counter to the recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences National Research Council (NRC) in its 2013 report, "Using Science to Improve the BLM Wild Horse and Burro Program: A Way Forward." That NRC report concluded that: "The possibility that ovariectomy may be followed by prolonged bleeding or peritoneal infection makes it inadvisable for field application."

2. Minimally Invasive Sterilization Techniques

The other sterilization procedures that BLM proposes to research, while less invasive than ovariectomy, should also be abandoned due to the inability to provide post-operative care and the impracticality of implementing these procedures—which have never before been done in wild or domestic horses—on a broad scale in a field setting. The EA fails to analyze the impacts of precedent-setting procedures that have never before been performed in horses, and as well as the inability to provide required post-operative care. The EA also omits analysis of the economic impacts and practicalities of implementing these procedures on the range.

In proceeding with these experiments, the BLM has ignored the NRC recommendation that these techniques should first be perfected in domestic mares, who can be easily handled and will be accessible for close monitoring and post-operative care, before attempting them in wild horses.

It is unconscionable that the BLM is proceeding with these draconian experiments that endanger the lives of the un-consenting equine subjects and their unborn foals, particularly when a proven non-invasive and safe fertility control method exists in the readily available PZP birth control vaccine. Instead of wasting millions of tax dollars to fund experiments on inhumane and impractical sterilization experiments, the agency should instead focus resources on vaccinating sufficient numbers of mares with the PZP fertility control vaccine, which is documented through 30 years of experience and published science, to be safe, effective, cost-effective and successful in managing wild horse populations.

Again, as a taxpayer and wild horse lover, I am outraged that the BLM is even considering pursuing such inhumane, barbaric and wasteful experimentation on wild horses and I find the BLM's Environmental Analysis of its impacts to be woefully inadequate. As a result, I strongly urge the BLM to abandon these proposed experiments in favor of using proven, more cost-effective and humane fertility control methods.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE FRIENDS OF PATUXENT RESEARCH REFUGE AND PATUXENT WILDLIFE RESEARCH CENTER, INC.

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee:

On behalf of the Friends of Patuxent Research Refuge and Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Inc., I would like to present testimony in support of the fiscal year 2017 budget requests for the Patuxent Research Refuge (USFWS) and the fiscal year 2018 capital budget request for the Patuxent Widlife Research Center (USGS) in Laurel, Maryland. In broad terms, the Friends of Patuxent supports a full appropriation of $506.6 million for the National Wildlife Refuge System operation and maintenance; permanent reauthorization and full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund at $900 million per year; and specifically for capital budget requests for the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center of $23 million for a replacement general science lab and $12 million for a wildlife physiology lab.

Many of you may have visited this unique National Wildlife Refuge and Research Center, the only facility of its kind, since it is so close to our Nation's Capital. Founded in 1936, Patuxent is the premier wildlife research center in the world, and

the 12,000+ acres of the research refuge, along with the National Wildlife Visitor Center, comprise one of the largest urban wildlife refuges in the Nation.

While this flagship refuge and research center is justly the pride of USFWS and USGS for its unique mission, the refuge and center have suffered from years of cutback budgets and staff shortages. These intentional cuts and lack of ability to make up for losses from inflation have seriously impacted the mission of each of these facilities.

For example, at Patuxent Research Refuge, full time staff positions have been left vacant for inordinate amounts of time; 2 and 3 years in some cases simply because there is insufficient funding to fill them. The National Wildlife Visitor Center is now closed 1 day per week because there is insufficient staff and operational funding to remain open 7 days per week.

Many program requests such as school visits, youth groups, and training workshops turned down because of lack of staff or the closed visitor center. This is not the staff's fault, but it is not acceptable for a national urban wildlife refuge of this caliber.

At Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, a facility of USGS, there is comparable need for staff and operational funding, but in addition, there is exceptional need for capital funding to replace a general science lab, the Stickell Lab, that was demolished in recent years due to deterioration and unsafe conditions. In addition, a new wildlife physiology lab for $12 million is needed to perform vital work in genetics analysis, indoor holding of wildlife species under study, and other needs.

The staff of research scientists and biologists is down 60 percent. Four scientists are retiring this year; they are replacing only one position. Overall the omplement of research scientists who are performing vital work on environmental contaminants, wildlife research, and endangered species is down from a high of 54 positions to the present 32.

The Friends of Patuxent have supported the volunteer program at Patuxent in both the educational and programmatic functions of Patuxent Research Refuge and the scientific and management functions of Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. It is a sad state of affairs when the lack of staff causes the volunteer program to be diminished because there is not enough staff to coordinate and supervise the outstanding volunteers who are willing to give of their time and talent in support of the mission of these facilities.

We urge you to support these reasonable budget requests for both the wildlife refuge and the wildlife research center. You will be making investments in work that is extremely important to the Nation. We thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

[This statement was submitted by Jeanne Latham, President.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE FRIENDS OF RACHEL CARSON NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Ms. Chairman and honorable members of the subcommittee: I am Bill Durkin, President of The Friends of Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge in Biddeford, Maine.

First off, a Happy Earth Day in a few days; it has been 46 years since the first Earth Day and it is truly amazing how far we have all come in protecting the environment. As you all know, after that first Earth Day, the EPA was created and Congress passed the Clean Air, Clean Water and Endangered Species Acts. At the time it was a gamble and we are all thankful that it worked and we continue to work at protecting our air, water and habitats (human and wildlife). I have been a member of the Friends of Rachel Carson NWR for the past 27 years. The group was founded in 1987; we are a small group supporting the refuge in southern Maine. I have given numerous written statements over the years and we really appreciate your support in the past. This year, our refuge is not requesting any appropriations directly for Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge; this is a request for general funding of the National Wildlife Refuge System of $506.6 million. This year we ask to appropriate $50 million in the National Wildlife Refuge Fund. I also urge the subcommittee to fund the Land, Water and Conservation Fund at full funding at $900 million with a $137.6 million of that request for the National Wildlife Refuge Systems purchase of easements and in holdings. I thank you all for your consideration.

The Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge is named in honor of one of the Nation's foremost and forward-thinking biologists. After arriving in Maine in 1946 as an aquatic biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Rachel Carson became entranced with Maine's coastal habitat, leading her to write the international bestseller *The Sea Around Us.* This landmark study, in combination with her other

writings, *The Edge of the Sea* and *Silent Spring,* led Rachel Carson to become an advocate on behalf of this Nation's vast coastal habitat and the wildlife that depends on it. With the recent 50th anniversary of the publication of *Silent Spring,* her legacy lives on today at the refuge that bears her name and is dedicated to the permanent protection of the salt marshes and estuaries of the southern Maine coast. The refuge was established in 1966 to preserve migratory bird habitat and waterfowl migration along southern Maine's coastal estuaries. It consists of 11 refuge divisions in 12 municipalities protecting approximately 5,600 acres within a 14,800 acre acquisition zone.

Consisting of meandering tidal creeks, coastal upland, sandy dunes, salt ponds, marsh, and productive wetlands, the Rachel Carson NWR provides critical nesting and feeding habitat for the threatened piping plover and a variety of migratory waterfowl, and serves as a nursery for many shellfish and finfish. Located along the Atlantic flyway, the refuge serves as an important stopover point for migratory birds. Previous years' appropriations have allowed the USFWS to conserve several properties within the refuge. In fiscal year 2010 we purchased a 98 acre tract at Timber Point with a $3 million LWCF appropriation. This purchases provide an important buffer between the intense development pressure along the southern Maine coast and its fragile coastal estuaries—development pressures continue to spiral upwards and additional coastal properties are under threat. We built a National Recreational Trail (NRT) for public use and have completed an Environmental Assessment for future use of the property. Protecting Timber Point was a priority for the refuge for decades, and we thank you. The process does work and I support all Refuges requests for fiscal year 2017. You can make it happen.

1. We are requesting an overall funding level of $506.6 million in fiscal year 2017 for the Operations and Maintenance Budget of the National Wildlife Refuge System, managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. All of the refuges are in dire need of staffing and upkeep. The National Wildlife Refuge System is responsible for 568 million acres of lands and waters, but currently receives less than a $1. per acre for management costs. The refuges cannot fulfill its obligation to the American public, our wildlife and 47 million annual visitors without adequate funding. Refuges provide unparalleled opportunities to hunt, fish, watch wildlife and educate children about the environment. An investment in the Nation's Refuge System is an excellent investment in the American economy, generating $2.4 billion and creating about 35,000 jobs in local economies. Without increased funding for refuges, wildlife conservation and public recreation opportunities will be jeopardized. We fully supported the U.S. Fish and Wildlife's request of $506.6 million for Operation and Management for the National Wildlife Refuge System.
2. Appropriate $50 million in the National Wildlife Refuge Fund in fiscal year 2017 which offsets losses in local government tax revenue because lands owned by the Refuge System are exempt from taxation. The Refuge Fund is an annual appropriation that supplements the Refuge Revenue Sharing Program. The Revenue Sharing Program offsets lost local tax revenue by providing payments to local governments from net income derived from permits and wildlife refuge activities.
3. We request $137.6 million in LWCF funding for Refuge land acquisitions/conservation easements and we call for full funding of LWCF at $900 million. The Land and Water Conservation Fund is our Nation's premier Federal program to acquire and protect lands at national parks, forests, refuges, and public lands and at State parks, trails, and recreational facilities. These sites across the country provide the public with substantial social and economic benefits including promoting healthier lifestyles through active recreation, protecting drinking water and watersheds, improving wildfire management, and assisting the adaptation of wildlife and fisheries to climate change. The quality of place is greatly enhanced. As you know, LWCF uses no tax payer dollars. Created by Congress in 1964 and authorized at $900 million per year (more than $3 billion in today's dollars), the LWCF is our most important land and easement acquisition tool. In the President's budget, he has included full funding for LWCF programs at the $900 million level, and I support the administration's commitment to fully funding the program. This wise investment in the Land and Water Conservation Fund is one that will permanently pay dividends to the American people and to our great natural and historical heritage. The Refuge System needs $137 million in LWCF for fiscal year 2017.

The Land, Water and Conservation Fund has provided incredible benefit to the State of Maine. We have six National Wildlife Refuges and our only National Park, Acadia, attracts a huge amount of tourist each year and offers great recreational

activities to the local citizens of the State. LWCF and the Forest Legacy program have conserved tens of thousands of acres in our interior forestlands and ensures that forestry and recreational access for all will be a huge part of our economy for generations to come. As a Mainer, I also wanted to highlight the importance of LWCF funding to other parts of the State beyond Rachel Carson NWR. We have a Crown Jewel of the national park system at Acadia National Park, which will celebrate its centennial this year. and has continuing LWCF acquisition needs. And we have incredibly valuable private forests whose permanent protection through Forest Legacy Program funding means that our tourist and timber industries—our two largest—can thrive together. I have traveled all over the huge State of Maine, visiting all of the National Wildlife Refuges, Acadia NP and State public lands where I enjoyed cross country skiing, hiking, mountain biking, spending nights at quaint lodges and dining at small restaurants: all adding to the local Maine economy. So, LWCF funding for conservation in Maine is critical to the rural economy and National Wildlife Refuges. And it is matched by other funding, and enjoys broad support from forest landowners, snowmobilers hikers and birdwatchers alike. I cannot emphasize enough how important LWCF funding is to Maine and the remaining 49 United States.

I again extend our appreciation to the subcommittee for its ongoing commitment to our National Wildlife Refuge System and respectfully request the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee allocate $506.6 million for the Refuge System's fiscal year 2017 Operations & Maintenance Budget, $50 million in the National Wildlife Refuge Fund and $137.6 million in Refuge LWCF monies. We need Congress to standby their commitment that was made in 1964 : stabilize the LWCF at $900 million.

Thank you again, Ms. Chairman, for the opportunity to present this testimony in support of protecting wildlife and it's habitat. Enjoy your next walk out on a National Wildlife Refuge.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

SUMMARY

The Geological Society of America (GSA) urges Congress to support the fiscal year 2017 request of $1.2 billion for the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). As one of our Nation's key science agencies, the USGS plays a vital role in understanding and documenting mineral and energy resources that underpin economic growth; researching and monitoring potential natural hazards that threaten U.S. and international security; and determining and assessing water quality and availability. Approximately two thirds of the USGS budget is allocated for research and development. In addition to underpinning the science activities and decisions of the Department of the Interior, this research is used by communities across the Nation to make informed decisions in land use planning, emergency response, natural resource management, engineering, and education. Despite the critical role played by the USGS, funding for the agency has stagnated in real dollars for more than a decade. The requested level would permit the USGS to add to its capability in these important areas. Given the importance of the many activities of the Survey that protect lives and property, stimulate innovations that fuel the economy, provide national security, and enhance the quality of life, GSA believes that growth in Federal funding for the Survey is necessary for the future of our Nation.

The Geological Society of America, founded in 1888, is a scientific society with over 26,000 members from academia, government, and industry in all 50 States and more than 100 countries. Through its meetings, publications, and programs, GSA enhances the professional growth of its members and promotes the geosciences in the service of humankind.

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY CONTRIBUTIONS TO NATIONAL SECURITY, HEALTH, AND WELFARE

The USGS is one of the Nation's premier science agencies. Approximately two thirds of the USGS budget is allocated for research and development. In addition to underpinning the science activities and decisions of the Department of the Interior, this research is used by communities across the Nation to make informed decisions in land use planning, emergency response, natural resource management, engineering, and education. USGS research addresses many of society's greatest challenges for national security, health, and welfare. Several are highlighted below.

—Natural hazards—including earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, wildfires, and landslides—are a major cause of fatalities and economic losses.

Recent natural disasters provide unmistakable evidence that the United States remains vulnerable to staggering losses. Landslides, which occur in every State, cause more than $3 billion in damage each year. An improved scientific understanding of geologic hazards will reduce future losses through better forecasts of their occurrence, which allows for effective planning and mitigation.

Decision makers in many sectors rely upon USGS data. For example, USGS volcano monitoring provides key data to enable decisions on airline safety and data from the USGS network of stream gages is used by the National Weather Service to issue flood and drought warnings. GSA urges Congress to support efforts for USGS to modernize and upgrade its natural hazards monitoring and warning systems to protect communities from the devastating personal and economic effects of natural disasters, including additional 3–D elevation mapping and earthquake early warning systems.

—A 2013 report by the National Research Council, *Emerging Workforce Trends in the Energy and Mining Industries: A Call to Action,* found, "Energy and mineral resources are essential for the Nation's fundamental functions, its economy, and its security." Recent studies have shown that rare earth elements are essential to the production, sustainment, and operation of U.S. military equipment. Reliable access to the necessary material is a bedrock requirement for the Department of Defense. In addition, many emerging energy technologies—such as wind turbines and solar cells—depend upon rare earth elements and critical minerals that currently lack diversified sources of supply. We support the proposed increases in minerals science, research, information, data collection and analysis that will allow for more economic and environmental management and utilization of minerals. In addition, GSA supports increases in research to better understand domestic sources of energy, including conventional and unconventional oil and gas and renewables.

—The ongoing drought in the western United States is a testament to our dependence on water. The availability and quality of surface water and groundwater are vital to the wellbeing of both societies and ecosystems. Greater scientific understanding of these resources through monitoring and research by the USGS is necessary to ensure adequate and safe water resources for the health and welfare of society.

—USGS research on climate impacts is used by the Department of the Interior and local policymakers and resource managers to make sound decisions based on the best possible science. The Climate Science Centers, for example, provide scientific information necessary to anticipate, monitor, and adapt to climate change's effects at regional and local levels, allowing communities to make smart, cost-effective decisions.

—The Landsat satellites have amassed the largest archive of remotely sensed land data in the world, a tremendously important resource for natural resource exploration, land use planning, and assessing water resources, the impacts of natural disasters, and global agriculture production. GSA supports interagency efforts to plan a path forward for future support of Landsat.

All of these activities are supported by the Core System Sciences, Facilities, and Science Support arenas. These programs and services, such as geologic mapping and data preservation, provide critical information, data, and infrastructure that underpin the research that will stimulate innovations that fuel the economy, provide security, and enhance the quality of life. Increases are particularly needed in Facilities to address many deferred maintenance programs.

Knowledge of the earth sciences is essential to science literacy and to meeting the environmental and resource challenges of the twenty-first century. It is also fundamental to training the next generation of Earth science professionals. We are very concerned that cuts in Earth science funding will cause students and young professionals to leave the field, potentially leading to a lost generation of professionals in areas that are already facing worker shortages. Investments in these areas could lead to job growth, as demand for these professionals now and in the future is assessed to be high.

A 2013 report by the National Research Council, *Emerging Workforce Trends in the Energy and Mining Industries: A Call to Action,* found, "In mining (nonfuel and coal) a personnel crisis for professionals and workers is pending and it already exists for faculty." Another recent study, *Status of the Geoscience Workforce Report 2014,* found an expected deficit of approximately 135,000 geoscientists by 2022.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony about the U.S. Geological Survey. For additional information or to learn more about the Geological Society of America—including GSA Position Statements on water resources, mineral and en-

ergy resources, natural hazards, and public investment in Earth science research—please visit www.geosociety.org or contact Kasey White at kwhite@geosociety.org.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HELEN GOLDING

Dear Senators:

As an American citizen and taxpayer, I strongly oppose the BLM's proposal to conduct dangerous sterilization experiments on wild mares at the Wild Horse Corral Facility in Hines. According to the Environmental Assessment (EA), the BLM is deciding whether or not to proceed with one or more of the proposed sterilization procedures. The weight of scientific evidence and public opinion clearly supports a BLM decision NOT to proceed with any of these sterilization procedures.

The sterilization procedures that BLM is proposing to conduct on federally protected wild mares are dangerous, costly and impractical for use in the field, due to the serious health risks they pose to the horses and their unborn foals, and also due to the great expense of purchasing the equipment and training the number of veterinarians necessary to implement these procedures on the range.

It makes no sense to spend millions of taxpayer dollars on these risky invasive experiments when proven, humane, and relatively inexpensive fertility control technology in the form of the PZP vaccine is readily available but vastly underutilized by the BLM.

The EA is completely inadequate in analyzing the impacts of these experimental procedures on mares. In addition, the BLM has deliberately avoided public opposition to this controversial and grotesque research proposal by skipping the scoping stage of the environmental analysis process. As a result, the public has been deprived of the opportunity to provide input into the impacts of and alternatives to these procedures that must be analyzed under the rules of the National Environmental Policy Act.

1. Ovariectomy via Colposcopy

This is an outdated and archaic procedure that has been supplanted by more modern laparoscopic surgery. The EA fails to analyze the impacts of and alternatives to this procedure to mares and never once mentions the availability of more modern techniques! This proposed sterilization experiment is an intra-vaginal complex surgical procedure, which is hardly ever performed in domestic horses (never mind in wild ones), due to its inherently dangerous risks.

—The blind nature of this surgery increases the risk of intra-abdominal hemorrhage, but the EA never even addresses this issue or the availability of more modern laparoscopic techniques that allow the surgeon to visualize the abdominal structures.

—The lack of a sterile environment subjects the mares to a high risk of infection, something that is ignored by the EA.

—The procedure carries with it a significant risk of hemorrhage and evisceration (protrusion of the intestines through the surgical incision), which is why it requires strict follow-up care when used in domestic horses, including pain relief and 4–7 days of stall rest, the first 48 hours of which is spent in crossties to prevent the mare from lying down. It is not possible to provide this required post-operative care to wild mares, yet the EA minimizes the impacts of this fact, citing the opinion of an un-named veterinarian, instead of the published science and National Research Council review, which clearly indicate the risks and impacts of this outdated procedure on wild mares.

—The procedure will cause mares in early stages of pregnancy to abort their fetuses and may cause loss of pregnancy for mares in the mid-stage of pregnancy as well. This is unacceptable.

This pursuit of ovariectomy research is directly counter to the recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences National Research Council (NRC) in its 2013 report, "Using Science to Improve the BLM Wild Horse and Burro Program: A Way Forward." That NRC report concluded that: "The possibility that ovariectomy may be followed by prolonged bleeding or peritoneal infection makes it inadvisable for field application."

2. Minimally Invasive Sterilization Techniques

The other sterilization procedures that BLM proposes to research, while less invasive than ovariectomy, should also be abandoned due to the inability to provide post-operative care and the impracticality of implementing these procedures—which have never before been done in wild or domestic horses-on a broad scale in a field setting. The EA fails to analyze the impacts of precedent-setting procedures that

have never before been performed in horses, and as well as the inability to provide required post-operative care. The EA also omits analysis of the economic impacts and practicalities of implementing these procedures on the range.

In proceeding with these experiments, the BLM has ignored the NRC recommendation that these techniques should first be perfected in domestic mares, who can be easily handled and will be accessible for close monitoring and post-operative care, before attempting them in wild horses.

It is unconscionable that the BLM is proceeding with these draconian experiments that endanger the lives of the un-consenting equine subjects and their unborn foals, particularly when a proven non-invasive and safe fertility control method exists in the readily available PZP birth control vaccine. Instead of wasting millions of tax dollars to fund experiments on inhumane and impractical sterilization experiments, the agency should instead focus resources on vaccinating sufficient numbers of mares with the PZP fertility control vaccine, which is documented through 30 years of experience and published science, to be safe, effective, cost-effective and successful in managing wild horse populations.

Again, as a taxpayer and wild horse lover, I am outraged that the BLM is even considering pursuing such inhumane, barbaric and wasteful experimentation on wild horses and I find the BLM's Environmental Analysis of its impacts to be woefully inadequate. As a result, I strongly urge the BLM to abandon these proposed experiments in favor of using proven, more cost-effective and humane fertility control methods.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE GREAT LAKES INDIAN FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

1. Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Operation of Indian Programs
   a. *Trust-Natural Resources Management, Rights Protection Implementation (RPI).*—At least the administration's proposed $40,161,000 and a proportionate share for Great Lakes Area Resource Management (the overall need for which is at least $11,454,603).
   b. *Trust-Natural Resources Management, Tribal Management/Development Program (TM/DP):* At least the administration's proposed $14,266,000 and the TM/DP requests of GLIFWC's member tribes.
   c. *Trust-Natural Resources Management, Tribal Climate Resilience:* At least the administration's proposed $13,056,000.
   d. *Trust-Natural Resources Management, Invasive Species:* At least the administration's proposed $6,770,000.
   e. *Tribal Government, Contract Support:* At least the administration's proposed $278,000,000.

Funding Authorizations: Snyder Act, 25 U.S.C. s. 13; Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, (Public Law 93–638), 25 U.S.C. ss. 450f and 450h; and the treaties between the United States and GLIFWC's member Ojibwe Tribes.[1]

2. Environmental Protection Agency
   a. *Environmental Programs and Management, Geographic Programs, Great Lakes Restoration:* The historical allocation of $300,000,000 out of which there is an overall tribal need of at least $25,000,000. GLIFWC's Need: $1,200,000.
   b. *State and Tribal Assistance Grants, Categorical Grants, Tribal General Assistance Program:* At least the Administration's proposed $96,375,000.

Funding Authorizations: Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. s. 1268(c); and treaties cited above.

GLIFWC'S FISCAL YEAR 2016 FUNDING REQUEST HIGHLIGHTS

1. GLIFWC would be pleased to accept an allocation of appropriated RPI funding that is in the same proportion as it has currently been receiving, while rejecting the notion that the RPI line item is open for a competitive process.
2. A total tribal set-aside of $25,000,000 and GLIFWC's request of $1,200,000 under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.
3. Full funding for contract support costs, as required by the ISDEA Act.

---

[1] Specifically, the Treaty of 1836, 7 Stat. 491, Treaty of 1837, 7 Stat. 536, Treaty of 1842, 7 Stat. 591, and Treaty of 1854, 10 Stat. 1109. The rights guaranteed by these treaties have been affirmed by various court decisions, including a 1999 U.S. Supreme Court case.

4. Sufficient funding in the Tribal Management and Development line item for GLIFWC's member tribes to fulfill their needs for reservation-based natural resource programs.

GLIFWC'S GOAL—A SECURE FUNDING BASE TO FULFILL TREATY PURPOSES

For more than 30 years, Congress has funded GLIFWC to implement comprehensive conservation, natural resource protection, and law enforcement programs that: (1) ensure member tribes are able to implement their treaty reserved rights to hunt, fish, and gather throughout the ceded territories; (2) ensure a healthy and sustainable natural resource base to support those rights; and (3) promote healthy, safe communities. These programs also provide a wide range of public benefits, and facilitate participation in management partnerships in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota.

GLIFWC'S PROGRAMS—PROMOTING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES AND EDUCATING TRIBAL MEMBERS THROUGH TREATY RIGHTS EXERCISE

Established in 1984, GLIFWC is a natural resources management agency of 11 member Ojibwe Tribes with resource management responsibilities over their ceded territory (off-reservation) hunting, fishing and gathering treaty rights. These ceded territories extend over a 60,000 square mile area in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan.[2] GLIFWC employs 83 full-time staff, including natural resource scientists, technicians, conservation enforcement officers, policy specialists, and public information specialists.

GLIFWC strives to implement its programs in a holistic, integrated manner that is consistent with the culture and values of its member tribes, especially in light of tribal lifeways that the exercise of treaty rights supports. This means not only ensuring that tribal members can legally exercise their rights, but supporting community efforts to educate them about the benefits (physical, spiritual, and cultural) of harvesting and consuming a more traditional diet, as well as promoting intergenerational learning and the transmission of traditional cultural and management practices. These programs, in turn, promote healthy communities by encouraging healthy lifestyles, intergenerational connections, and cultural education.

GLIFWC and its member tribes thank Congress, and particularly this subcommittee, for its continuing support of these treaty obligations and its recognition of the ongoing success of these programs. There are two main elements of this fiscal year 2016 funding request:

1. *BIA Great Lakes Area Management (Within the RPI Line Item):* A proportionate share of the $40,161,000 proposed by the administration for the RPI line item, including the proposed $2,500,000 increase. The administration's proposed increase for climate change in RPI for fiscal year 2017 is greatly appreciated, but competition for funding has no place in this line item. RPI provides funding for tribes and tribal commissions to meet Federal court litigated responsibilities. Fulfilling these obligations cannot be the focus of a competitive process. GLIFWC has always

[2] GLIFWC's programs do not duplicate those of the Chippewa-Ottawa Resource Authority or the 1854 Treaty Authority. GLIFWC also coordinates with its member tribes with respect to tribal treaty fishing that extends beyond reservation boundaries by virtue of the Treaty of 1854 and the reservations' locations on Lake Superior.

saupported allocating increases to the RPI line item in the historically proportionate amounts.

GLIFWC has testified about the fact that the need is consistently greater than RPI funding, and the impacts that underfunding has on treaty rights programs. RPI climate change funding has allowed GLIFWC to undertake a new climate change program to better understand the physical, chemical and biological changes occurring in ceded territory ecosystems, develop and implement adaptive management strategies to address those changes, and provide technical assistance to GLIFWC member tribes. This program is in its infancy, and continued support would allow it to further develop and integrate into GLIFWC overall programs.

Tribes can only protect the resources that support their rights if they undertake relevant scientific and technical analyses that inform the design and implementation of adaptive natural resource management activities. To this end, maximum flexibility should be provided to GLIFWC and its tribes to define for themselves the science and research activities best suited to the needs of their member tribes and the particular issues within their region. GLIFWC would gladly accept funds in proportion to overall RPI funding, as provided in fiscal year 2016.

2. *EPA Environmental Programs and Management:* $300,000,000. GLIFWC: $1,200,000. GLIFWC supports continued funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) as an important non-regulatory program that enhances and ensures coordinated governance in the Great Lakes, as well as substantive natural resource protection and restoration projects. GLIFWC supports funding the GLRI at $300 million, the level that has been provided since 2011. Effective Great Lakes programs throughout the basin require a consistent funding level of $300 million.

GLIFWC also recommends that at least $25 million be provided through a distinct tribal program to fulfill treaty obligations, meet trust responsibilities, and achieve tribal self-determination and self-governance in protecting and restoring the Great Lakes. A separate tribal component should allow for greater flexibility to allow tribes to develop the programs that are of the highest priorities to their communities, rather than having priority projects designed for them by Federal agencies.

Sustained funding for GLIFWC at approximately $1.2 million will enable GLIFWC to augment its current natural resource protection and enhancement activities. It will also allow GLIFWC to maintain its participation in interjurisdictional governance structures, including the implementation of the revised Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA). With GLRI funding, GLIFWC has been able to provide active support on numerous implementing Annexes, including the Lakewide Action and Management Plan, Aquatic Invasive Species, Chemicals of Mutual Concern, and Science Annexes.

GLRI funding has also allowed GLIFWC to continue to provide culturally relevant and targeted mercury-based consumption advice for fish. Tribal members are disproportionately impacted by the presence of mercury in fish due to their higher rate of consumption. Contaminated fish threaten the tribes' ability to exercise their treaty guaranteed right to harvest fish off reservation throughout the ceded territory.

RESULTS AND BENEFITS OF GLIFWC'S PROGRAMS

1. *Maintain the Requisite Capability To Meet Legal Obligations, To Conserve Natural Resources and To Regulate Treaty Harvests:* While more funding would increase program comprehensiveness, sustained funding at the fiscal year 2017 level supports tribal compliance with various court decrees and intergovernmental agreements that govern the tribes' treaty-reserved hunting, fishing and gathering rights. Funding for science and research enhances GLIFWC's capability to undertake work and participate in relevant partnerships to address ecosystem threats that harm treaty natural resources, including those related to climate change.

2. *Remain a Trusted Management and Law Enforcement Partner, and Scientific Contributor in the Great Lakes Region:* GLIFWC has become a respected and integral part of management and law enforcement partnerships that conserve natural resources and protect public safety. It brings a tribal perspective to interjurisdictional Great Lakes management fora and would use its scientific expertise to study issues and geographic areas that are important to its member tribes but that others may not be examining.

3. *Maintain the Overall Public Benefits That Derive From Its Programs:* Over the years, GLIFWC has become a recognized and valued partner in natural resource management. Because of its institutional experience and staff expertise, GLIFWC has built and maintained numerous partnerships that: (i) provide accurate information and data to counter social misconceptions about tribal treaty harvests and the status of ceded territory natural resources; (ii) maximize each partner's financial resources and avoid duplication of effort and costs; (iii) engender cooperation rather

than competition; and (iv) undertake projects that achieve public benefits that no one partner could accomplish alone.

4. *Encourage and Contribute to Healthy Tribal Communities.* GLIFWC works with its member tribes' communities to promote the benefits of treaty rights exercise. These include the health benefits associated with a more traditional diet and the intergenerational learning that takes place when elders teach youth. In addition, GLIFWC sponsors a camp each summer where tribal youth build leadership skills, strengthen connections to the outdoors, and learn about treaty rights and careers in natural resource fields.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE GREAT LAKES RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee:

My name is Levi D. Carrick, Sr., Chairman of the Great Lakes Resources Committee (GLRC) of the Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority (CORA). CORA is an inter-tribal resource management organization established by five (5) federally recognized Indian tribes in the State of Michigan. They are: the Bay Mills Indian Community; the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians; the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians; the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians; and the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. GLRC addresses issues of management, preservation and enhancement of all species and habitats which are within the Great Lakes resources. I also am proud to serve as the President of the Bay Mills Indian Community.

On behalf of CORA, I personally express CORA's appreciation for the *Rights Protection Implementation Program* (RPI) funding request for CORA, contained in the Presidents' Fiscal Year 2017 Budget for the Department of the Interior. RPI Program funds enable CORA's tribes to provide for the exercise by their members of the reserved right to hunt, fish, trap and gather on the lands and waters ceded to the United States by our ancestors in Article 13 of the Treaty of March 28, 1836. That cession covers the eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan and the northern ⅔ of the Lower Peninsula, as well as large portions of the upper three Great Lakes—Lakes Huron, Michigan and Superior.

I am sure that the importance of treaty reserved rights to Indian tribes and their members has been expressed in testimony before this subcommittee many times, but that importance can never be overstated. Treaty hunting, fishing and gathering rights were essential to the existence of our ancestors and continue to be essential to our existence as Indian people; they preserve our access to culturally significant resources which are intimately connected to traditional ways of life. This importance is not symbolic; tribal members continue to rely on the ability to harvest natural resources for both commercial and subsistence purposes. It is our life way.

The tribes have always believed that these treaty reserved rights continue to exist, and were not extinguished or diminished by any act of the Federal Government. Unfortunately, that was not a belief shared by the State of Michigan, which prosecuted tribal members for hunting, fishing and gathering at times or with methods which State law prohibited. This situation continued until the United States filed suit against the State of Michigan in 1973. It resulted in a decision in *United States v. Michigan* in 1979 upholding the right to fish in the ceded waters of the Great Lakes. This right was implemented by court-facilitated negotiations among the Federal, State and tribal parties, that produced two Consent Decrees which provided for the allocation and management of the Great Lakes fisheries in the treaty area; the first one was entered in 1985 for a period of 15 years, and a successor agreement was entered in 2000 for a period of 20 years, ending in August, 2020. It is that Decree which is listed as "Chippewa/Ottawa Treaty Fisheries" under CORA in the Fiscal Year 2017 Green Book RPI Programs.

The CORA tribes receive base funding through the "Treaty Fisheries" line item for the following activities: to establish conservation-based fishing regulations; conduct biological monitoring of the fishery; carry out resource protection and enhancement programs and activities; staff conservation enforcement departments and adjudicatory bodies to resolve violations of the regulations; and provide an intertribal voice to coordinate and cooperate with the Federal, State and international organizations which address Great Lakes resource matters.

The Great Lakes "model" provided a template for the parties in *United States v. Michigan,* who voluntarily entered into negotiations to resolve the scope of rights reserved by Article 13 in the inland 14 million acres of land and water of the cession. In 2007, their efforts produced a permanent Consent Decree, which encompasses the nature and extent of the right to hunt, fish, trap and gather by tribal members as regulated by their respective tribes; establishes protocols by which the

resources are allocated between tribal and State-licensed harvesters; and provides collaborative resource management procedures for the CORA tribes and the State of Michigan.

The terms of the Inland Consent Decree envision the following responsibilities for the tribes: significant expansion of the tribes' conservation enforcement programs; creation and maintenance of inland biological monitoring, assessment, restoration and enhancement programs; growth in tribal adjudicatory systems' staffing, administration and financial support; and expansion of intertribal management mechanisms and procedures. It is the trust responsibility of the United States to provide stable, recurrent funding by which the Court Decree can be implemented by the tribes.

This element of the trust responsibility was finally recognized by the administration and included in the Interior Green Book as an RPI Program for Fiscal Year 2013. In response, the Congress appropriated $461,000 for CORA in RPI funds, an amount which allowed each tribe to initiate permanent programs, albeit very small ones. This amount was increased by this subcommittee to $1,605,714.00 in fiscal year 2016, and is the amount requested by the administration for these purposes in the Fiscal Year 2017 Green Book for RPI Programs, listed as "Chippewa/Ottawa Inland Consent Decree".

One final item is included in the RPI fiscal year 2017 budget for all intertribal resource management organizations, which is entitled "Evaluation & Research Activities—Climate Change". CORA supports the administration's proposed $2.5 million increase for climate change activities, but does not support the administration's proposed competitive process for distributing this increase, in the event that it is approved by this Congress. CORA's position is that requiring the tribes to compete with each other for funding derogates the trust responsibility embodied by the RPI line item. The recipient tribes and tribal commissions receive RPI funds to carry out responsibilities established and ordered by Federal courts as the culmination of years of litigation. Establishing a mandatory competitive process for any portion of the resource management activities undertaken by tribes to fulfill their court-ordered obligations is a breach of the trust responsibility masquerading as fiscal accountability. CORA instead supports an allocation of those funds among the organizations based on the percentage that each listed inter-tribal organization will receive in RPI funds, as compared to the total amount requested for all RPI purposes for fiscal year 2017. This is the same method used in previous fiscal years, and it has worked well. For CORA, that proportionate amount is $681,355.

CORA tribes have participated in intertribal management and regulation of natural resources since 1982. For decades, we have been at the forefront of efforts to protect, enhance and restore the natural environment so that all human beings can enjoy the fish, wildlife and plants of our region for generations to come. Already, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is asking to consult on what type of resource management regime should replace the Great Lakes Consent Decree in 2020. The CORA tribes have proven to be an effective partner with agencies of the United States, the States, and the province of Ontario to manage our natural resources to the seventh generation and beyond.

For these reasons, the CORA tribes respectfully request your support for fiscal year 2017 RPI funding at the level of $4,746,355.00 in recurring base funding, which is the amount outlined for CORA in the RPI portion of the Department of Interior's Green Book for Fiscal Year 2017, plus CORA's proportionate share of the "Climate Change" line item.

Thank you for your consideration.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES (HSUS), HUMANE SOCIETY LEGISLATIVE FUND (HSLF), AND DORIS DAY ANIMAL LEAGUE

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony to the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee on items of importance to our organizations. We urge the subcommittee to address these priority issues in the fiscal year 2017 Department of Interior appropriation. We have requests to a number of programs detailed below: Environmental Protection Agency's CompTox program ($25.7 million), Bureau of Land Management's Wild Horse and Burro Program (budget increase contingent on implementing the National Academy of Science's recommendations on fertility control; language to ensure continued protection of wild horses and burros from slaughter), and the Multinational Species Conservation Fund (continued funding but with no funds from conservation programs to promote trophy hunting, trade in animal parts, and other consumptive uses). We also ask that language

is not included that would halt the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) efforts to combat wildlife trafficking or in any way undermine the Endangered Species Act.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY'S COMPTOX PROGRAM

Thousands of chemicals are currently used and hundreds of new ones are introduced each year for which toxicity assessments need to be conducted. To answer this need, EPA established the National Center for Computational Toxicity to predict hazard and prioritize chemicals for further screening and testing, developing and using high-throughput assays and predictive tools which are less expensive and time consuming and more predictive of relevant biological pathways.

Through EPA's CompTox program, EPA has screened more than 2,000 chemicals (industrial, food additives, and consumer products) and evaluated them in more than 700 high-throughput assays. Additionally, EPA is using ToxCast data to prioritize chemicals for evaluation in the Endocrine Disruptor Screening Program. Tox21, a collaboration between EPA, NIEHS, NCATS and the FDA is currently screening 10,000 chemicals to improve the effectiveness of drug development.

However, even as the need increases for this data, the program's budget has stagnated at $21.4 million in fiscal year 2015 and fiscal year 2016. We support an increase to $25.7 million to the CompTox program in fiscal year 2017. This will encourage the likelihood of realizing the goals presented in the CompTox program and assure a more predictable and relevant chemicals safety assessment.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT—WILD HORSE AND BURRO PROGRAM

The Humane Society of the United States (The HSUS) is one of the leading advocates for the protection and welfare of wild horses and burros in the U.S. with a long history of working collaboratively with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM)—the agency mandated to protect America's wild horses and burros—on the development of effective and humane management techniques.

The HSUS strongly supports a significant reduction in the number of wild horses and burros gathered and removed from our rangelands annually. We believe removing horses from the range without implementing any active program for suppressing the population growth rate has proven itself to be an unsustainable method of management of our Nation's wild horses, and simply leads to a continual cycle of roundups and removals when more long-term, cost-efficient and humane management strategies, such as fertility control, are readily available.

For years, the BLM has removed far more wild horses and burros from the range than it could possibly expect to adopt annually, and as a consequence, the costs associated with caring for these animals off the range have continued to skyrocket. The costs associated with caring for one wild horse in a long term holding facility over the course of its life is approximately 46,000 dollars according to the BLM. Today, there are almost 50,000 wild horses and burros in these pens, and the agency spends more than 65 percent of its annual Wild Horse and Burro budget on holding costs. While recent years have shown a decline in the number of animals removed from the range, the BLM must continue to balance the number of animals removed from the range annually with the number of animals it can expect to adopt in a given year if it hopes to effectively reduce off-the-range management costs.

Further, the BLM's current program of management of wild horses has negative effects that go beyond a simple cost-benefit analysis. For instance, the recommendations in the National Academy of Sciences 2013 report "Using Science to Improve the BLM Wild Horse and Burro Program: A Way Forward," commissioned by the BLM itself, stated that it is BLM's own practices of managing wild horses "below food-limited carrying capacity" by rounding up and removing a significant proportion of the herd's population every 3 to 4 years that is facilitating high horse population growth rates on the range.

As such, it is incumbent that the BLM move away from current management practices to create a long-term, humane and financially sustainable path. It is our belief that the most cost-effective and humane approach is for the BLM to move aggressively forward with a fertility control program which prioritizes on-the-range management of wild horses and burros. This path forward is supported by the National Academy of Sciences report, which called for an increased usage of on-the-range management tools, including the usage of the fertility control vaccine PZP. Further, a 2008 paper determined that contraception on-the-range could reduce total wild horse and burro management costs by 14 percent, saving $6.1 million per year. Finally, the results of a paper describing an economic model commissioned by The HSUS indicates that by treating wild horses on one hypothetical Herd Management Area (HMA) with the fertility control vaccine Porcine Zona Pellucida (PZP), the BLM could save approximately $5 million dollars over 12 years while achieving

and maintaining Appropriate Management Levels (AML) of 874 horses. Since the BLM estimates that more than 58,000 wild horses roam in the U.S., the use of PZP could result in a cost-savings of tens of millions of dollars if applied broadly across all HMAs.

For these reasons, we support an increase to the BLM Wild Horse and Burro budget, contingent on the agency's usage of the funding to immediately begin usage of the NAS-recommended fertility control methods that are currently available, and to fund additional research on contraception and population growth suppression methods.

We also request inclusion of the same language barring wild horses and burros from being sent to slaughter that was included in the fiscal year 2016 omnibus: "Appropriations herein made shall not be available for the destruction of healthy, unadopted, wild horses and burros that results in their destruction for processing into commercial products." (Division G, p. 714, line 23).

The President's fiscal year 2017 budget requested language that inadvertently creates a loophole that could allow iconic wild horses and burros to be sent to slaughter. If Congress chooses to include Section 110 from the President's fiscal year 2017 budget, we request the following language be added at the end of the section to ensure that wild horses and burros are not sent to slaughter:

> *Provided further,* That any Federal State, or local government agency receiving excess wild horses or burros shall not destroy, sell, or otherwise transfer the horses or burros in a way that results in their destruction for processing into commercial products.

MULTINATIONAL SPECIES CONSERVATION FUND

The administration's fiscal year 2017 budget requests $11.1 million for the Multinational Species Conservation Fund (MSCF) program which funds African and Asian elephants, rhinos, tigers, great apes like chimps and gorillas, and sea turtles. The HSUS joins a broad coalition of organizations in support of the administration's request while ensuring that the sales from the semi-postal stamps benefiting this program remain supplementary to annually appropriated levels. We also support the fiscal year 2017 budget justification request from the USFWS Office of International Affairs (IA) of approximately $15.8 million. The USFWS IA program supports efforts to conserve our planet's rich wildlife diversity by protecting habitat and species, combating illegal wildlife trade, and building capacity for landscape-level wildlife conservation. Within IA are the Wildlife Without Borders programs that tackle grassroots wildlife conservation problems and we support these programs that conserve several of the world's most iconic species in their native habitats.

While we wholeheartedly support continued funding for the MSCF, we are concerned about past incidents and oppose any future use of funds from these conservation programs to promote trophy hunting, trade in animal parts, and other consumptive uses—including live capture for trade, captive breeding, and entertainment for public display industry—under the guise of conservation for these animals. Grants made to projects under the MSCF must be consistent with the spirit of the law.

WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

The illegal wildlife trafficking trade has reached a level of global emergency, with impacts on national security, international human rights, and the survival of protected wildlife species. African elephants are especially facing an unprecedented crisis, with one elephant killed every 15 minutes in Africa. The U.S. is the world's second largest market for ivory product sales, behind China. In response to this crisis, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) issued a proposed rule that will curtail the commercial ivory trade in the U.S. by cracking down on the domestic trade in ivory. In addition, the rule proposes to increase scrutiny of the import of African elephant trophies and to extend Endangered Species Act (ESA) protection to live African elephants in captive facilities in the United States. Soon after the release of the rule, President Obama and President Xi Jinping of China announced a detailed and shared commitment to ending the global trade in ivory.

In the midst of the current poaching crisis African elephants are facing, it is imperative that the FWS is able to finalize a rule that will curtail the commercial ivory trade in the United States. We ask that the fiscal year 2017 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill not include language that would block further action on this proposed rule.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) is fundamental to the protection of our globe's most imperiled animals. This law, which is supported by 90 percent of American voters, has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the species under its care, including the bald eagle. Under the ESA, the responsibility to list and delist species lies with Federal agencies, which must make these listing decisions based upon the best available science. The authority to make these science-based management decisions should remain with Federal agencies.

We ask that the fiscal year 2017 Interior Appropriations bill exclude any language that prevents Federal agencies from making listing or delisting decisions based on sound science, or otherwise undermines the ESA.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW TEAM

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and to address the serious funding needs that have limited and continue to hinder the operations of tribal judicial systems in Indian Country. We are representing the Independent Tribal Court Review Team. We thank this subcommittee for the additional $10.0 million funding in fiscal year 2010, the last significant increase. These funds were a blessing to tribes. Even minimal increases are always put to good use. It is the strong recommendation of the Independent Tribal Courts Review Team that the Federal Tribal Courts budget be substantially increased in fiscal year 2017 to support the needs of tribal judicial systems.

BUDGET PRIORITIES, REQUESTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. +$2.6 Million—Support fiscal year 2017 Proposed Increased for Tribal Courts
2. +$58.4 Million authorized under the Indian Tribal Justice Act of 1993, Public Law 103–176, 25 USC 3601 and re-authorized in year 2000 Public Law 106–559 (no funds have been appropriated to date)
3. Support the requests and recommendations of the National Congress of American Indians

The increase will support:

1. Hiring and Training of Court Personnel
2. Compliance with the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010
3. Compliance with and implement the VAWA Act of 2013
4. Salary Increases for Existing Judges and Court Personnel
5. State-of-the-Art Technology for Tribal Courts
6. Security and Security Systems to Protect Court Records and Privacy of Case Information
7. Tribal Court Code Development
8. Financial Code Development

The Independent Tribal Courts Review Team supports the proposed $2.6 million increase for tribal courts in the fiscal year 2017 President's budget. Tribal courts need an immediate, sustained and increased level of funding. The lack of funding has delayed implementation of the Tribal Law and Order Act (TLOA) and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) to a critical level and the resources that have been appropriated are required to provide Attorneys to represent Non-Indian defendants which further strain the capacity of the Tribal Judicial System. Tribal systems remain underfunded, understaffed and ill-equipped to function effectively and in a manner comparable to non-Indian government judicial systems. Tribal courts are at a critical stage in terms of need. The Tiwahe Initiative, as a means to be responsive to tribal concerns, demonstrates that the administration and Congress are listening to the tribes, but there needs to be a greater effort to fund the authority that was enacted in 1993.

Section 402 of TLOA reauthorized the Tribal Justice Act, and Indian Tribal Justice Technical and Legal Assistance Act of 2001. These acts authorize funding for tribal court judges, court personnel, public defenders, court facilities, and the development of records management systems and other needs of tribal court systems. The Tribal Justice Act, originally enacted December 1993, authorized the appropriation of $58.4 million in tribal court base funding. Yet, not a single dollar under the Tribal Justice Act has been appropriated in the 22 years since it was enacted. Of particular note is the provision of the Tribal Justice Act that states that Federal funds may be used specifically for "training programs and continuing education for tribal judicial personnel." Appropriations should finally be made to fulfill the promise of

these acts.[1] We recommend that the Interdepartmental Tribal Justice, Safety and Wellness Session, of which the Department of the Interior (DOI) is a member, resume outreach to support the efforts of TLOA, VAWA and the Tiwahe Initiative.

The Tiwahe Initiative was launched in 2015 to address several lagging family welfare and poverty issues in Indian Country including a strategy to reduce incarceration in Indian Country. The alternative to incarceration is intended to address underlying causes of repeat offenses, such as substance abuse and the lack of adequate social service support, by utilizing alternative courts to increase treatment opportunities, probation programs, and interagency and intergovernmental partnerships with tribal, State and Federal stakeholders. In response to the unusual high rates of alcohol and/drug related repeat offenders that are dominating the resources of the justice system, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) created the Diversion and Re-Entry Division (DRD) within the Tribal Justice Support Directorate. In fiscal year 2016 tribal courts received a 4.9 percent increase, and the budget request for 2017 is $2.6 million over the enacted 2016 level. There is an even greater need to ensure that court personnel are trained, equipped and prepared to address these new challenges. We support the fiscal year 2017 proposed $21.0 million increase for Tiwahe to expand social services, Indian Child Welfare, housing, tribal courts and job placement and training.

Background:

The Bureau of Indian Affairs provides funding to tribal governments to supplement their justice systems including courts. Tribal courts play a "vital role" in Tribal Self-Determination and Self-Governance as cited in long-standing Federal policy and Acts of Congress. Funding levels from BIA to support tribal justice systems have not met the Federal obligations.

There is a great deal of variation in the types of tribal courts and how they apply laws. Some tribal courts resemble Western-style courts in that written laws and court procedures are applied. Others use traditional Native means of resolving disputes, such as peacemaking, elders' councils, and sentencing circles. Some tribes have both types of courts. The BIA also manages a small number of CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) courts.

Since 1999, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) in the Department of Justice (DOJ) has administered the Tribal Courts Assistance Program, designed to provide funds for tribes to plan, operate, and enhance tribal judicial systems. They have made attempts to evaluate tribal courts but discovered their means of doing so was insensitive to American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people and unrealistic in the absence of elements that were key to Indian Country, such as: (1) the importance of tribal culture and traditions; (2) the inability to apply State and local criminal justice initiatives to tribal settings; (3) the lack of cooperation from non-tribal entities; and, (4) the lack of available data on tribal justice.

The Independent Tribal Court Review Team has had more hands on success in reviewing tribal court systems. For 7 years, we traveled throughout Indian Country assessing how tribal courts are operating. During this time, we have completed 84 Court Reviews. We also completed 28 Corrective Actions. There is no one with more hands-on experience and knowledge regarding the current status of tribal courts than our review team.

Justification for Request:

1. *Hiring and Training of Court Personnel.*—Tribal courts make do with underpaid staff, under-experienced staff and minimal training. (We have determined that hiring tribal members limits the inclination of staff to move away; a poor excuse to underpay staff.)
2. *Compliance with the Tribal Law & Order Act of 2010.*—To provide judges, prosecutors, public defenders, who are attorneys, who are bared to do "enhanced sentencing" in tribal courts.
3. *Compliance with the 2013 VAWA Act.*—To provide tribal courts with the ability to provide non-Indians with all the rights under the U.S. Constitution in domestic violence actions in tribal courts (12 person juries, provide licenses attorneys for non-Indians, provide licensed attorneys in court personnel in domestic violence cases as in TLOA, etc.).
4. *Salary Increases for Existing Judges and Court Personnel.*—Salaries should be comparable to local and State court personnel to keep pace with the non-tribal judicial systems and be competitive to maintain existing personnel.

[1] Defining the Indian Civil Rights Act's "Sufficiently Trained" Tribal Court Judge, Jill Elizabeth Tompkins, American Indian Law Journal [Vol, 4:53].

5. *Tribal Courts Need State-of-the-Art Technology (Software, Computers, Phone Systems, Tape Recording Machines).*—Many tribes cannot afford to purchase or upgrade existing court equipment unless they get a grant. This is accompanied by training expenses and licensing fees which do not last after the grant ends.
6. *Security and Security Systems to Protect Court Records and Privacy of Case Information.*—Most tribal courts do not even have a full time Bailiff, much less a State-of-the-Art security system that uses locked doors and camera surveillance. This is a tragedy waiting to happen.
7. *Tribal Court Code Development.*—Tribes cannot afford legal consultation. A small number of tribes hire on-site staff attorneys. These staff attorneys generally become enmeshed in economic development so code development does not take priority. Tribes make do with under-developed codes. The Adam Walsh Act created a hardship for tribes who were forced to develop codes, without funding, or have the State assume jurisdiction. (States have never properly overseen law enforcement in a tribal jurisdiction.)
8. *Financial Code Development.*—We have rarely seen tribes with developed financial policies. The process of paying a bond, for example, varies greatly from tribe to tribe. The usual process of who collects it, where it is collected and how much it is, is never consistent among tribes.

There are many positive aspects about tribal courts. It is clear that tribal courts and justice systems are vital and important to the communities where they are located. Tribes value and want to be proud of their court systems. Tribes with even modest resources tend to allocate funding to courts before other costs. After decades of existence, many tribal courts, despite minimal funding, have achieved a level of experience and sophistication approaching, and in some cases surpassing, local non-Indian courts.

Tribal courts, through the Indian Child Welfare Act, have mostly stopped the wholesale removal of Indian children from their families. Indian and non-Indian courts have developed formal and informal agreements regarding jurisdiction. Tribal governments have recognized the benefit of having law-trained Judges, without doing away with judges who have cultural/traditional experience. Tribal court systems have appellate courts, jury trials, well-cared-for courthouses (even the poorer tribes), and Tribal Bar listings and fees. Perhaps most importantly, tribes recognize the benefit of an independent judiciary and have taken steps to insulate courts and judges from political pressure. No longer in Indian Country are judges automatically fired for decisions against the legislature.

Tribal courts have other serious needs. Tribal appellate court judges are mostly attorneys who dedicate their services for modest fees that barely cover costs for copying and transcription fees. Tribal courts do offer jury trials. In many courts, one sustained jury trial will deplete the available budget. The only place to minimize expenses is to fire staff. Many tribal courts have defense advocates. These advocates are generally not law trained and do a good job protecting an individual's rights (including assuring speedy trial limitations are not violated.) However, this is a large item in court budgets and if the defense advocate, or prosecutor, should leave, the replacement process is slow.

On behalf of the Independent Tribal Court Review Team, Elbridge Coochise, Ralph Gonzales, Charles Robertson, Philip Lujan and Myrna Rivera, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE INSTITUTE OF MAKERS OF EXPLOSIVES

Interest of the IME

The Institute of Makers of Explosives (IME) was founded in 1913 to provide accurate information and comprehensive recommendations concerning the safety and security of the commercial explosives industry. Our mission is to promote safety, and the protection of users, the public and environment, and to encourage the adoption of uniform rules and regulations in the manufacture, transportation, storage, handling, use and disposal of explosive materials used in blasting and other essential operations.

IME represents the U.S. manufacturers and distributors of commercial explosive materials and oxidizers as well as other companies that that provide related services. Millions of metric tons of high explosives, blasting agents, and oxidizers are consumed annually in the United States. Of this, IME member companies produce over 98 percent of the high explosives and a great majority of the blasting agents and oxidizers. These products are used in every State and are distributed worldwide.

The industry's commitment to being good stewards of the environment is well documented. Managers responsible for operating explosives manufacturing and distribution sites are faced with a surprising number of environmental issues that require knowledgeable and diligent attention. To assist the commercial explosives industry in this area, IME developed a manual of best practices for managers to reference called Safety Library Publication (SLP) 29, *Recommendations for the Environmental Management of Commercial Explosives* (2011). While limited in its scope, IME believes SLP 29 is of assistance to facility managers in crafting and implementing a comprehensive environmental compliance programs for their unique circumstances. IME is in the final steps of updating SLP 29 and expects the new version to be published later this year. This update will serve to provide the latest in best practices and updates on current regulations so that all of our members can be proper stewards of the environment.

With this perspective, IME appreciates the opportunity to comment on the following subjects:

Ammonium Nitrate (AN)

Regarding EPA's implementation of Executive Order (EO) 13650, IME would like to note that the Agency has abided by the directions in the House committee report to the fiscal year 2016 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. Specifically, the committee report language instructed the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to defer further consideration of including AN under the Risk Management Program (RMP) until the agency considers whether that approach is necessary. As was reflected in the language, it was entirely appropriate that EPA should defer its decisionmaking until the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)—the agency currently regulating workplace and thus public safety of this material—first determines what action it will take with regard to AN safety.

Going forward, OSHA has announced that it will initiate a Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (SBREFA) review on Risk Management Program Modernization, including how to address safety of AN, and expects to conclude the process in 2016. The SBREFA process will afford OSHA greater understanding of how different courses of action, including those for regulating AN, could impact small businesses and the potential safety improvements associated with those actions. IME is participating in this process.

EPA's Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC)

IME requests that the subcommittee support the $23.7 million budget request for EPA's State and Local Prevention and Preparedness program, which represents an $8.4 million increase over the agency's fiscal year 2016 appropriation.[1]

The Emergency Preparedness and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986 was created to help communities plan for emergencies involving hazardous chemicals. It envisioned a seamless safety net of LEPCs established by States and Indian tribes that would ensure community engagement and chemical industry participation. Since that time, EPA has conducted two assessments of the program, in 1999 and 2008, and both have shown the implementation of the program to uneven at best. More recently, the tragic 2013 industrial incident at West, Texas revealed again EPA's lack of attention and leadership in using this program to better safeguard communities. As a result, EO 13650 has called for the agency to revitalize the LEPC program.

The funding request is more important this year than in the past. Historically, significant funding for this program has come from registration fees assessed by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) on shippers and carriers of hazardous materials. The 2015 Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) made important changes to how registration fees may be used by States. Since 1990, DOT has allocated registration funds to States for hazmat training and planning. Planning funds were provided to State Emergency Response Commissions (SERC) with a 75 percent pass-through requirement to LEPCs. The FAST Act removes DOT discretion to allocate these funds and it removed the 75 percent pass-through. In short, DOT's annual $8.15 million set-aside to fund SERCs and LEPCs will still be provided to States, but States will have unfettered discretion about whether to use those funds for emergency responder training or for planning. Many believe that States will choose to direct the majority of these funds to training purposes. These FAST Act changes underscore the need for EPA to take responsibility to fully-fund its LEPC program. The additional $8.4 million request for this program is warranted.

[1] Fiscal Year 2017 EPA Budget Estimate, page 50.

USGS Minerals Resource Program, Minerals Information Program (MIP)

IME requests the subcommittee support the USGS budget request for the MIP of $15.4 million.[2]

The Minerals Information dataset one of the longest running data sets in the Federal Government. It provides critical information to a number of important public sector entities as well as the private sector. No other entity has the capability, integrity, or objectiveness to produce the broad data sets that are now produced by the MIP. According to the USGS, in 2016, and on a continuing basis, MIP mineral economists and minerals information specialists will provide minerals information to other Federal agencies, including the U.S. Census Bureau, the Department of Defense, the Federal Reserve Board, and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.[3]

IME works with the MIP to produce the Explosives Commodity Report. IME collects information for the report from the commercial explosives industry as a public service because the USGS has proven to be a trusted partner in ensuring that commercially sensitive data is not disclosed. The completed report provides business intelligence unavailable elsewhere, to stakeholders inside and outside of government.

As stated by USGS,

> "In 2017, the National Mineral Information Center (NMIC) will continue to provide hundreds of reports such as the Minerals Commodity Summaries, the Minerals Yearbook, the Mineral Industry Surveys, Metal Industry Indicators, and the Nonmetallic Mineral Products Industry Indexes. These and other MRP information products, along with sound analysis from minerals and materials analysis specialists and program scientists, allow for decision makers and stakeholders to better understand the changes and importance of mineral resource production, consumption, and use. The NMIC will continue to provide high quality information and analysis that informs Federal critical minerals policy and is of paramount importance to U.S. national security and trade interests."[4]

Clearly, it is in the interest of the Nation and other stakeholders for the U.S. Congress to fund the Minerals Information Program at the requested level.

Thank you for your consideration of our requests.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE INTER TRIBAL BUFFALO COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

My name is Ervin Carlson and I am a member of the Blackfeet Nation in Montana and serve as the President of the Inter Tribal Buffalo Council (ITBC). Please accept my sincere appreciation for this opportunity to submit written testimony to the honorable members of the Senate Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies. ITBC was granted a Federal charter in 2009 pursuant to Section 17 of the Indian Reorganization Act and is comprised of 60 federally recognized Indian tribes in 19 States with headquarter offices in Rapid City, South Dakota. The Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, the Shakopee Tribe of Minnesota, and the Ruby Tribe of Alaska are the three newest members of ITBC.

American Indians have a long-standing connection with the buffalo. Historically, buffalo provided the tribes with food, shelter, clothing and essential tools for survival. Indians have maintained a strong spiritual and cultural connection with the buffalo that has not diminished with the passage of time. ITBC member tribes strive to restore buffalo to tribal lands for cultural, health and economic benefits for tribal populations.

On behalf of the member tribes of ITBC, I am requesting an increase of $5,600,000 to our current $1,400,000 fiscal year 2015 funding level for a total funding award for fiscal year 2016 of $7,000,000 to allow the organization to: (1) increase funds for the tribal herd development grant program, (2) to fund ITBC efforts to serve as a meaningful management partner to the National Park Service, and (3) to fund scientific research on the benefits of buffalo meat for Native populations for the prevention and treatment of diet related diseases. ITBC requests funding from the Department of Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs Fish and Wildlife Program and also from the National Park Service.

---

[2] 2017 USGS Budget Justification, page H–22.
[3] 2017 USGS Budget Justification, page H–24.
[4] 2017 USGS Budget Justification, page H–25.

FUNDING HISTORY

ITBC has been funded through various methods including the President's budget, congressional earmarks or administrative action since 1992. ITBC's approximate annual funding is listed below:

Fiscal year 1992–1993	$ 400,000.00 Congressional Earmark
Fiscal year 1994–1999	$ 650,000.00 President's Budget
Fiscal year 2000–2001	$1,100,000.00 President's Budget; Congressional Earmark
Fiscal year 2002–2003	$1,560,000.00 President's Budget; Congressional Earmark
Fiscal year 2004–2005	$2,200,000.00 President's Budget; Congressional Earmark
Fiscal year 2006	$4,100,000.00 President's Budget; Congressional Earmark
Fiscal year 2007	$1,000,000.00 Administrative Action BIA
Fiscal year 2008	$1,000,000.00 Congressional Earmark
Fiscal year 2009–2010	$1,400,000.00 Congressional Earmark; Administrative Action BIA
Fiscal year 2011	$1,750,000.00 President's Budget; Administrative Action BIA
Fiscal year 2012	$1,400,000.00 President's Budget
Fiscal year 2013	$1,600,000.00 President's Budget; Administrative Action BIA
Fiscal year 2014	$1,400,000.00 President's Budget; Administrative Action BIA
Fiscal year 2015	$1,450,000.00 President's Budget; Administrative Action BIA
Fiscal year 2016	$1,400,000.00 President's Budget

The above funding history illustrates congressional and administrative support for ITBC and tribal buffalo herds. Annual funding of ITBC provides evidence that buffalo restoration and management is not a limited or one-time "project" but a "recurring program" most recently funded from the Department of Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs Fish and Wildlife line item.

FUNDING INCREASE JUSTIFICATION

Increase in Herd Development Grant Funds

ITBC expends 100 percent of the appropriated funds on the development and management of tribal buffalo herds. A significant portion of ITBC funding is distributed directly to ITBC member tribes via a Herd Development Grant program administered by ITBC. The herd development grant program commenced in 1992 with $400,000 to assist the twelve member tribes in the organization. In 2002, ITBC was awarded $1,000,000 for tribal herd development grants to support 25 tribal herds. Since 2002, the herd development grant funding has been stagnant at $1,000,000 despite the growth of the organization to the current 60 member tribes and 54 buffalo herds. In total, ITBC collectively manages over 20,000 buffalo which is more than all the buffalo currently managed by NPS in the National Parks. A $2,500,000 increase for tribal herd development grants will provide critically needed funding to protect and manage existing tribal herds. This increase will provide a total of $3,500,000 for distribution to tribes in an average amount of $65,000 per tribal herd depending on specific needs. These funds will create jobs in Indian Country, create sustainable tribal buffalo herds and allow tribes to utilize buffalo for economic development.

Funding for National Park Service and United States Fish and Wildlife Service Partnership

Since its inception, ITBC has partnered with the National Park Service (NPS) on buffalo management efforts including population management through roundups and distribution of buffalo to tribes from the parks national refuges. ITBC has not been funded for these activities but has utilized minimal administrative funding to partner with the Federal agencies. For example, ITBC has agreed to manage buffalo removed from Yellowstone Park for population control, transport the animals to processing facilities and distribute processed meat to tribes despite very limited funding for these efforts. Additionally, ITBC is a member of the Interagency Bison Management Plan workgroup and has incurred significant costs to participate in all related activities to insure that tribes are represented in buffalo management decisions. ITBC can continue these efforts and develop and manage a quarantine program that will allow the transfer of live buffalo from the Yellowstone Park to tribes through an increase of $500,000 in annual funding.

Health Related Research

ITBC has a long-term objective to prevent and treat diet related diseases in Native populations through the reintroduction of buffalo into daily diets. However, these efforts to coordinate with healthcare providers have been limited by the lack of scientific evidence of the health benefits of natural grass fed buffalo diets. ITBC

believes research to develop concrete evidence of these health benefits will facilitate ITBC partnerships with health programs to prevent and treat diet related diseases in Native populations.

Additionally, sound research results will allow ITBC to develop a health education curriculum for healthy living with a component specifically focused on Native youth. Further, this critical research will support ITBC's efforts to provide buffalo meat to school lunch programs as a healthy alternative to other meat products.

Funding in the amount of $3,000,000 will allow ITBC to pursue professional research objectives.

CURRENT ITBC INITIATIVES

ITBC's primary objectives are to restore buffalo to tribal lands, and to conserve and manage existing tribal herds through the promotion of traditional buffalo handling practices and beliefs. ITBC strives to offer assistance and opportunities to tribes to meet the needs and desires of individual tribal programs. ITBC attempts to balance the varying interests of member tribes from maintaining herds for spiritual purposes to utilizing buffalo as viable economic development endeavors. ITBC accomplishes these objectives as follows:

1. *Technical Assistance to Tribes*

ITBC assesses current and potential tribal buffalo programs to determine technical service needs and infrastructure needs and provides technical assistance in the areas of wildlife management, ecological management, range management, buffalo health, cultural practices and economic development. Further ITBC assists with fencing, corrals, facility design, water development and equipment research. ITBC provides annual training sessions (national and regional) designed to enhance tribal buffalo management.

2. *Education and Outreach*

ITBC staff provides educational presentations to various audiences including school-age youth on buffalo restoration, conservation efforts, and the historical, cultural relationship between buffalo and American Indians.

3. *Partnership and Collaboration*

ITBC is a member of various Federal and State working groups organized to address buffalo issues. ITBC collaborates with the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on surplus Federal buffalo and to address the Yellowstone brucellosis concerns. However, ITBC participates on a limited basis due to a lack of funding for these collaborative efforts.

4. *ITBC Marketing Program*

ITBC strives to develop markets for buffalo meat and products for interested member tribes at the local and national level. ITBC procures buffalo, as limited funds allow, from tribes and sells the meat products under a joint tribal and ITBC label. An increase in funding will enhance these marketing efforts.

5. *School Lunch Program*

ITBC has eight member tribes serving tribal raised buffalo into their school lunch programs to address health concerns of school-age children. ITBC anticipates expanding this program to 20 tribes in the next 3 years with increased funding.

CONCLUSION

ITBC has existed for over two decades to assist tribes with restoration of buffalo to tribal lands for cultural purposes. No other program exists to assist tribes with buffalo restoration and protection.

ITBC and its member tribes have created a new Indian reservation industry that includes job creation and new revenue for the tribal economies. ITBC ultimately hopes to restore tribal herds large enough to support local tribal health needs and generate sufficient revenue to achieve economically self sufficient herds.

ITBC and it member tribes are appreciative of past and current support from the Congress and the administration. However, I urge the subcommittee to increase ITBC funding to a total of $7,000,000 which is a level commensurate with the growth of the tribal buffalo programs. This increase will demonstrate congressional respect for this national icon and allow ITBC to fulfill its responsibilities to restore, protect and manage buffalo.

I would like to thank this subcommittee for the opportunity to present testimony and I invite you to visit ITBC tribal buffalo projects and experience first hand their successes.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL

SUMMARY

Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, I am Phil Rigdon, President of the Intertribal Timber Council (ITC) and Deputy Director of Natural Resources for the Yakama Nation. The ITC offers the following recommendations for fiscal year 2017 Indian forestry-related activities in the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the Department of Interior (DOI) Office of Wildland Fire Management (OWFM), and the U.S.D.A. Forest Service (USFS):

BIA

1. Increase BIA Forestry by $25 million, to $77.2 million, as a first step toward the additional $100 million needed for funding parity with other Federal forestry programs, as recommended by the 2013 IFMAT III report.
2. Separately, increase BIA Forestry Projects by $12.7 million to initiate a BIA Forestry Workforce Development program.
3. Increase BIA's Endangered Species funding to $10 million.
4. Increase BIA's Tribal Climate Resilience program to $30.4 million.

OWFM

5. Provide $12.6 million in OWFM BAR for rehabilitation of Indian trust forests burned in 2015.
6. Direct a reassessment of wildfire suppression priorities to include Indian trust forests as "property," to be a second priority behind only protection of life as a suppression priority.
7. Increase Fuels Management funding to $206 million; allow RTRL funds on tribal lands.

USFS

8. Encourage expanded support for the ITC Anchor Forest initiative.
9. Continue encouraging the USFS to improve implementation of the TFPA.

APPRECIATION

I would like to begin by expressing our appreciation for the subcommittee's adopting BIA's fiscal year 2016 requested increase of $2 million for thinning on Indian trust forests and for adding $2 million to BIA Forestry Projects for post-fire rehabilitation. These funds are critically needed to address the historic and catastrophic 2015 fire season.

IFMAT III

Many of our requests reflect the findings and recommendations of the 2013 IFMAT III report, the statutorily required (Public Law 101–630, Sec. 312) decadal independent review on tribal forests and forestry. A copy of that report has been provided to the subcommittee.

IFMAT III found that chronically insufficient funding and understaffing threaten tribal forests and communities. Unless these problems are rectified, Indian forests will continue to suffer unnecessary damage from wildland fire, insects, disease, and climate change.

BIA

1. Increase BIA Forestry by $25 million, to $77.2 million, as a first step toward the additional $100 million needed for funding parity with other Federal forestry programs, as recommended by the 2013 IFMAT III report.

Indian forestlands cover one third of the total 56 million acres held in Federal trust for Indians. These trust forestlands provide enumerable essential and renewable functions to tribal and surrounding communities, including clean air and water, stable soils, spiritual and cultural support, habitat for fish, wildlife and plants, forest products for medicine, art, and individual entrepreneurship, and through commercial forestry, local jobs and revenues for tribal governments. Indian people live with the forests and deeply rely upon them, and the United States, especially the Interior Department, has a binding and compensable fiduciary responsibility to protect, maintain and enhance these forests, but is failing to do so. Interior's chronic underfunding of the BIA Forestry program also incurs significant economic losses for the tribes. Insufficient personnel constrain BIA Forestry's ability to process the annual timber harvest levels set by tribes, such that in fiscal year 2014, timber har-

vest benefits were 60 percent below what should have been realized, costing tribes $41 million in lost revenue and a loss of over 15,000 jobs.

The fiscal year 2017 BIA Budget Justification continues to reflect disregard for Federal trust responsibilities for Indian forests. Enhanced climate resilience is a principal theme for Trust and Natural Resources Management programs, but funding increases are not proposed for Forestry, despite the fact that trust forests (A) cover one third of all BIA trust land, (B) are subject to statutory trust protection, (C) are integral to supporting a wide and critical array of environmental, cultural and economic functions, (D) are vital to approaches for addressing climate change, carbon sequestration, water management, and adaptation, and (E) are the only trust natural resource with professional and independent assessments and reports documenting the impacts of climate change.

We find fiscal year 2017's exclusion of BIA Forestry from any programmatic increase to be bewildering and dismaying. IFMAT III reports a $100 million increase is needed to correct this disparity. As in past years, ITC requests that the subcommittee incrementally correct chronic underfunding by providing a $25 million increase to the fiscal year 2017 BIA Forestry program.

2. Separately, increase BIA Forestry Projects by $12.7 million to initiate a BIA Forestry Workforce Development program, as recommended by IFMAT III.

BIA and tribal Forestry are facing a staffing crisis. The IFMAT III report states 800 additional BIA Forestry positions are needed, and essential existing positions are going unfilled and knowledge and expertise are being lost due to retirements and funding shortfalls. Last year I cited an example on my reservation—the Yakama Nation—where 33 of the 55 BIA Forestry positions had not been filled for a long time. Today, 1 year later, it is basically unchanged, despite repeated tribal pleas. Harvest targets are not being met, forest health is suffering, and economic opportunities are being lost. A concerted effort is needed to fill vacancies and provide the skills required for responsible stewardship of our forest resources. ITC requests that $12.7 million be added to BIA Forestry Programs to undertake a program to attract, train and retain well qualified professional forestry staff.

3. Increase BIA Endangered Species funding to $10 million.

ITC requests BIA ESA be funded at $10 million to address impacts of listed species on management of trust resources. BIA's $3.7 million request represents an increase over recent years, but is still less per acre than BLM ESA and below BIA ESA's $3 million appropriated for fiscal year 2002 after inflationary costs are considered.

4. Increase BIA's Tribal Climate Resilience program to $30.4 million.

ITC requests $30.4 million for the BIA Tribal Climate Resilience program, the amount requested by the administration for fiscal year 2016. Indian tribes rely upon the land, which is our history, our culture, our livelihoods, and our future. While the administration's fiscal year 2017 request is $3.1 million over fiscal year 2016's final appropriation, last year's $30.4 million requested amount better represents the BIA and tribes' true needs for evaluating climate change on our homelands and planning and conducting actual on-the-ground projects to begin addressing its consequences.

DOI OFFICE OF WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT

5. Provide $12.6 million in OWFM BAR for rehabilitation of Indian trust forests burned in 2015.

The 2015 wildfire season was catastrophic for Indian tribes, particularly in the Northwest, where some fires were the most destructive in recorded history. Nearly 500,000 acres of Indian trust forest burned. Approximately 1.5 billion board feet of timber was killed, worth more than $200 million in tribal revenue. Nearly 100,000 acres need reforestation. Tribal losses of their forest resource, revenue and jobs are severe and will extend decades into the future. BIA has estimated recovery costs of $9 million for fiscal year 2016, $12.6 million for fiscal year 2017, and a total of $55 million over 5 years.

The Interior Department's Office Wildland Fire Management (OWFM) provided BIA and the tribes only $3.5 million in Burned Area Recovery (BAR) funds for fiscal year 2016. OWFM has not provided any increase to address the devastating impacts of the 2015 fires on tribal resources. The fiscal year 2016 amount allocated is less than the $4 million in BAR funds allocated for BIA and tribes in fiscal year 2015. The only fund increase in response to last summer's devastation of tribal trust forests has been Congress's fiscal year 2016 increase of $2 million. At Interior, it is

as if our Federal trustee is simply turning a blind eye to the problem, which, by further delaying or denying the recovery, only exacerbates the economic and environmental losses inflicted on the tribes.

ITC asks Congress to specifically designate $12.6 million for fiscal year 2017 within OWFM BAR for recovery of tribal forests burned in 2015. Please note this is just for the 2015 fires, and should not impinge on separate funding for fires that may occur in 2016 and future years.

6. Direct a reassessment of wildfire suppression priorities to include Indian trust forests as "property," to be a second priority behind only protection of life as a suppression priority.

Last summer, lightning storms ignited a wave of wildfires in the Northwest, including on Indian reservations. When fire crews attacking reservation fires were diverted to fight off-reservation fires threatening private property, the fires on our trust forests exploded. The United States evidently abandons its fiduciary obligations to protect Indian trust assets when Federal fire suppression policy prioritizes protection of life first and property second, leaving our trust forests to burn, as they did last summer. Timber tribes depend on our forests for jobs and revenue; the destruction suffered by those forests will have severe and long-lasting consequences. Fire suppression policy must prioritize protection of trust resources and economies, not subjugate those obligations to the protection of (often insured) private property. We ask the subcommittee to direct the reevaluation of Federal fire suppression priorities to consider the protection of Indian trust resources as second only to protection of life.

7. Increase Fuels Management funding to $206 million; allow RTRL funds on tribal lands.

For fiscal year 2017, ITC urges that Fuels Management funding be restored to its fiscal year 2010 $206 million level to reduce the Department's fuels backlog. This will be a sound investment that will reduce future costs of suppression. Within the fiscal year 2017 Fuels Management budget, ITC strongly supports the designation of $10 million for Reserved Treaty Rights Lands (RTRL) landscape restoration, to allow tribes to engage in proactive fuels and forest health projects to protect tribal trust assets on treaty lands. However, we ask that these funds be allowed to be used on both tribal lands and off-reservation.

USFS

8. Encourage expanded support for the ITC Anchor Forest initiative.

We ask that you encourage and expand continued Forest Service support of the ITC's Anchor Forest initiative, in which tribes and other forest stakeholders are pursuing long-term collaboration to maintain ecological functions and sustain economically viable infrastructure for management, harvesting, transportation, and processing of forest products. The Final Report of the ITC's Anchor Forest pilot study in Washington State, published March 2016, reflects the participation of tribal, Federal and State governments, the conservation community, and local forestland owners and businesses. Tribes in the Lakes States, the Plains States, Alaska, and the Southwest are expressing interest in the Anchor Forest concept, and we urge the subcommittee to express support for expanding the application of the Anchor Forest concept.

9. Continue encouraging the USFS to improve implementation of the TFPA.

Finally, we thank the subcommittee for its fiscal year 2015 support of the Tribal Forest Protection Act (TFPA, Public Law 108–278) that authorizes tribes to conduct fuels and health projects on U.S.F.S. and B.L.M. lands to protect trust and cultural resources. The subcommittee's support helped prompt a series of successful regional TFPA workshops and the initiating of numerous TFPA agreements. There is keen interest in additional workshops and follow-on activities, and the ITC urges the subcommittee to express continued support for the TFPA program.

INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL BACKGROUND

The ITC is a 40-year-old association of forest owning tribes and Alaska Native organizations dedicated to improving the sustainable ecological and economic management of our 18.6 million acres of timberland and woodland held in BIA trust. We invite you to come visit.

That concludes my statement. Thank you.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE JAMESTOWN S'KLALLAM TRIBE

On behalf of the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, I am pleased to submit this written testimony on our funding priorities and requests for the fiscal year 2017 Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Indian Health Service (IHS) budgets. A fundamental goal for our tribe is achieving economic self-sufficiency/self-reliance through opportunities that enable us to generate our own unrestricted revenues to address the unmet needs of our community. In order to achieve this goal, we need to be treated on par with State and local governments with respect to revenue raising authority. The continued proliferation of State and local taxes on sales, personal property and transactions (including resource extraction) within Indian reservations has a direct negative impact on the self-sufficiency of Indian tribes and tribal governments, and an indirect and equally negative impact on Federal programs and appropriations. When tribes are allowed to conduct activities on their own land subject only to their own taxes and regulations, tribal governments are able to fund their own programs and Indian reservation economies can flourish.

Tribal Specific Appropriation Priorities

1. Waste Water System $8.3 million
2. Tribal Courts TPA $20,000
3. BIA Road Maintenance $1.5 million

$8.3 million—Waste Water System.—In order to engage in economic development and expand our tribal business portfolio, the tribe needs to invest in a waste water system. Our tribal government cannot operate without adequate infrastructure and clean water. After years of careful planning and research, we have entered into a partnership with the City of Sequim to connect tribal businesses and governmental facilities in Blyn to the City of Sequim Wastewater Treatment Plant. The installation of the project pipeline is approximately $8.3 million with environmental and economic benefits to all.

$20,000—Tribal Courts TPA.—Tribes cannot operate police departments and court systems on grant funding. Stable funding for tribal courts is a prerequisite to ensure a safe, healthy and thriving tribal community. Although Congress and the administration have taken steps in recent years to try and address some of these concerns through the passage of the Tribal Law and Order Act (TLOA) of 2010 and the Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 2013, significant funding is needed in order to implement these new authorities to address the crisis level need in Indian Country and elevate the safety and wellness of our tribal citizens and communities.

$1.5 million—BIA Road Maintenance.—Federal appropriations for the BIA Road Maintenance Program has averaged only $24.3 million annually for a number of years. However, a recent analysis completed by the BIA and tribal representatives determined that the documented deferred road maintenance backlog is at $203 million above fiscal year 2015 enacted funding levels. Substantial investment in tribal transportation is primarily needed to ensure the safety of all persons who traverse these roads, Native and non-Native alike. Deteriorated roads are not only a health risk, they hinder governmental services, impede economic development and make getting to health clinics, schools, stores and employment centers more difficult. The tribe plans to use transportation/road maintenance funding to complete a road safety project that is desperately needed on a very busy and well-traveled area of State highway that runs through our tribal reservation campus. In summer months, traffic on the highway substantially increases due to a surge in tourism, which supports both tribal and county economies.

National Requests and Recommendations: The Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe continues to support the requests and recommendations of the National Congress of American Indians and the National Indian Health Board.

National Requests and Recommendations

BIA and IHS:

1. Contract Support Costs Mandatory Funding $800 million for IHS & $278 million for BIA
2. Hold Indian Country Programs Harmless from Budgetary Reductions, Rescissions and Sequestration

Contract Support Costs Mandatory Funding.—The tribe appreciates the bipartisan support of the Interior appropriations subcommittees for full funding of Contract Support Costs (CSC). Funding of CSC in fiscal year 2016 at an indefinite amount, helped to ensure that critical programmatic services were not abrogated in order to cover the CSC need. The tribe maintains that the indefinite appropriation

of CSC funding must be made mandatory and permanent. We thus support the administration's proposal to move CSC funding to a mandatory funding basis, although, we would like it to begin in fiscal year 2017 rather than in fiscal year 2018. Should CSC funding not be made mandatory in fiscal year 2017, we otherwise are supportive of the President's request for an appropriation of "such sums as may be necessary," with an estimated $800 million for CSC for IHS, and an estimated $278 million for the BIA, in separate accounts in both the IHS and BIA discretionary budgets. However, we do not agree with the continued insertion of a proviso that could effectively deny the carryover authority granted by the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. For fiscal year 2017 and thereafter, we thus request the removal of the following proviso: "amounts obligated but not expended by a tribe or tribal organization for contract support costs for such agreements for the current fiscal year shall be applied to contract support costs otherwise due for such agreements for subsequent fiscal years."

Hold Indian Country Programs Harmless from Budgetary Reductions, Rescissions and Sequestration.—Decades of unfulfilled Federal obligations has devastated tribal communities who continue to face persistent shortfalls and overwhelming unmet needs. Until tribes attain exclusive taxing jurisdiction within their tribal lands, Federal support remains critical to ensure the delivery of essential governmental services to our tribal citizens. The Federal trust obligation must be honored and vital programs and services for tribes must be sustained and held harmless in any budgetary deal enacted to reduce the national deficit.

BIA Requests:

1. Self-Governance Compacts $171,468
2. Economic Development TPA $200,000
3. Natural Resources TPA $611,319
4. Indian Guaranteed Loan Program $12.6 million

$171,468—Self–Governance Compacts.—Tribal Self-Governance is the most successful policy in the history of tribal-Federal relations because it stimulates efficient and effective government spending. Increases to Self-Governance tribal base budgets will allow tribes to fund core tribal government programs such as community development, economic development, healthcare, and community safety. Funding Self-Governance not only fulfills the Federal treaty and trust obligation, it positively impacts the surrounding regional economies.

$200,000—Economic Development (TPA).—Tribal governmental revenues depend entirely on effective economic development to support nearly every aspect of reservation life and tribal governance. Chronic underfunding and the severe lack of private investment have left the economic potential of Indian Country unrealized. Tribes are forced to rely on their own economic ventures to generate revenue to support programs and services for tribal citizens. Yet, tribes are expected to meet these economic challenges with fewer resources and greater restrictions placed on vital economic financing tools and incentives that are easily accessible and lucrative to other governments. Increased funding for Economic Development will allow us to continue to diversify our successful business portfolio and expand our revenue generating opportunities.

$611,319—Natural Resources (TPA).—In the Northwest, degradation of the environment is occurring faster than ever before. Climate change is having profound impacts on tribal people and tribal treaty rights are at risk. The Jamestown Natural Resource Department is charged with the responsibility to manage, protect, conserve, and nurture the Point-No-Point Treaty rights in our usual and accustomed areas for tribal citizens and future tribal descendants. The Federal investment in Tribal Natural Resources will foster tribal self-sufficiency and support tribal economies through the creation of jobs, the promotion of cultural vitality, religious practices, community cohesiveness, improve the environmental conditions on our tribal homelands and in surrounding communities, and foster cross-jurisdictional partnerships between our tribe and the local and State governments.

$12.6 million—Indian Guaranteed Loan Program.—The Federal Government is in a unique position to help advance tribal projects and provide sustainable economic opportunities for Indian businesses and tribal governments through the Indian Loan Guarantee Program. The program provides attractive incentives for financial institutions to expand their services by underwriting loans in Indian country, provides tribes and their citizens' access to capital, and promotes tribal economies by encouraging lending to Indian-owned businesses. Loan guarantees are an attractive financial tool because tribes are able to leverage limited Federal funding in and promote economic growth by investing in projects that are capable of generating their own revenue streams. The program, however, has been consistently targeted for cuts despite its positive return on the Federal investment. If not for the Loan Guarantee

Program, many tribes would be unable to secure loans from standard sources that are available to other entities and businesses. Federal credit programs should facilitate tribal access to private capital markets where tribes frequently encounter market resistance to conventional lending.

IHS Requests:

1. Support Advanced Appropriations for IHS
2. Fully Fund the Indian Healthcare Improvement Act Provisions in the ACA
3. Increase Funding for Purchased and Referred Care $562.2 million

Support Advanced Appropriations for IHS.—The Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, which includes funding for IHS, has not been enacted in a timely manner for the past 20 years, creating significant challenges to tribes' ability to provide critical healthcare services to their tribal citizens. When it comes to IHS funding, delays could mean the loss of life. Late funding not only affects quality of care, it constrains tribal healthcare providers' ability to plan, budget, recruit and retain staff, and construct and maintain facilities. Tribal healthcare programs should be funded similarly to every other government health program in this country either through mandatory funding or advanced appropriations. Providing predictable, timely and sufficient funding will ensure the Federal Government is upholding its trust responsibility to American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Fully Fund the IHCIA Provisions in the ACA.—Although the IHCIA provides the authority and, with it, the opportunity to provide essential healthcare to tribal citizens, it did not provide the necessary funds to the IHS to carry out these new statutory obligations. There are 23 unfunded provisions in the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA). Many of the provisions that remain unfunded would strengthen the tribal healthcare workforce, provide greater access to behavioral health and support innovative initiatives for healthcare delivery to tribal citizens. Funding these provisions is a necessary precursor to increase tribal capacity, infrastructure and most importantly access to healthcare services. Significant Federal investment is needed to achieve a fully funded Indian Health Service and now is the time to act on opportunities made possible in the newly expanded authorities granted under the Indian Health Care Improvement Act.

$562.2 million—Purchased and Referred Care.—Most IHS and tribal operated direct care facilities do not provide the required emergency and specialty care services so tribes are forced to turn to the private sector to fulfill this need. CHS funds are used to purchase essential healthcare services, including inpatient and outpatient care, routine emergency ambulatory care, transportation and medical support services, such as diagnostic imaging, physical therapy, laboratory, nutrition and pharmacy services.

Local/Regional Requests and Recommendations.—The Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe support the requests and recommendations of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board, and the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission.

I would like to extend my thanks to the subcommittee for an opportunity to submit testimony on the fiscal year 2017 appropriations.

[This statement was submitted by honorable W. Ron Allen, Tribal Chairman/CEO.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROSE KULJERICH

Dear Senators:

As an American citizen and taxpayer, I strongly oppose the BLM's proposal to conduct dangerous sterilization experiments on wild mares at the Wild Horse Corral Facility in Hines. According to the Environmental Assessment (EA), the BLM is deciding whether or not to proceed with one or more of the proposed sterilization procedures. The weight of scientific evidence and public opinion clearly supports a BLM decision NOT to proceed with any of these sterilization procedures.

The sterilization procedures that BLM is proposing to conduct on federally protected wild mares are dangerous, costly and impractical for use in the field, due to the serious health risks they pose to the horses and their unborn foals, and also due to the great expense of purchasing the equipment and training the number of veterinarians necessary to implement these procedures on the range.

It makes no sense to spend millions of taxpayer dollars on these risky invasive experiments when proven, humane, and relatively inexpensive fertility control technology in the form of the PZP vaccine is readily available but vastly underutilized by the BLM.

The EA is completely inadequate in analyzing the impacts of these experimental procedures on mares. In addition, the BLM has deliberately avoided public opposition to this controversial and grotesque research proposal by skipping the scoping stage of the environmental analysis process. As a result, the public has been deprived of the opportunity to provide input into the impacts of and alternatives to these procedures that must be analyzed under the rules of the National Environmental Policy Act.

1. Ovariectomy via Colposcopy

This is an outdated and archaic procedure that has been supplanted by more modern laparoscopic surgery. The EA fails to analyze the impacts of and alternatives to this procedure to mares and never once mentions the availability of more modern techniques! This proposed sterilization experiment is an intra-vaginal complex surgical procedure, which is hardly ever performed in domestic horses (never mind in wild ones), due to its inherently dangerous risks.

—The blind nature of this surgery increases the risk of intra-abdominal hemorrhage, but the EA never even addresses this issue or the availability of more modern laparoscopic techniques that allow the surgeon to visualize the abdominal structures.

—The lack of a sterile environment subjects the mares to a high risk of infection, something that is ignored by the EA.

—The procedure carries with it a significant risk of hemorrhage and evisceration (protrusion of the intestines through the surgical incision), which is why it requires strict follow-up care when used in domestic horses, including pain relief and 4–7 days of stall rest, the first 48 hours of which is spent in crossties to prevent the mare from lying down. It is not possible to provide this required post-operative care to wild mares, yet the EA minimizes the impacts of this fact, citing the opinion of an un-named veterinarian, instead of the published science and National Research Council review, which clearly indicate the risks and impacts of this outdated procedure on wild mares.

—The procedure will cause mares in early stages of pregnancy to abort their fetuses and may cause loss of pregnancy for mares in the mid-stage of pregnancy as well. This is unacceptable.

This pursuit of ovariectomy research is directly counter to the recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences National Research Council (NRC) in its 2013 report, "Using Science to Improve the BLM Wild Horse and Burro Program: A Way Forward." That NRC report concluded that: "The possibility that ovariectomy may be followed by prolonged bleeding or peritoneal infection makes it inadvisable for field application."

2. Minimally Invasive Sterilization Techniques

The other sterilization procedures that BLM proposes to research, while less invasive than ovariectomy, should also be abandoned due to the inability to provide post-operative care and the impracticality of implementing these procedures—which have never before been done in wild or domestic horses—on a broad scale in a field setting. The EA fails to analyze the impacts of precedent-setting procedures that have never before been performed in horses, and as well as the inability to provide required post-operative care. The EA also omits analysis of the economic impacts and practicalities of implementing these procedures on the range.

In proceeding with these experiments, the BLM has ignored the NRC recommendation that these techniques should first be perfected in domestic mares, who can be easily handled and will be accessible for close monitoring and post-operative care, before attempting them in wild horses.

It is unconscionable that the BLM is proceeding with these draconian experiments that endanger the lives of the un-consenting equine subjects and their unborn foals, particularly when a proven non-invasive and safe fertility control method exists in the readily available PZP birth control vaccine. Instead of wasting millions of tax dollars to fund experiments on inhumane and impractical sterilization experiments, the agency should instead focus resources on vaccinating sufficient numbers of mares with the PZP fertility control vaccine, which is documented through 30 years of experience and published science, to be safe, effective, cost-effective and successful in managing wild horse populations.

Again, as a taxpayer and wild horse lover, I am outraged that the BLM is even considering pursuing such inhumane, barbaric and wasteful experimentation on wild horses and I find the BLM's Environmental Analysis of its impacts to be woefully inadequate. As a result, I strongly urge the BLM to abandon these proposed experiments in favor of using proven, more cost-effective and humane fertility control methods.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LAC DU FLAMBEAU BAND OF LAKE SUPERIOR CHIPPEWA INDIANS

My name is Larry Wawronowicz, I am the Natural Resource Director for the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, located in Wisconsin. I am not a tribal member, but I have worked for the Lac du Flambeau Band for 33 years, raised a family in the Lac du Flambeau community and have many friends and co-workers in Indian Country, so I am deeply honored that the tribe has allowed me the privilege to present written testimony which reflects the needs and concerns of the tribal membership.

The President's fiscal year 2017 budget has some important and positive initiatives for tribes. For example, it includes fully funding contract support costs and requesting that Congress reclassify this funding as mandatory. And in doing so would implement what two Supreme Court cases have already stated is the law. This funding must be paid; it is time that Congress make the necessary changes in the statute to implement the Court's decisions.

I. GENERATION INDIGENOUS INITIATIVE

I call on the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee to fully support the administration's emphasis on our youth. The Generation Indigenous Initiative is the first time this Nation has taken a comprehensive approach to improving the lives of Indian children. The administration called on all agencies, including those outside of the Department of the Interior and the Indian Health Service, to do their part to fulfill the trust responsibility to Indian children. Based the Federal trust responsibility, the Federal Government should be committed to providing fundamental fairness to tribes, not just in selected areas but across the board—and appropriations for all programs affecting Indians should provide funding levels based on this fundamental principle.

BIA Tiwahe (Family) Initiative. The tribe strongly supports the continuation of the administration's Tiwahe initiative, a broad-based, interdisciplinary, and culturally appropriate program for addressing the needs of Indian families and communities—including child welfare and family services, housing and job training. This program fills an immediate and critical need. At Lac du Flambeau, over the last few years we have faced a crisis in our community arising from a growing epidemic of drug abuse. The problem has been far-reaching—as we find widespread abuse of prescription drugs, synthetic marijuana, and heroin on our reservation. The impact on our community has been devastating in terms of the health and well-being of our families. The rise in drug abuse often leaves our children caught in unsafe situations at home. This has led to an increase in the need for foster care and other temporary placements for our children. The administration's $57 million request (a $12.3 million increase) for tribal social service programs and the $18.9 million request (a $3.4 million increase) for Indian Child Welfare programs will help meet this need. In addition the $30 million requested for tribal courts ($2.5 million increase) will also ensure that our children are safer as these institutions will have additional resources to supervise and monitor the children in their care. This is also why the tribe supports the administration's request for $29 million to increase the number of mental health providers throughout the Indian Health Care System and the $15 million increase to hire behavioral health professionals and peer specialists focused on Indian youth and their families.

II. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

A. Natural Resource Programs. As we address our communities' social services needs, we are mindful that one of the cornerstones of a healthy community is a healthy environment. Clean air, water and land are vital for the physical and emotional health of our people, and provide both a foundation for our tribal culture and the basis for economic opportunity on our reservation. That is our obligation to future generations—to ensure that our lands, air and waters are adequately protected.

B. Bureau of Indian Affairs Climate Resiliency. The tribe endorses the requested $13 million to address the impact of the changing climate on our natural resources. Our community is reliant on our natural resources to survive. If people cannot fish the lakes we have been fishing since the beginning of time or hunt wild game because these resources are not there, who we are as a people will be forever changed.

C. Tribal Natural Resource Management and Development; Tribal Fish Hatchery Operations and Maintenance. Tribes are leaders in natural resource protection and BIA natural resource funding is essential to maintain our programs. Lac du Flambeau has a comprehensive Natural Resources Department and dedicated staff with considerable expertise in natural resource and land management. Among our many

programs, the tribe operates a fish hatchery that stocks many of our lakes. Along with our other natural resource programs, our fish production activities are essential to protect our natural resources and to foster economic activity on our Reservation. We support full funding fish hatchery operations and maintenance.

D. Circle of Flight: Wetlands Waterfowl Program. We urge the subcommittee to continue to provide support for the BIA Circle of Flight Program. This program supports tribal efforts throughout the Great Lakes Region to restore and preserve wetlands and waterfowl habitat within tribal territories.

E. Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission. The tribe strongly supports the work of the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission ("GLIFWC"). GLIFWC assists in protecting and implementing its treaty-guaranteed hunting, fishing and gathering rights. We urge the subcommittee to fully support the programmatic funding for GLIFWC from both BIA and EPA. GLIFWC has played an invaluable role in providing science and sound management practices for our off-reservation resources. This role could not be filled by any other agency.

F. Education Programs. Education remains a critical investment in the future of the tribes. The Johnson-O'Malley Program provides vital support for Indian students in public schools. We support the $18.5 million requested for this Program. We must do more for our students in public schools. Likewise, we are proud to see an increasing number of our students attending and graduating from colleges and other post-secondary institutions. Thus, we support the increased funding for scholarships and adult education within the BIE. The Tribe also supports the administration's proposed increase in BIA funding for fellowship and training opportunities for post graduate study.

G. Tribal Courts. We are concerned that the administration has proposed an $8 million cut in funding for tribal courts in Public Law 280 States like Wisconsin. Because of a BIA policy that chose not to fund tribal courts in Public Law 280 States for decades, our courts have lagged behind our sister tribes in the ability to meet the justice needs of our communities. Congress recognized this deficiency last year and provided $10 million to address it. BIA essentially wants to halt this initiative before it even starts. With regard to the $10 million provided in fiscal year 2016, the BIA has not held any consultation on how this funding would be allocated and we understand may not do so and instead use this funding to build its own bureaucracy. We would urge the subcommittee to clarify with the BIA that the fiscal year 2016 funding was intended to assist tribal courts in Public Law 280 States and not to build their own bureaucracy which hopefully will carry over to fiscal year 2017 funding as well.

H. Transportation. Proper road maintenance on the reservation is essential for the safety and health of our community, and for promoting economic opportunities. BIA Road Maintenance, nationally, is responsible for 29,700 miles of BIA owned road and 931 BIA owned bridges. The administration request of $27 million only funds 16 percent of the level of need for BIA road maintenance. For bridges it would fund 62 percent of the level of need. Thus, 84 percent of the roads in the BIA systems will continue to be at poor or and failing condition and almost 300 of the bridges in the BIA system will be at poor or failing condition. These are roads used by school buses and first responders. In any other community this would be unacceptable. We urge the subcommittee to increase BIA road maintenance funding by at least $9 million. This level of funding would allow a greater percentage of roads to be maintained in fair or better condition.

I. Tribal Historic Preservation Offices. The tribe supports the administration's $11.9 request (a $2 million increase) for Tribal Historic Offices. This increase is a start to adequately fund tribal Historic Preservation Act compliance. While more tribes have assumed the responsibility under the Historic Preservation Act, Federal appropriations have not kept pace and this threatens tribe's ability to do this important work.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

A. EPA Tribal General Assistance Program. The tribe strongly supports the proposed $96.4 request in the EPA Tribal General Assistance Program, known as "Tribal GAP." This program provides base environmental funding to assist tribes in building their environmental capacity to assess environmental conditions, utilize available data and build their environmental programs to meet their local needs. This is a foundational program for tribes to address the broad range of challenging circumstances we face regarding our reservation environment. Importantly, the increase in funding this program is to implement tribal environmental plans and to recruit and retain qualified environmental professionals in Indian Country.

B. Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. The tribe strongly supports funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. For the indigenous people of Wisconsin, the Great Lakes represent the lifeblood of our culture and the foundation of our economies. The protection and preservation of the Great Lakes are necessary to preserve the tribal communities that have made the Great Lakes area their home since time immemorial.

C. Leaking Underground Storage Tank. The tribe urges the subcommittee to increase funding for Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) clean-up in Indian Country. This funding was decreased to $1.69 million from almost $2.5 million a few years ago. As the EPA notes in its budget justification this funding is the primary source of funding for these clean-up activities in Indian Country. Since its inception in the 1980s, the LUST program has cleaned up 78 percent of the 1,375 identified releases in Indian Country. There are 298 of these identified sites that still need to be cleaned up. Unfortunately, the number of sites the EPA is able to cleanup has decreased by 50 percent in the last 6 years. While some of this is attributed to the fact the sites are much more complex and require more time and resources, there can be no doubt that this drastic reduction in the number of sites addressed is attributed to the decrease in funding.

This issue is particularly important to Lac du Flambeau because we fear that the 1,375 identified sites grossly underestimate the number of sites actually in Indian Country. In Lac du Flambeau we have 25 sites that may be impacting reservation resources which are not included in the 1,375 sites. One site in particular, the Haskell Lake/Tower Standard Site has the Tribe very concerned because of contaminated ground and possibly lake surface water with lead, benzene and a host of other contaminates. We identified this site in 2010 and we are still working on getting the funding necessary for cleanup. So we urge Congress to increase funding for the LUST program in Indian Country by $5 million, recognizing that this will only clean-up approximately 33 out of the 298 identified sites per year.

IV. INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE PROGRAMS

We fully support the administration's request of $ 5.1 billion for the Indian Health Service. According to the IHS, this level of funding would fully fund pay costs, inflation, and partially fund population growth. This increase will allow for a significant investment in Purchased and Referred Care with a $48.1 million increase.

Research has clearly demonstrated that our overall health is tied to our oral health. The Lac du Flambeau Tribe recognized this and that is why in 2013 we opened a state of the art dental clinic to serve the needs of our people. No longer are dental visits done by an occasional dental visit at our schools. We are now seeing our members in our facility early and often and are preventing dental disease before it can happen. We fully support the requested $8.5 million increase for the dental health services program. This increase will address the not only medical inflation, but also the population increase our community has experienced.

Thank you for affording the Lac du Flambeau Tribe the opportunity to submit written testimony.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE LEAGUE OF AMERICAN ORCHESTRAS

The League of American Orchestras urges the Senate Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee to support fiscal year 2017 funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) at a level of $155 million. We are pleased that Congress showed strong bi-partisan support for the agency by approving a $2 million increase for its fiscal year 2016 appropriation, and we ask for further support so the agency can help more communities fulfill the NEA's mission to provide all Americans with diverse opportunities for arts participation.

The League of American Orchestras leads, supports, and champions America's orchestras and the vitality of the music they perform. Its diverse membership of more than 2,000 organizations and individuals across North America runs the gamut from world-renowned symphonies to community groups, from summer festivals to student and youth ensembles, from conservatories to libraries, from businesses serving orchestras to individuals who love symphonic music. Orchestras unite people through creativity and artistry, contribute to civic vitality, and educate young people and adults. The League is committed to helping orchestras engage with their communities, and the NEA plays an invaluable role through its direct grants, Federal/State partnerships, and research on trends in public participation and workforce development.

An NEA grant affirms an organization's contributions to our Nation's artistic vitality. The capacity of orchestras to present nationally recognized programs is highly

valued by communities of all sizes, in part because NEA grants awarded through the competitive process leverage additional funding from State, local, and private sources. In fiscal year 2015, the NEA's Grants to Organizations included 102 direct grants to orchestras in the *Art Works* and *Challenge America* categories, and from the current fiscal year, the following 10 awards, totaling $267,000 in support, offer a sampling of the high quality, unique opportunities communities are able to enjoy with NEA support.

NEA Funding Broadens Access for Underserved Communities

In partnership with the organizations it supports, the NEA is dedicated to improving public access to the arts. The *Challenge America* grant category offers support primarily to small and mid-sized organizations for projects that extend the reach of the arts to underserved populations—those whose opportunities to experience the arts have been limited by geography, economics, or disability. *Challenge America* grantee Northwest Symphony Orchestra will present a concert and related educational programming with a focus on Northwestern classical composers and musicians. Koichiro Yamamoto, principal trombonist of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra, will perform for the public, as well as participate in Symphony for Students, the orchestra's program serving low-income students in South King County. Yamamoto will lead master classes for underserved youth, and orchestra musicians will visit 10 schools to provide clinics and master classes to more than 200 students in the Highline School District. Youth participants will also receive free tickets to attend the public performance at the Highline Performing Arts Center, which will include music by Northwest composers Samuel Jones and Sumi Tonooka.

The Great Falls Symphony will use its *Challenge America* grant to produce performances, a public post-concert question-and-answer session, and various activities featuring pianist Sean Chen and one of the symphony's resident string ensembles, the Cascade Quartet. In addition to the main performance, Chen and the Cascade Quartet will participate in concerts and lead master classes for rural high school students. Further broadening their reach, they will perform in a concert preview that will be aired on Montana's public radio station as well as perform during an open rehearsal for local piano students and piano teachers. With just two full-time and two part-time staff, and three conductors, the orchestra and its musicians present a wealth of services to their community each year, from coaching sessions to education concerts in schools across Montana, as well as mainstage concerts. Great Falls Symphony also includes a youth orchestra and the Chinook Winds quintet, which performs throughout the country.

The NEA is Committed to Artistically Rich Youth Development Opportunities

Many of the NEA's grants directly support programs involving the development of young artists and musicians, such as an *Art Works* grant to support the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras' Intensive Community Program (ICP). This rigorous string instrument training program began in 1998 to serve inner-city youth by offering weekly music lessons, ensemble classes, instrument rentals, and performance opportunities to students who are exceptionally interested in music but are faced with financial and/or cultural barriers to participation. After a few years of intensive study, ICP students are prepared to pass the audition into the youth symphony's entry-level orchestra. Historically, 98 percent of ICP students successfully audition into the highly competitive BYSO orchestras; once admitted, ICP students receive a tuition subsidy, weekly lessons, use of an instrument, and ongoing mentorship until they graduate high school. The BYSO, with a staff of 12 full-time and 24 part-time employees, prides itself on the ICP having provided this deep and focused experience to more than 150 students, with 100 percent of its graduates going on to college.

On the opposite coast, similarly rich and intensive youth development is offered by the Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles at Heart of Los Angeles (YOLA at HOLA). This after-school music program, in partnership with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, is inspired by the Venezuelan El Sistema movement and, with NEA support, provides free instruments, ensemble-based classical music instruction, and performance opportunities to underserved and at-risk youth, ages 6–18, in central Los Angeles. YOLA at HOLA students participate in up to 15 hours each week of sectional, ensemble, and orchestra rehearsals, specialized music classes, community performances, academic tutoring and intervention, and wrap-around support. YOLA at HOLA is led by a knowledgeable and passionate corps of 19 music educators who teach and mentor HOLA's students and contribute to an international conversation about high-intensity music education. Through HOLA's and the LA Philharmonic's partnership with the Longy School of Music of Bard College's Master of Arts in

Teaching program, the next generation of music educators also hone their skills in YOLA at HOLA's classrooms.

The NEA Supports Celebrating the Arts and Our Natural Resources

The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra (SLSO), employer of 93 musicians and 61 full-time staff, won an "Imagine Your Parks" grant in this year's joint celebration of the NEA's 50th anniversary and the centennial of the National Park Service. SLSO paired French composer Olivier Messiaen's "Des canyons aux etoiles . . . (From the canyons to the stars . . .)" with visual imagery by photographer Deborah O'Grady. Programming explored the relationship between art and nature, incorporating images of the National Parks that inspired the composer for the original 1971 commission to celebrate the bicentennial of the United States. O'Grady literally followed in Messiaen's footsteps to capture the breathtaking images from Cedar Breaks, Zion, and Bryce Canyon, among other locations. The cross-disciplinary concerts were presented in St. Louis, and then in Berkeley and Los Angeles as part of the SLSO's four-city California tour.

The Boulder Philharmonic, which employs 73 musicians and a staff of eight people, is using its "Imagine Your Parks" grant to commission and premiere a new orchestral work by composer Stephen Lias, which will accompany projected images that showcase Rocky Mountain National Park. Concerts will take place in Boulder, Colorado, as well as at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC next spring as part of the SHIFT Festival of American Orchestras. Ancillary events in both Colorado and DC will include interpretive musical hikes and public talks featuring the composer that examine the national parks legacy through a musical lens. For the inaugural SHIFT Festival, the Boulder Philharmonic is one of four orchestras, with each participant presenting education events, symposia, and community events in venues around Washington, DC, along with full-orchestra performances in the Kennedy Center Concert Hall.

NEA Funding Supports Bringing World-Class Artistry to Communities

With the help of an *Art Works* grant, The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra—comprising 38 full-time and 6 part-time staff members, and 26 full-time musicians—will present contemporary works by an international array of composers such as George Crumb, Bryce Dessner and Nico Muhly (U.S.), Georges Enesco (Romania), Sir Michael Tippett (U.K.), Erkki-sven Tuur (Estonia), and Alberto Ginastera, Mauricio Sotelo and Manuel De Falla (Spain). The orchestra's 3-week performance project will feature guest artists Finnish violinist Pekka Kuusisto, Moldovan violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Spanish mezzo-soprano Nerea Berraondo, and Spanish Flamenco dancer Rubén Olmo, and the project will be highlighted by the world premiere of Mauricio Sotelo's *Red Inner Light Sculpture,* a new work for solo violin, strings, and Flamenco dancer. Several pre-concert educational lectures will be offered as well, to provide audiences with additional context for and deeper engagement with the programming.

The Louisville Orchestra, with a staff of approximately 21 employees and 55 full-time musicians, will use its *Art Works* support to bring exceptional guest artists for a 3-week Festival of American Music created, curated, and conducted by music director, Teddy Abrams. The Festival will feature the orchestra alongside artists from across the country, encompassing a variety of musical genres including jazz, contemporary, popular music, and local music of the Kentuckiana region. The Festival will include concert previews before each show addressing the role of American orchestras and composers in the 21st century, as well as several community engagement events with schools and local businesses. The final week of the festival will include a world premiere of a piano concerto by Chase Morrin, featuring the composer as soloist.

Showcasing the world-class musicianship of their home State, the Eugene Symphony will utilize its *Art Works* grant to present a series of new composition, performance, and mentorship opportunities for Oregon composers. In celebration of its 50th anniversary, the Eugene Symphony—which employs seven full-time and four part-time staff, and 83 part-time musicians—will present the world premiere of a new piano concerto by Oregon composer Robert Kyr featuring Eugene-based pianist Alexandre Dossin. Kyr is also planning an integrated composition project for high school and graduate students, which will culminate in the creation of an orchestral theme and variations based on "Ode to Joy" from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. The premiere of the jointly composed work will take place on a regular subscription program and for students at a youth concert in November 2016.

Celebrating both local and international talent, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra received *Art Works* support for world premieres of works by two celebrated American composers, Jeremy Gill and Christopher Rouse. Gill's composition is written for

the Dallas Symphony Orchestra's principal oboe Erin Hannigan, while Rouse's composition is a co-commission led by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra and shared with the Aspen Music Festival and the Nashville Symphony. Educational activities include participation by the composers in workshops, master classes, and school programs. Both works will be conducted by Jaap van Zweden, music director of the orchestra, which employs 65 full-time and 20 part-time staff, and 91 musicians.

Thank you for this opportunity to convey the tremendous value of NEA support for the communities served by orchestras throughout our country. Orchestras provide countless innovative collaborations, thoughtful programming for underserved communities, and lifelong learning opportunities in service to adults and children from all walks of life. As orchestras continually strive to bring the power and benefits of music to more people, we applaud the NEA's national leadership in promoting excellence and engagement with high quality artistry. Advancing the highest expectations for accessibility and artistry are among the strongest arguments for a Federal role in support of the arts, therefore we urge you to increase creativity and access to the arts by approving $155 million in funding for the National Endowment for the Arts in fiscal year 2017.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE LITTLE RIVER BAND OF OTTAWA INDIANS

Chairman Murkowski, respected members of the subcommittee:

The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians (LRBOI) is honored to present this testimony on behalf of our Nation and people, regarding our views and priorities for the fiscal year 2017 President's annual budget request.

LRBOI is pleased with the ongoing commitment of the administration to Indian Country. President Obama's commitment to establishing a legacy respecting the sacred relationship forged by our treaties is evident in the appropriations requests for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) at $2.9 billion, and the Indian Health Services (IHS) of $5.2 billion; fully $138 million and $377 million above the fiscal year 2016 enacted levels. The increases demonstrate a long-standing commitment to promoting tribal sovereignty, and for LRBOI, it aligns with our mission to secure and promote the prosperity of future generations. LRBOI would like to thank the subcommittee for hearing the concerns of tribal leadership and our views regarding the impact of the administration's budget requests on our Nation's efforts to reach the outcomes we are all wishing to achieve—successful, safer and prospering 'Native First Nations'.

LRBOI would like to acknowledge the importance of the recently signed MOU between the Census Bureau and the BIA. We believe tribal communities have long been undercounted and inaccurately represented in Census data. We support the $12 million increase to the BIA to address these gaps in Indian Country and believe this measure is a key component to formulating a realistic budget.

Since Reaffirmation in 1994, LRBOI has prioritized its economic development efforts, programs, and service delivery to enhance the standard of living of its members. Assisting LRBOI members to achieve a middle class economic standard has been an overarching goal since reaffirmation, and while gains are being made, persistent issues remain as reported in the previous fiscal year:

—over half (56 percent) of tribal member households earn less than $30,000 annually, compared to a mean household income of just over $64,500 for Michigan residents;
—less than 40 percent of LRBOI tribal members adults have achieved education beyond a high school diploma, compared to nearly 60 percent of Michigan adults reporting some degree of higher education;
—⅓ of tribal members access one or more tribal assistance programs annually—current enrollment stands at just over 4200 persons.

LRBOI understands the challenges we face to assist our population out of poverty and into true individual self-determination. LRBOI is pleased with the ongoing commitment to make affordable housing available through the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA); we have built 55 high quality housing opportunities as a result of this Act to address the needs of our Elders, lower income and working families. LRBOI requests that the subcommittee continue to make these funds available to us, as our needs are increasing year to year with the return of our people to our homelands; we presently have an unmet need of 35 homes for our returning families.

LRBOI was also pleased with the increases to healthcare, specifically the commitment to fully fund contract support costs, which reduces the need to redirect other program funds to meet our costs of providing services. LRBOI appreciates the ad-

ministration's move of Contract Support Costs from discretionary to a mandatory appropriation. This change presents an opportunity for the Federal Government to comply at long last with the decisions in the Cherokee, Arctic Slope and Ramah Supreme Court cases. LRBOI cautions that the proposed proviso limiting carry-over is not consistent with the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act and should be eliminated. In addition, the increases to patient services will allow us to continue to implement direct services; we are on schedule to implement pharmacy service to our members in 2016—a direct result of services and contract support cost increases.

LRBOI also notes that funds dedicated to Generation Indigenous, "Gen-I" will assist us to build stronger programs to address our at-risk youth populations and strengthen our family support systems. You heard us when we asked that these types of funds become a formula-based tribal priority allocation putting all tribes within reach of this needed assistance. Creating government-wide collaboration placing priority on "all of the Federal Government" to assist in the preservation of our most precious resource, Native American Youth, is achievable and commendable.

There are some areas that are near and dear to us; and we wish to bring them to the attention of the Committee.

Language and culture are the cornerstone of the unique identity of Indian peoples; the protection of our way of life is critical to our individual identities, our Community prosperity and most importantly, our children's future. These are the guides of our governance as nations. The preservation of our sacred lands and objects, including the repatriation of our ancestors to our homelands is our highest responsibility. LRBOI would like to see future appropriations for the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) increase to allow tribes to appropriately staff and more importantly, continue to provide opportunities for our people to engage in language-immersion instruction and culturally based community events that reinforce our identity as Little River Band Ottawa; the Anishinabek peoples. The beauty of our culture is found in our language; it guides our daily life, preserves our identity and provides a foundation for our youth in the development of who they are as individual Anishinabek persons. Our language and culture keeps us strong, drug and alcohol free and family oriented. The present budget request of $15 million towards language and culture preservation is not enough for 566 federally recognized Tribes. LRBOI must write a successful grant proposal to even access funds to assist our efforts. A better approach to ensuring the preservation of the unique language, culture, sacred lands and objects that make us who we are, would be to implement a government wide initiative similar to Gen-I. It's time to rewrite the priorities and place emphasis on the United States' 'First Nations.' It's time to restore the very things that were taken from us by assimilation. It's time to repatriate our language and ceremonies back to us by increasing the appropriation to $30 million. We also need a set aside to allow our THPO officer to meet our requirements and respond to inquiries regarding the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 matters. We are pleased to inform the subcommittee that our THPO Officer has been recognized by the Governor of Michigan for our government to government collaboration. LRBOI responds to nearly 300 inquiries annually with one THPO Officer and two staff. Section 106 requirements are a full-time obligation that could easily employ the skills of an engineer and archaeologist. I'm proud to say our staff fill those roles, and manage to provide cultural education, ceremonial and language opportunities for our people in addition to Section 106 compliance.

Our LRBOI Anishinabek culture's foundation is in the "KchiiGaamii" or Great Lakes that surround our lands. LRBOI is part of the Three Fires Nations; we live in the area on our 'Turtle Island' as directed to us long ago—'settle in the place where food grows on water.' This food is critical to our people; it is known as wild rice. Our current efforts to preserve wild rice beds, restore wild rice habitat and enhance growing opportunities for LRBOI member harvests is also impacted by three factors; the quality of the fresh water it grows in, the overall climate of the region and the invasion of non-native plant species such as purple loose-strife and phragmytes. Presently, LRBOI receives an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) multi-year grant under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) that assists our wild rice re-introduction, restoration and existing source management efforts. Combined with Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) funds, LRBOI is making an effort to protect existing wild rice beds within our Ceded Territory watersheds, establish harvesting education programs and reduce the incidence of invasive species and their impact on the habitat. LRBOI recommends increasing the existing EPA GLRI appropriation to $10 million from the $3 million requested in the fiscal year 2017 budget as there are 36 tribes in our region with similar cultural preservation aspirations. LRBOI also recommends increasing the BIA Invasive Species Program from

$10 million to $15 million. The biologists working on our wild rice and habitat restoration efforts have indicated the biggest threats to our region for all Natural Resources are climate change, land management, farming and the siphoning of fresh water for activities such as fracking for gas and oil exploration. LRBOI asks the subcommittee to consider the protection of water quality to be a long-term priority. We are very aware of the crisis this year in Flint, Michigan and the threat to clean, safe drinking water—LRBOI donated $10,000.00 to the Flint Children's Fund to assist with ongoing lead testing for Flint's children as they continue to discover the far reaching impact of the contaminated water the people of Flint were consuming. We are very proud of our effort to assist the children of Flint and ask the subcommittee to take measures in this budget request to protect the fresh water resource that is the Great Lakes Basin.

Finally, by its own admission, the administration's funding request for the Road Maintenance Program for fiscal year 2017 will permit tribes to maintain only 16 percent of BIA-owned roads and 62 percent of BIA-owned bridges in "acceptable" condition. In Michigan, the condition of our roads and bridge infrastructures impacts our economy, the quality of life in or territory and the communities surrounding it. The current appropriation requests would leave 8 out of 10 BIA-owned roads and nearly 4 out of 10 BIA-owned bridges with funds to maintain them in their current poor or failing condition. This is a life-safety issue. Most of these routes are gravel and earthen school bus routes that require more frequent maintenance than paved roads. We urge the subcommittee to add an additional $9 million to the Road Maintenance Program out of planned increases for the Interior Department for fiscal year 2017. Doing so will increase the percentage of BIA-owned roads and bridges maintained to an "acceptable" condition. In our territory, encompassing over 70,000 'reservation set-aside' acres, and just over 13 million acres of 'Ceded Territory' over which we have Natural Resources enforcement jurisdiction, failing roads impact our watersheds and habitats. The additional funds if appropriated would do much to protect those resources and habitats.

LRBOI appreciates many of the proposed increases in the President's fiscal year 2017 budget. We see the positive impact of ongoing meaningful consultation that is occurring through the Tribal Interior Budget Council and National Budget Formulation Workgroup. We urge the subcommittee to continue to support the efforts of these tribally driven bodies to inform the work of the administration and, ultimately, Congress. We also believe in the partnership that continues to evolve out of the Federal Indian trust relationship. The United States and its 'Native First Nations' truly do share a "sacred bond" borne from treaties—a mutual exchange for the benefit of both, our respective lands and nations.

Little River Band appreciates the opportunity to present this testimony to the subcommittee on these important matters.

KchiMiigwech (Many Thanks)
Gdagaanaagaanik (All Our Relations)

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE LOWER ELWHA KLALLAM TRIBE

Chairman Calvert, members of the subcommittee and the distinguished gentleman from Washington State, Congressman Kilmer. I am Frances Charles, Chairwoman of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, an elected position that I have been honored to hold for the past 11 years. Thank you for providing me this opportunity to testify on the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Indian Health Service (IHS) budgets for fiscal year 2017. My testimony identifies our most urgent tribal-specific funding needs at the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe. We are also supporting some regional and national budget requests which will also benefit the Lower Elwha citizens and community.

TRIBAL-SPECIFIC REQUESTS FOR LOWER ELWHA KLALLAM TRIBE

Bureau of Indian Affairs $5.43 Million

1. $4.972 Million Dam Removal and Fisheries Restoration—Public Law 102–495, Elwha River Ecosystem and Fisheries Restoration Act
   a. $702,000—Salmon Hatchery O&M
   b. $270,000—Flood Control Levee O&M
   c. $4 million—Land Acquisition
2. $267,000—Tribal Court Enhancement and Implementation of TLOA and VAWA.

3. $191,000—Tiwahe Initiative—Tribe seeks to assert jurisdiction in its own court system over all cases arising under the ICWA and to become a licensing agency for foster homes.

Indian Health Service $500,000—Mental Health and Chemical Dependency programs

FISCAL YEAR 2017 REGIONAL REQUESTS

The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe supports the fiscal year 2017 budget priorities of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians and the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board.

FISCAL YEAR 2017 NATIONAL REQUESTS

The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe supports the fiscal year 2017 budget priorities of the National Congress of American Indians and National Indian Health Board.

Contract Support Costs—Past, Present and Future

As a Self-Governance Tribe, Lower Elwha has been impacted by the Federal Government's refusal to pay full contract support costs (CSC) to tribes for contracted and compacted programs for the past two decades. In 2014 and 2015, the Supreme Court determined that tribes were entitled to CSC. The IHS and BIA began to settle past claims with tribes. In addition Congress directed the agencies to find a long-term solution to CSC as well as directed them to pay full CSC for 2014 and 2015. The game-changer going forward was the ground breaking decision by Congress in Public Law 114–113, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 to support the administration's proposal to create a new account in the appropriations bill specifically for CSC in 2016 and 2017. While we are truly grateful for the progress to date in paying past, present and future CSC to tribes, there is a proviso in the fiscal year 2017 budget proposal which counters current law. The proviso states that "CSC amounts that are not expended by a tribe or tribal organization in the current fiscal year be applied to contract support costs otherwise due in subsequent fiscal years." This language should be removed because the Indian Self-Determination Education and Assistance Act (ISDEAA) already address use and disposition of unexpended contract and compact funds. Therefore, Lower Elwha requests that the subcommittee deem this provision unnecessary and discontinue it.

We also support the administration's proposal to fully fund CSC on a mandatory basis in fiscal year 2018–2020, though we would prefer that it begin in fiscal year 2017 and, of course, that it be a permanent, indefinite appropriation.

The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe

The Lower Elwha Indian Reservation is located at the mouth of the Elwha River where it empties into the Strait of Juan de Fuca on the North Coast of the Olympic Peninsula, about 8 miles west of the City of Port Angeles, Washington. We are a small tribe, with roughly 1,000 members, and a total land base—reservation and adjacent trust lands—of about 1,000 acres. To date, our economic development opportunities have been limited and we believe our long-term prospects are tied to natural resources restoration and preservation in an ecologically rich region where an extraction-based economy is well past its prime.

$5.43 Million—Bureau of Indian Affairs Elwha

1. *$4.972 Million—Dam Removal and Fisheries Restoration*—Lower Elwha is a salmon people with fishing rights reserved in the 1855 Treaty of Point No Point. We fish in marine waters and in the rivers and streams throughout our usual and accustomed treaty fishing area, including the Elwha River. We are strongly committed to the restoration of fisheries, fish habitat, streams and rivers, and the Port Angeles Harbor. We are the leading advocate for the removal of the two hydro-electric dams on the Elwha River—which is now nearly complete—and in accordance with Congress's direction in the Elwha River Ecosystem and Fisheries Restoration Act of 1992 (Elwha Act), Public Law 102–495, we are working closely with the National Park Service and other agencies to remove the dams, and restore the once famously abundant Elwha River runs of salmon and steelhead. Unfortunately, removal of the dams caused a short term threat to the salmon runs (due to sediment released from behind the former dam sites) and has adversely impacted our small tribal land base and our tribal budgets. We urgently need increased Self-Governance funds to support the operation of dam removal mitigation and restoration features and to revive our other Self-Governance activities from which we have been forced to transfer funds to support dam removal mitigation.

a. *$702,000—Salmon Hatchery O&M Costs*—Fish Hatchery Operations Budget for the ongoing operation and maintenance (O&M) of our state-of-the-art hatchery, which went online in 2011. This is a significant increase of $601,929 annually, but one that is amply justified by the crucial role that our hatchery serves in dam removal and fishery restoration. Our hatchery is a genetic preserve for native Elwha salmonids, which have been on the verge of extirpation from the impacts of the dams and which have been further threatened by the enormous sediment load unleashed by the removal of the dams. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) would not have approved dam removal under the Endangered Species Act without the hatchery's native salmonid programs. The tribe should not have to bear the O&M cost of this important restoration facility that in fact benefits the entire region.

b. *$270,000—Flood Control Levee O&M Costs*—The levee on our lands had to be expanded prior to dam removal in order to protect tribal lands from the newly unleashed Elwha River and to conform to post-Hurricane Katrina standards—clearly it is a mitigation feature of the dam removal project. In passing the Elwha Act in 1992, Congress intended that courts should not be asked to address problems where legislative solutions would be far superior in covering all the bases. Factoring in the inflation rate since 1992 compared to 2016, it is not fathomable that we currently receive only $10,400 annually to operate this levee.

c. *$4 million for Land Acquisition*—The Elwha people have struggled for a century from the harm to their culture and economies caused by the Elwha River dams. We had to endure the delays in starting the dam removal process, we watched the destruction of not only the fisheries but the treaty fishers themselves with the loss of our traditional and cultural livelihood, and we have lost an opportunity—which will only return after another generation—to teach our children the ways of their ancestors and the Elwha life as designed by the Creator. We struggle every day to maintain a lifestyle that has been altered forever because of the impact this has had on our community. Section 7(b) of the Elwha Act authorized the appropriation of $4 million so that the Secretary could acquire trust lands for the tribe in reservation status in Clallam County, Washington, for economic development and housing. These funds have not yet been appropriated and the lands they could provide are desperately needed to revive the lives of the Elwha people.

In 1934, an Interior Department report concluded that the reservation should be 4,000 acres (for far fewer tribal members than we have today), but currently we have only 1,000 acres, several hundred of which (on the river's side of the levee) have to be maintained in undeveloped state as floodplain habitat. In addition, we need legislative direction to ensure that former hydro-project lands are transferred to the tribe as contemplated in Section 3(c)(3) of the Elwha Act.

2. *$267,000—Funding for Tribal Court Enhancement and to implement TLOA and VAWA.* Although the Interior Department and the tribe have identified tribal court enhancement as a high priority, Lower Elwha has been unable to adopt the enhanced sentencing provisions authorized by the 2010 Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 or to exercise expanded Domestic Violence Criminal Jurisdiction under the 2013 Violence Against Women Act because of the lack of adequate base funding for its tribal court development. Requested funding will enable our tribe to do so by providing for: (a) mandatory criminal defense representation (including basic legal assistance for domestic violence victims and representation for parents); (b) detention services; (c) probation services that focus on solutions and restorative justice by sharing coordinated case management and re-entry referrals; and (d) basic court security. Fully funding of TLOA mandated provisions and increased base funding for our tribal court will enable Elwha to benefit from: BIA regional assessments using the Trial Court Program Standards; specific technical assistance and training identified through assessments; targeted training initiatives for specific tribal court personnel (judges; prosecutors; public defenders); development of tribal court bench books; identification of funding sources for pilot court programs; captured data covering criminal pre-trial matters to post-conviction issues, and including, any collateral civil legal issues.

3. *$191,000—Funding for ICW-related services from BIA's Tiwahe (Family) Initiative.* Lower Elwha is facing a community crisis with the increasing number of child abuse/neglect cases, which stem from inordinately high rates of drug/substance abuse by parents or caregivers. Services in all facets of tribal government are severely impacted by this reality. A coordinated community response must be based on multi-disciplinary, culturally informed case planning and service delivery, coupled with a strong commitment to restorative justice ideals and solutions-based sentencing (in criminal cases). A major obstacle to implementing this approach is our lack of infrastructure to assume jurisdiction over all local cases clearly arising under the Indian Child Welfare Act; in addition, because we are dependent on an inad-

equate State system for licensing foster care providers, we are often unable to make proper placements to assist our families. The tribe currently receives only $45,000 in Self-Governance for Indian Child Welfare matters. We seek $191,000 additional annual funding from the BIA's Tiwahe (Family) Initiative, which would enable the tribe to assert jurisdiction in its own court system over all cases arising under the ICWA and to become a licensing agency for foster homes.

Indian Health Service Elwha Tribal-Specific Funding Requests—$500,000 for Elwha Health Department Programs.

Lower Elwha faces a drug abuse and mental health crisis of epidemic proportions that threatens to destroy the potential and the cultural connections of many tribal members. In fiscal year 2015, the Tribe's Mental Health and Chemical Dependency programs served 272 American Indian or Alaskan Native patients and have the potential to reach approximately 1,500 AI/AN beneficiaries within Clallam and Jefferson County. The tribe currently subsidizes its chemical dependency program with third-party revenue and gaming revenue to fund prevention health initiatives and chemical dependency programs, leaving these critical health epidemics severely underfunded. To remedy this, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services formula must be expanded to inpatient chemical dependency treatment programs at the current encounter rate of $350 per day, with annual increases.

CONCLUSION

The Lower Elwha Tribe has unique needs arising from our leading role in fisheries restoration, which will provide long-term economic benefit to the entire North Olympic Coast region. We have been a strong partner with numerous Federal agencies but the agencies have not fully addressed the unique impacts on our tribe of the dams and their removal.

Thank you for your consideration.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LAURAIN MAGILACUTTY

Dear Senators:

As an American citizen and taxpayer, I strongly oppose the BLM's proposal to conduct dangerous sterilization experiments on wild mares at the Wild Horse Corral Facility in Hines. According to the Environmental Assessment (EA), the BLM is deciding whether or not to proceed with one or more of the proposed sterilization procedures. The weight of scientific evidence and public opinion clearly supports a BLM decision NOT to proceed with any of these sterilization procedures.

The sterilization procedures that BLM is proposing to conduct on federally protected wild mares are dangerous, costly and impractical for use in the field, due to the serious health risks they pose to the horses and their unborn foals, and also due to the great expense of purchasing the equipment and training the number of veterinarians necessary to implement these procedures on the range.

It makes no sense to spend millions of taxpayer dollars on these risky invasive experiments when proven, humane, and relatively inexpensive fertility control technology in the form of the PZP vaccine is readily available but vastly underutilized by the BLM.

The EA is completely inadequate in analyzing the impacts of these experimental procedures on mares. In addition, the BLM has deliberately avoided public opposition to this controversial and grotesque research proposal by skipping the scoping stage of the environmental analysis process. As a result, the public has been deprived of the opportunity to provide input into the impacts of and alternatives to these procedures that must be analyzed under the rules of the National Environmental Policy Act.

1. Ovariectomy via Colposcopy

This is an outdated and archaic procedure that has been supplanted by more modern laparoscopic surgery. The EA fails to analyze the impacts of and alternatives to this procedure to mares and never once mentions the availability of more modern techniques! This proposed sterilization experiment is an intra-vaginal complex surgical procedure, which is hardly ever performed in domestic horses (never mind in wild ones), due to its inherently dangerous risks.

—The blind nature of this surgery increases the risk of intra-abdominal hemorrhage, but the EA never even addresses this issue or the availability of more modern laparoscopic techniques that allow the surgeon to visualize the abdominal structures.

—The lack of a sterile environment subjects the mares to a high risk of infection, something that is ignored by the EA.
—The procedure carries with it a significant risk of hemorrhage and evisceration (protrusion of the intestines through the surgical incision), which is why it requires strict follow-up care when used in domestic horses, including pain relief and 4–7 days of stall rest, the first 48 hours of which is spent in crossties to prevent the mare from lying down. It is not possible to provide this required post-operative care to wild mares, yet the EA minimizes the impacts of this fact, citing the opinion of an un-named veterinarian, instead of the published science and National Research Council review, which clearly indicate the risks and impacts of this outdated procedure on wild mares.
—The procedure will cause mares in early stages of pregnancy to abort their fetuses and may cause loss of pregnancy for mares in the mid-stage of pregnancy as well. This is unacceptable.

This pursuit of ovariectomy research is directly counter to the recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences National Research Council (NRC) in its 2013 report, "Using Science to Improve the BLM Wild Horse and Burro Program: A Way Forward." That NRC report concluded that: "The possibility that ovariectomy may be followed by prolonged bleeding or peritoneal infection makes it inadvisable for field application."

2. Minimally Invasive Sterilization Techniques

The other sterilization procedures that BLM proposes to research, while less invasive than ovariectomy, should also be abandoned due to the inability to provide post-operative care and the impracticality of implementing these procedures—which have never before been done in wild or domestic horses—on a broad scale in a field setting. The EA fails to analyze the impacts of precedent-setting procedures that have never before been performed in horses, and as well as the inability to provide required post-operative care. The EA also omits analysis of the economic impacts and practicalities of implementing these procedures on the range.

In proceeding with these experiments, the BLM has ignored the NRC recommendation that these techniques should first be perfected in domestic mares, who can be easily handled and will be accessible for close monitoring and post-operative care, before attempting them in wild horses.

It is unconscionable that the BLM is proceeding with these draconian experiments that endanger the lives of the un-consenting equine subjects and their unborn foals, particularly when a proven non-invasive and safe fertility control method exists in the readily available PZP birth control vaccine. Instead of wasting millions of tax dollars to fund experiments on inhumane and impractical sterilization experiments, the agency should instead focus resources on vaccinating sufficient numbers of mares with the PZP fertility control vaccine, which is documented through 30 years of experience and published science, to be safe, effective, cost-effective and successful in managing wild horse populations.

Again, as a taxpayer and wild horse lover, I am outraged that the BLM is even considering pursuing such inhumane, barbaric and wasteful experimentation on wild horses and I find the BLM's Environmental Analysis of its impacts to be woefully inadequate. As a result, I strongly urge the BLM to abandon these proposed experiments in favor of using proven, more cost-effective and humane fertility control methods.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE MANIILAQ ASSOCIATION

Summary. The Maniilaq Association is an Alaska Native tribal organization representing 12 tribes in Northwest Alaska. We provide health services through a self-governance agreement with the Indian Health Service (IHS) and social services through a self-governance agreement with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). We make the following recommendations regarding fiscal year 2017 IHS and BIA funding:

—Increase funding for the Village Built Clinic leases in Alaska by at least $12.5 million and make it a line item in the IHS budget.
—Make full Contract Support Costs funding for the IHS and BIA mandatory, and ensure there are no provisos on indefinite CSC funding that conflict with the carryover funding authority provided by the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act.
—Fund the IHS budget on an advanced appropriations basis.
—Support the proposed increases in mental health, suicide prevention and substance abuse spending in the IHS and BIA budgets.

Village Built Clinics

For many years now, Maniilaq has submitted testimony to the subcommittees regarding the need to address the chronic underfunding of our Village Built Clinic (VBC) facilities. We appreciate the inclusion of language in the fiscal year 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act, providing that ". . . $2,000,000 shall be used to supplement funds available for operational costs at tribal clinics operated under an Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act compact or contract where healthcare is delivered in space acquired through a full service lease, which is not eligible for maintenance and improvement and equipment funds from the Indian Health Service[.]" While the language is not specific to VBCs, we understand that the $2 million was intended for VBCs.

We also appreciate that the administration has also requested for fiscal year 2017 a $9 million increase for tribal clinic leases, on top of the $2 million provided in fiscal year 2016 funds. Approval of this request would finally help stabilize the desperately needed village-based care that is crucial in Alaska.

The VBCs are essential for us to maintain the Community Health Aide Program (CHAP) in Alaska. As you know, CHAP is mandated by Congress as the instrument for providing basic health services in remote Alaska Native villages and often provides the only local source of healthcare for Alaska Native people in rural areas. We cannot overstate the critical role of village built clinics in Alaska. Lease rental amounts for the VBCs have failed to keep pace with costs—the majority of the leases for VBCs have not increased since 1989 and the IHS until this year resisted proposals to increase their funding. As a result, many of the VBCs are unsafe or have had to be closed, leaving some villages in Alaska without a local healthcare facility.

In addition, the President's proposed fiscal year 2017 clinic lease bill language may need some clarification, depending on IHS's interpretation, concerning the references that healthcare be delivered in a space acquired through a "full service lease". In some cases tribes—including the Maniilaq Association—receive VBC funding as part of their recurring base, and so the IHS no longer has "full service leases" in place for those clinics. We know that the Appropriations Committees do not intend to limit VBC eligibility based on unclear terminology.

In sum, these amounts are a step in the right direction but the 2105 ANHB study that analyzed the funding deficiency statewide for these facilities identified an increased need of $12.5 million increase. We urge that the full amount needed be appropriated. We also support maintaining this funding as a line item in the bill.

Contract Support Costs Mandatory Funding

Maniilaq appreciates the bipartisan support of the Interior appropriations subcommittees for full funding of Contract Support Costs (CSC). We very much appreciate the funding of CSC in fiscal year 2016 at an indefinite ("such sums as necessary") amount, which has helped to ensure that CSC would be fully funded without having to reprogram funding for critical healthcare services and other programmatic funding to cover the CSC need. Maniilaq continues to believe that the indefinite appropriation of CSC funding must be made mandatory and permanent. We thus support the administration's proposal to move CSC funding to a mandatory funding basis, although we would like it to begin in fiscal year 2017 rather than waiting until fiscal year 2018. We plan to reach out to and work together with the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and the House Natural Resources Committee in order to determine the best way to reach our goal for CSC funding to be made indefinite, permanent and mandatory. We ask for this subcommittee's support for such mandatory CSC funding.

Should CSC funding not be made mandatory in fiscal year 2017, we otherwise are supportive of the President's request for an appropriation of "such sums as may be necessary," with an estimated $800 million for CSC for the IHS, and an estimated $278 million for the BIA, in separate accounts in both the IHS and BIA discretionary budgets. However, we do not agree with the continued insertion of a proviso that could effectively deny the carryover authority granted by the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act for fiscal year 2017 and thereafter. We thus request the removal of the following proviso: "amounts obligated but not expended by a tribe or tribal organization for contract support costs for such agreements for the current fiscal year shall be applied to contract support costs otherwise due for such agreements for subsequent fiscal years."

IHS Advance Appropriations

The Maniilaq Association continues to work toward a transition of the IHS budget to an advance appropriations basis. Over the past several fiscal periods, appropriations have been enacted well after the beginning of the Federal fiscal year: 2.5

months in both fiscal years 2016 and 2015, 3.5 months in fiscal year 2014, and 6 months in fiscal year 2013. Following enactment, it takes a few months before funds are cleared through the Office of Management and Budget, allocated to the IHS Area Offices, and then finally provided to the tribes and tribal organizations.

Both the tribal and IHS programs suffer under this situation. We need to be able to do the best job possible in planning, decisionmaking and administering programs, but we are impeded in our ability to do so because we do not know how much funding will be made available or when we will receive it. This uncertainty requires us to constantly re-work our budget and delay recruiting and hiring decisions, when we should be devoted to providing the best health services possible. These delays also ultimately cost us more money, since we are not able to take full advantage of buying items in bulk for lower cost, such as our heating fuel.

We are asking that Congress appropriate IHS funds on an advance basis, just as it does for the Veterans Administration (VA) medical accounts funding. In the proposed fiscal year 2016 budget (fiscal year 2017 advance appropriations) for the VA, the administration justifies advance funding for the VA on the basis of providing timely, high-quality healthcare for the Nation's veterans, and reiterates this justification in the proposed fiscal year 2017 budget. Our need for timely and predictable funding is no less great than it is for the VA.

Alcohol & Substance Abuse Treatment, and Behavioral Health, Suicide Prevention

The administration's request includes $25 million in program increases for mental health. Of that amount, $21.4 million would be for a behavioral health integration initiative, for which tribes and tribal organizations would be eligible to seek funding for the expansion of their behavioral health services to areas outside of the traditional healthcare system; training; hiring behavioral health staff; and community-based programs. Another $3.6 million in the proposal would be for funding pilot projects to implement the "Zero Suicide Initiative." The overwhelming majority of the people we lose to suicide suffer from diagnosable, treatable mental health or substance abuse problems. However, the waiting list for treatment averages nearly 9 months, and due to lack of funding there is often no place to refer people, particularly young people. We therefore request your support for funding the $25 million program increase for these critical programs.

We also appreciate the $10 million appropriated in fiscal year 2016 for the *Generations Indigenous (Gen–I)* initiative, which provides increased resources for tribes to address youth behavioral, mental health and substance abuse issues. This funding is critical for the hiring of staff to provide more services and prevention programs for our youth. We ask for your support to fund the expansion of the *Gen–I* program in fiscal year 2017. For the IHS, the administration is requesting a $16.8 million increase focused on youth: $15 million to expand *Gen–I* for additional staffing and $1.8 million for a pilot program that would provide a continuum of care for youth after discharge from a Youth Regional Treatment Center. For the BIA the proposal includes an increase of $21 million to expand the *Tiwahe Initiative* designed to address the inter-related problems of poverty, violence and substance abuse faced by Native communities, including $12.3 million for social services programs designed to provide culturally appropriate care. We ask for your support for this funding.

The President's proposal also includes 2-year mandatory funding of $10 million in fiscal year 2017 to expand the number of behavioral health professionals providing services in Indian communities, and $15 million to provide assistance "to prevent reoccurrences to tribes experiencing behavioral health crises including specialized crisis response staffing, technical assistance, and community engagement." This funding and these programs are desperately needed in our communities. Increased behavioral health staffing is a necessity in order to save lives. We are committed to working together with the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and the House Natural Resources Committee and any others to develop legislation to support these proposals.

Other

We wish to join others in Indian Country in supporting the permanent authorization of the Special Diabetes Program for Indians; funding for annual built-in costs for medical and non-medical inflation, pay increases, and population growth; and the establishment of Medicare-like Rates for non-hospital services, thus stretching our otherwise limited Purchased/Referred Care funds.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE METLAKATLA INDIAN COMMUNITY

Summary. The requests of the Metlakatla Indian Community for fiscal year 2017 are:

—Support Contract Support Cost (CSC) funding as being a separate, indefinite appropriation; remove the proviso potentially limiting carryover authority for CSC; and support permanent and mandatory CSC funding.
—Exempt the IHS from any future sequestration, as Congress has done for the Veterans Health Administration programs.
—Permanently authorize the Special Diabetes Program for Indians.
—Substantially increase funding for BIA Natural Resources Management.

The Metlakatla Indian Community (Tribe) is located on the Annette Island Reserve in southeast Alaska, a land base of 87,000 acres. Through our Annette Island Service Unit we provide primary health services at our outpatient facility through funding from the IHS as a co-signer to the Alaska Tribal Health Compact under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. We have significant fish and forestry resources, but as noted elsewhere in this testimony, we require more resources to fully manage them.

Contract Support Costs (CSC).—We appreciate the change made to funding of CSC in the fiscal year 2016 appropriations act, which made the fiscal year 2016 CSC funding for an indefinite amount. This shift helped to ensure that CSC would be fully funded without having to reprogram funding for critical healthcare services and other programmatic funding to cover the CSC need.

For fiscal year 2017, we support the President's request for an appropriation of "such sums as may be necessary," with an estimated $800 million for CSC for the IHS, and an estimated $278 million for the BIA, in separate accounts in both the IHS and BIA discretionary budgets. However, we request the removal of the following proviso: "amounts obligated but not expended by a tribe or tribal organization for contract support costs for such agreements for the current fiscal year shall be applied to contract support costs otherwise due for such agreements for subsequent fiscal years." This proviso, which we understand the IHS proposed be included in the fiscal year 2016 appropriations language, is problematic because it could be misread to effectively deny the carryover authority granted by the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. We thus ask that the proviso be removed for fiscal year 2017 and thereafter.

The Tribe's long-term goal, however, remains that the indefinite appropriation of CSC funding be made mandatory and permanent. Under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, the full payment of CSC is not discretionary; it is a legal obligation, affirmed by the U.S Supreme Court. Funding of CSC on a discretionary basis has placed the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations, in their own words, of being in the "untenable position of appropriating discretionary funds for the payment of any legally obligated contract support costs." We are committed to working together with the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and the House Natural Resources Committee to determine how best to achieve that goal. We also ask for the subcommittees' intervention with the Budget Committee and any others that may influence this proposal for mandatory CSC funding.

Sequestration.—We continue to ask that IHS funding be exempt from sequestration, as is the Veterans Health Administration (VA) programs. We understand that a number of members of Congress previously indicated that it was an oversight that IHS was not exempt from sequestration in the past and that the oversight should be corrected. The VA was made fully exempt from sequestration for all programs administered by the VA. See § 255 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act (BBEDCA), as amended by Public Law 111–139 (2010). Also exempt are State Medicaid grants and Medicare payments, which are held harmless except for a 2 percent reduction for administration of the program. We thus strongly urge the subcommittee to support an amendment to the BBEDCA to fully exempt the IHS from any future sequestration.

Special Diabetes Program for Indians.—While we understand that the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) is not part of the IHS appropriations process, the SDPI funds are administered by the IHS. The current authorization and funding for the SDPI expires at the end of fiscal year 2017. The SDPI provides crucial funding for diabetes treatment and prevention programs for Alaska Natives and American Indians, among whom diabetes is an epidemic. As we have expressed in the past, the SDPI is an indispensable program that has shown identifiable, significant outcomes—both in terms of access to treatment and prevention. We support the administration's proposal that the SDPI be permanently authorized, and hopefully at an increased amount. SDPI has been flat funded at $150 million for many years.

We ask for your support of the efforts to pass such an authorization as quickly as possible—well in advance of the SDPI's expiration in September, 2017—so that these critical programs can continue to provide uninterrupted care and our contracts can be renewed without disruption and loss of expertise.

BIA Natural Resources Funding.—Metlakatla has the only reservation (Annette Island Reserve) within the State of Alaska—87,000 acres, plus the marine waters 3,000 feet out from the shorelines of Annette Islands. We did not participate in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), though were given the opportunity to do so. Instead we communicated to the congressional drafters of ANCSA the need for the reservation to stay intact. Section 19 of ANCSA thus excludes the Tribe, preserving the Tribe's trust land and reservation intact.

The Alaska congressional delegation sent a joint letter on December 16, 2015 to Assistant Secretary Washburn at the BIA requesting information and a response to a significant issue: the BIA has, for decades, underfunded our natural resource programs. The BIA, thus far, has not responded.

The Alaska congressional delegation acknowledges that we have produced a detailed analysis of not only the funding we currently receive to carry out BIA natural resource programs ($957,205), but an analysis of the funding necessary to adequately protect the trust assets (our lands, waters, habitat, minerals, and fish and wildlife), and also to steward those trust assets to meeting tribal needs on an ongoing basis. We determined that our BIA natural resource programs require a total funding of $3,118,050 on an annual basis, which means additional appropriations in the amount of $2,160,845.

This breaks down as additional funds needed for the Tribe in the following budgetary accounts: BIA Hatchery Operations (+$1,155,900); Fisheries Management and Development & Wildlife Management and Development (+$201,456); Forestry (+$439,772); Other Rights Protection (including water) (+$208,123); and Mineral Development (+$155,594). All of these funds have been requested directly from the BIA in a recent Title I Self-Determination contract request, but during negotiations on February 8, 2016, the BIA indicated there are no new funds available for these programs. The Tribe is awaiting the official written contract declination from the BIA.

We urge the subcommittee to fully fund these needs so that the Tribe can adequately carry out responsibilities that are critical to ensure that the Tribe's natural resources programs are adequately funded. We have a water shortage crisis at the Tribe currently, and there is no doubt that greater natural resources program funding would assist us in better understanding its causes and implementing solutions. I discuss below two of these program areas—Fisheries and Forestry—to greater illustrate all that is involved in carrying out these natural resource programs, the existing inequitable share of these funds that the Tribe receives in comparison with other Tribes in the Northwest, and why this funding is so critical to the Tribe.

Fisheries.—Because State-managed waters surround the reservation's waters, and because there is no court-ordered co-management relationship between the Tribe and the State, Tribal fisheries must be managed in a way that accounts for the Tribe's fishing effort, as well as the State's. This must be done without having any influence over the State's management strategies, which, at times, have been preemptive of our subsistence and harvest rights. In order to properly manage our fishery resources, we need to bring our own scientists and resource managers to the table, but have insufficient funding to do so.

We manage the following commercial fisheries (subject to Secretarial approval): *Salmon*—The Tribe's fishery is the largest tribally managed salmon fishery in the Nation. In fact, the Tribe annually harvests more salmon than the five top fishing tribes in western Washington combined; *Herring*—we manage the second largest herring stock in southeast Alaska (second only to the Sitka fishery), the largest (almost certainly the only) tribally managed herring fishery in the Nation; *Halibut*—our halibut fishery is comparable to the tribal halibut fisheries in western Washington; and *Dive Fisheries for Sea Cucumber and Geoduck*—Comparable to tribal fisheries in western Washington.

The tribes of western Washington, which conduct fisheries that are most similar to the Tribe's, also have complex managerial, technical and scientific needs. Yet, their funding, although substantially greater than the Tribe's, is still inadequate to cover the costs of retaining staff in each of the individual disciplines that, in combination, make up a legitimate fishery management program. However, Congress, through the BIA, makes millions of dollars available to the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC) for that very purpose. The NWIFC, like the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, is able to draw on economies of scale and consortia staff, so that when tribes meet with the State, or other management authorities, they are supported by expertise that the State cannot ignore. By contrast, the

Tribe not only does not have the funds necessary to hire its own experts, we are also not able to draw upon the expertise of an inter-tribal consortium.

Our Tamgas Creek Hatchery is possibly the largest tribally operated hatchery in the Nation, but it inexplicably receives $0 in the Hatchery Operations line item in the BIA budget, while Oregon and Washington tribes receive substantial funding. Because of the role that hatcheries play in sustaining tribal fishing rights, every significant tribal hatchery in Washington State receives Hatchery Operations funding through the BIA budget, but Metlakatla receives none. Since the Tribe cannot compel the State to consider the Tribe's needs, the Tribe's only recourse is to increase the production of fish at its hatchery that will return to the Reserve, trusting that enough fish will get through the harvest gauntlet to meet the Tribe's needs. Our Tribe is very much on its own. When considered in this light, the disparity between the fishery management support available to western Washington tribes and the support available to us is enormous. As a result, we are severely handicapped in efforts to protect our fishing rights and conserve our fishery resources.

Forestry.—A second example of critically needed funding to meet tribal natural resource program needs is in the forestry program. We receive $62,278 for our forestry program. This is insufficient funding to hire even one position in the program, let alone plan, design, and implement silvicultural prescriptions, forest harvest, conservation, and wildfire prevention and control strategies on the 21,172 acres of commercial forestland, and 54,197 acres of non-commercial forestland and associated muskeg habitat. Using the formula developed by the IFMAT III team in 2011, the Tribe's forestry program should receive a minimum of $646,223.32 in Federal funding in order to ensure forest health and Federal trust obligations are met. Without this funding, we cannot maintain healthy forests that are not susceptible to fire risk, nor can we count on our forests for any jobs and income going forward. We have requested less than this full amount, or only an additional $439,772.

We are glad to provide any additional information you may request. Thank you for your consideration of our concerns and needs.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall, and members of the subcommittee:

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan) encourages the subcommittee's support for the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Subactivity: Soil, Water & Air Management. This Subactivity includes Colorado River Salinity Control as a primary focus area. For fiscal year 2017, a funding level of $1.5 million for salinity specific control projects is needed in this primary focus area to prevent further degradation of Colorado River water quality and increased downstream economic damages.

The salt concentration in the Colorado River causes over $300 million in damages to water users each year. While this figure is significant, had it not been for the efforts of the Salinity Control Program, damages would be much higher. Salinity Control Program actions have reduced salinity concentrations of Colorado River water by 90 milligrams per liter (mg/L) from what they would have been without the actions. That reduction of 90 mg/L has avoided additional damages of approximately $200 million per year.

Metropolitan is the regional water supplier for most of urban southern California, providing supplemental water to retail agencies that serve approximately 19 million people. Water imported via the Colorado River Aqueduct has the highest salinity level of all of Metropolitan's sources of supply, averaging around 630 mg/L since 1976. This salinity level causes economic damages to all sectors. For example, high salinity leads to:

—A reduction in the useful life of galvanized water pipe systems, water heaters, faucets, garbage disposals, clothes washers, and dishwashers, and an increased use of bottled water and water softeners in the household sector;

—An increase in the cost of cooling operations, additional need for and cost of water softening, and a decrease in equipment service life in the commercial sector;

—An increase in the use of water and the cost of water treatment, and an increase in sewer fees in the industrial sector;

—A decrease in the life of treatment facilities and pipelines in the utility sector;

—Difficulty in meeting wastewater discharge requirements to comply with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit terms and conditions, an increase in desalination and brine disposal costs due to accumulation of salts

in groundwater basins, and fewer opportunities for recycling due to groundwater quality deterioration;
—Increased cost of desalination and brine disposal for recycled water in the municipal sector; and
—A reduction in the yield of salt sensitive crops and increased water use for leaching in the agricultural sector.

Concern over salinity levels in the Colorado River has existed for many years. To deal with the concern, the International Boundary and Water Commission signed Minute No. 242, Permanent and Definitive Solution to the International Problem of the Salinity of the Colorado River in 1973, and the President signed the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act of 1974 (Act) into law. To further foster interstate cooperation and coordinate the Colorado River Basin States' efforts on salinity control, the seven Basin States formed the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum (Forum). The Forum is charged with reviewing the Colorado River's water quality standards for salinity every 3 years. In so doing, it adopts a Plan of Implementation consistent with these standards. The Plan of Implementation, as adopted by the States and approved by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, calls for additional salinity control measures to be implemented by BLM.

BLM is the largest landowner in the Colorado River Basin. Due to geological conditions, much of the lands that are controlled and managed by the BLM are heavily laden with salt. Past management practices have led to human-induced and accelerated erosion processes from which soil and rocks, heavily laden with salt have been deposited in various stream beds or flood plains. As a result, salts are dissolved into the Colorado River system causing water quality problems downstream.

The Salinity Control Program reduces salinity by preventing salts from dissolving and mixing with the River's flow. Irrigation improvements (sprinklers, gated pipe, lined ditches) and vegetation management reduce the amount of salt transported to the Colorado River. Point sources such as saline springs are also controlled.

The Salinity Control Program, as set forth in the Act, benefits the Upper Colorado River Basin water users through more efficient water management, increased crop production, benefits to local economies through construction contracts, and through environmental enhancements. The Salinity Control Program benefits Lower Basin water users, hundreds of miles downstream from salt sources in the Upper Basin, through reduced salinity concentration of Colorado River water. California's Colorado River water users are presently suffering economic damages in the hundreds of millions of dollars per year due to the River's salinity.

Congress has charged Federal agencies, including the BLM, to proceed with programs to control the salinity of the Colorado River. Salt reduction is achieved by controlling both point and nonpoint sources of salt contributions; however, the majority of salt derived from public lands is of non-point-source origin. Salt loading from non-point sources is mainly reduced by minimizing soil erosion. BLM achieves salinity control goals through managing land use practices. BLM's rangeland improvement programs can lead to some of the most cost-effective salinity control measures available. Metropolitan supports BLM's current drafting of a comprehensive strategy to improve the implementation of salinity control and outreach efforts within the Colorado River Basin. BLM's measures significantly complement programs and activities being considered for implementation by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation through its Basin-wide Program and by the U.S. Department of Agriculture through its on-farm Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

Over the past years, the Salinity Control Program has proven to be a very cost effective approach to help mitigate the impacts of increased salinity in the Colorado River. Continued Federal funding of this important Basin-wide program is essential. The program change proposed by BLM in the 2017 budget request for the Soil, Water & Air Management Subactivity to enhance core capability is welcomed. This enhancement to support monitoring and analysis of soil, water and air resources, including sediment and salinity reductions within the Colorado River Basin, is needed.

Metropolitan encourages the subcommittee's support for sufficient funding in the Subactivity: Soil, Water & Air Management to allow for general water quality improvement efforts in the Colorado River Basin and $1.5 million for salinity specific control projects in 2017. This amount is needed to prevent further degradation of the quality of the Colorado River and increased downstream economic damages.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE MINERALS SCIENCE AND INFORMATION COALITION

On behalf of the undersigned members of the Minerals Science and Information Coalition, thank you for the opportunity to submit a written statement for the

record on fiscal year 2017 appropriations for the Mineral Resources Program within the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

The Minerals Science and Information Coalition (MSIC or the Coalition) is a broad-based alliance of minerals and materials interests united in advocating for reinvigorated minerals science and information functions in the Federal Government. Our group is comprised of trade associations, scientific and professional societies, groups representing the extractive industries, processors, manufacturers, other mineral and material supply-chain users, and other consumers of Federal minerals science and information.

MSIC supports the President's request for $49 million for the U.S. Geological Survey's Mineral Resources Program, and respectfully requests that Congress add $5 million in new funding to create minerals forecasting capabilities as well as new investments in the USMIN project to continue development of a comprehensive national mineral resource database.

Minerals are part of virtually all the products we use every day, acting as the raw materials for manufacturing processes or as the end products themselves. Minerals are critical ingredients in specialized applications for national defense and energy technologies, as well as essential building blocks for buildings, roads and civic infrastructure projects. They are used in the manufacture of paper, glass, ceramics, plastics, refined metals, and a host of intermediary materials. These, in turn, find their way into the manufactured products that make up our daily lives, such as automobiles, mobile phones, and computers. Every sector of industry relies on a variety of minerals to generate their end products, making a stable and reliable supply of minerals vital for the continued growth and success of our economy.

The recent crisis in the global supply of rare earth elements caused by Chinese export restrictions is a case study in the importance of a stable mineral supply chain. Supply chains can be long, complex, and vulnerable to disruption for many reasons. The restrictions in the supply of rare earth elements threatened the production of components essential for U.S. defense systems, in addition to a vast array of communications, clean energy, electronics, automotive, and medical products. Both the private and the public sectors realize that we must reduce risks to key minerals supply chains. However, we cannot do this without accurate, timely information on the nature, location, and characteristics of our domestic mineral resources, and on the worldwide supply of, demand for, and flow of minerals and materials. This information is the foundation for identifying and anticipating existing and emerging vulnerabilities, and for sound decisionmaking by business leaders and policy makers.

USGS MINERAL RESOURCES PROGRAM

The USGS plays a central role in providing the fundamental information that allows our business leaders and government institutions to make informed natural resource decisions. It is the Minerals Science and Information Coalition's belief that prioritizing both the science and information components of USGS's Mineral Resources Program is vitally important to our national defense and economic well-being.

Minerals science covers the full life cycle of minerals from the discovery of mineral deposits to the disposal of mineral products, including understanding how mineral deposits are formed, the nature and location of mineral deposits, and the environmental issues associated with responsible mineral extraction. The Mineral Resources Program has a long and distinguished history of research and assessment of our Nation's mineral resources. According to a National Science and Technology Council [1] report issued in March this year, an overarching trend in mineral production between 1996 and 2013 has been the concentration of production in countries with higher governance (geopolitical and regulatory) risk. This means that the risk of possible disruption to our mineral supply is rising. Therefore, it is vital that we invest in understanding our domestic resources to build resilient supply chains.

The National Minerals Information Center (NMIC) is the premier source of information on the worldwide supply of, demand for, and flow of minerals and materials. The consistency and reliability of NMIC's data over decades is one of its greatest strengths. Its data and products are used throughout the Federal Government to support economic, national security, and land-use decisionmaking. It is also critical to private sector investment and financial institutions. However, in spite of our ex-

[1] National Science and Technology Council, Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Sustainability, Subcommittee on Critical and Strategic Mineral Supply Chains. 2016. Assessment of Critical Minerals: Screening Methodology and Initial Application. Office of Science and Technology Policy, 57 p.

panding use of a range of critical and strategic mineral commodities that are essential to keep up our defense, economy, and wellbeing, NMIC does not have the resources needed to develop a robust forecasting function for the minerals sector. Therefore, we strongly urge additional new funding of $5 million for NMIC to support advanced mineral flow analysis and the development of minerals forecasting capability within the U.S. Geological Survey.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony to the subcommittee.

American Chemical Society

American Exploration & Mining Association

American Geosciences Institute

American Physical Society

Industrial Minerals Association—North America

Materials Research Society

National Mining Association

National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association

Society for Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration, Inc.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE MISSISSIPPI INTERSTATE COOPERATIVE RESOURCE ASSOCIATION

My name is Ron Brooks. I am the Director of the Fisheries Division of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. I am submitting written testimony on behalf of the Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association—an interstate partnership known as MICRA—regarding the priorities and budgets of two agencies within the Department of Interior, specifically the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The following testimony includes three appropriations requests totaling $4,460,000 in additional funding to the USFWS's Fish and Aquatic Conservation fiscal year 2017 budget (Activity: Aquatic Habitat and Species Conservation; Subactivity: Aquatic Invasive Species).

MICRA is an organization of my fellow State agency fish chiefs in the 28 States that have management jurisdiction of the fisheries resources in the Mississippi River Basin. The Mississippi River Basin is the largest watershed in the Nation, covering 41 percent of the continental U.S. and draining all or part of 31 States and 2 Canadian Provinces. The Mississippi River Basin States formed the MICRA partnership in 1990 to cooperatively manage the interjurisdictional fisheries and aquatic resources in the basin. Recreational and commercial fishing in the Mississippi River Basin generates more than $19 billion in economic output annually.

MICRA supports the increases in the President's fiscal year 2017 budget for National Fish Hatchery System Operations and Maintenance, and for the Aquatic Habitat and Species Conservation's Fish Passage Improvements and Aquatic Invasive Species Programs. Two of the primary basin-wide issues impacting our native fisheries and aquatic resources are the loss of diverse habitats and aquatic invasive species. The National Fish Hatchery System mitigation program, Aquatic Invasive Species Program, National Fish Passage program, and the National Fish Habitat Partnerships are all programs that MICRA strongly supports and would like to see remain priorities for the USFWS and Congress.

Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) impact water resources, businesses, waterway users, native ecosystems, and the public in every State throughout the Nation. Management and control of nuisance fish—such as Asian carps and lion fish; mussels—such as quagga mussels, zebra mussels, New Zealand mud snails, and applesnails; plants such as Brazillian elodea, hydrilla, water hyacinth, and Eurasian water milfoil; and a plethora of other organisms cost the United States billions of dollars each year.

The Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force (ANS Task Force), composed of 13 Federal agencies and 13 ex-officio organizations, serves as the only intergovernmental organization dedicated to preventing and controlling ANS. The ANS Task Force provides a national forum for collaboration on critical issues that can impact prevention, control, and management of ANS. Regional coordination among Federal, State, and local partners is accomplished through the work of six Regional Panels. MICRA is an ex-officio member on the ANS Task Force and the host organization for the Mississippi River Basin Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species—the largest Regional Panel in the country.

Funding for the Regional Panels is provided through the USFWS's Aquatic Invasive Species Program, specifically as part of 'NISA Implementation' (i.e. National Invasive Species Act of 1996). Funding for the six Regional Panels is authorized in the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990 (NANPCA) at $300,000, providing a mere $50,000 in annual operations to each Regional Panel when fully appropriated. Beginning in 2013, the USFWS reduced annual funding to the Regional Panels by 20 percent. MICRA requests that Congress restore Regional Panel funding to at least the previously appropriated level of $300,000, but preferably to $600,000 which would provide each Regional Panel with $100,000 for annual operations. Leadership of the six Regional Panels has repeatedly stated that a minimum annual operational budget of $100,000 is needed for each Regional Panel to meet its legislated responsibilities under NANPCA.

As part of the Federal-State partnership to address the myriad of ANS issues, 40 State and 2 interstate ANS management plans have been developed to identify needed actions to address each State's priority ANS issues. Funding for implementation of these 42 ANS Task Force approved State and interstate ANS management plans is administered through the USFWS and is authorized by NANPCA at $4 million annually. Funding for State ANS management plans allows States to leverage funds and implement the highest priority actions to prevent the continued spread of ANS and minimize their impacts on the public. Initial funding levels (fiscal year 2000 and fiscal year 2001) provided more than $100,000 annually per approved plan; however, as the number of approved State ANS management plans has increased each year, the amount of funding received by each State has steadily decreased, severely limiting the ability of States to effectively manage ANS.

Thankfully, Congress increased funding for implementation of State ANS management plans to $2 million in fiscal year 2016 and this increase is included in the President's fiscal year 2017 budget. This much needed increase will result in each State with an approved plan receiving approximately $47,000 for implementation. The total funding requested by States to implement approved plans in fiscal year 2012 was more than $14 million. MICRA requests Congress increase funding for implementation of approved State ANS management plans to the fully authorize level of $4 million in fiscal year 2017. This increase of $2 million for implementation of approved State and interstate ANS management plans is critically needed and long overdue. It is an investment in the States' collective ability to prevent introductions of new ANS and manage and control existing ANS populations that cause millions of dollars in losses each year.

State management plan and Regional Panel funding are included with USFWS operational costs in the agency's budget for Aquatic Invasive Species as NISA implementation. We encourage appropriations language that clearly articulates the level of funding for State management plan implementation and Regional Panel operations as is intended by the subcommittee to prevent the continued loss of funds from these programs to USFWS operational costs. MICRA also recognizes the increased cost for USFWS operations each year, and underscores the importance of additional funding in the USFWS's Fish and Aquatic Conservation budget for these important programs to the States.

Asian carp have been spreading throughout much of the Mississippi River Basin over the past two decades impacting new waters each year. The States assisted the USFWS in the development of the national 'Management and Control Plan for Bighead, Black, Grass, and Silver Carps in the United States' that was approved by the national ANS Task Force in 2007. The Mississippi River Basin States have long advocated for national strategies to prevent and control Asian carps, recognizing that comprehensive efforts to address Asian carp throughout the Mississippi River Basin are necessary to achieve success in preventing Asian carp from becoming established in the Great Lakes, Upper Mississippi River, upper Ohio River, and elsewhere. Congress has made a significant investment over the last several years to prevent Asian carp from becoming established in the Great Lakes, first through Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (or GLRI) funding and more recently through base funding allocations to Federal agencies.

Beginning in fiscal year 2014 the USFWS and USGS began receiving base funding to address Asian carp outside the Great Lakes, however this funding has been focused on preventing Asian carp from becoming established in the Upper Mississippi River and Ohio River basins. In addition to protecting uninvaded waters in every Mississippi River Basin State, many States in the Mississippi River Basin are attempting to reduce established populations of Asian carp and minimize their impacts on the businesses and recreational users that rely on these waters. The fiscal year 2017 President's budget includes base funding for USFWS to "to prevent the spread of Asian carp in the Great Lakes Basin, and the upper Mississippi and Ohio rivers." Such language has prevented Federal agencies from implementing a na-

tional strategy for this issue and has kept Asian carp prevention and control technologies developed with Great Lakes Asian carp funding from being implemented and evaluated in parts of the Mississippi River Basin beyond the upper Mississippi and Ohio rivers where the results would have meaningful local and national benefits. For example, the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks has coordinated with USFWS, USGS, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to identify potential tools and locations to prevent the interbasin transfer of silver carp from the Tennessee River to the Mobile River Basin via the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway. Despite the collaboratively agreed upon potential application of USGS developed technologies to prevent an inter-basin transfer of Asian carp, the Federal agencies have informed the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks that Asian carp funding is not available to implement and evaluate these technologies in the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway.

The President's fiscal year 2017 budget for USFWS includes $7.9 million in base funding for Asian carp; however $5.3 million is designated to be used for the Great Lakes and $2.6 million is designated for the Upper Mississippi River and Ohio River basins. MICRA supports these Federal agency base funding increases to enable the USFWS, in partnership with USGS and USACE, to lead national efforts to manage and control Asian carps in the United States. Greater focus on national priorities and increased funding for Asian carp prevention and control beyond the Great Lakes is desperately needed. MICRA urges the subcommittee to include an additional $2.1 million in USFWS base funding for Asian carp and to include language that the agency's Asian carp base funds are to be used for "implementation of the national 'Management and Control Plan for Bighead, Black, Grass, and Silver Carps in the United States' and associated collaborative multi-State Asian Carp Control Strategy Frameworks and Action Plans to protect the Great Lakes, Mississippi River and tributaries, and other priority watersheds." Similar wording is recommended for USGS and other Federal agencies receiving base funding for implementation of Asian carp programs. This wording is recommended to enable current work in the Great Lakes, Upper Mississippi River, and Ohio River basins to continue at their current levels, and to provide Federal agencies with the flexibility to implement additional work where needed based on national priorities.

The Regional Frameworks/Action Plans for the Mississippi River Basin were developed with flexibility to use creative solutions to control existing populations of Asian carp and prevent further range expansion. Much of the work identified in the Asian Carp Regional Frameworks/Action Plans for the Mississippi River, Ohio River, and other parts of the Mississippi River Basin are State-led actions. The States are critical partners to the Federal agencies in the battle against Asian carp, but most States lack funding to implement actions and address priority needs. Federal grants to States for implementation of priority actions in support of the 'Management and Control Plan for Bighead, Black, Grass, and Silver Carps in the United States', and Regional Frameworks/Action Plans is needed to enable the States to engage as equal partners in addressing Asian carp. Funding increases to USFWS for Asian carp should include a specific amount or a percentage for grants to States for implementation of State-led priority needs identified in Asian Carp Regional Frameworks/Action Plans. Such a program could be administered by the USFWS and implemented in a similar manner as the State ANS management plan program.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on the fiscal year 2017 budget for the Department of Interior and for considering the recommendations and requests submitted by MICRA on behalf of our 28 Mississippi River Basin member States. I am happy to provide clarification or additional information to the subcommittee or its individual members regarding any of MICRA's recommendations and requests presented in this written testimony.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE MOUNTAIN PACT

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

The Mountain Pact represents mountain communities across the American West, approximately 250,000 permanent residents and 40 million visitors each year. Positioned in rural mountain areas and often surrounded by Federal land, Western mountain communities are especially vulnerable to economic, public health, and environmental damages from catastrophic wildfire.

It is not news to anyone living in the Western United States that wildfires have become a major threat to our communities. Many factors contribute to the increase in wildfire frequency and severity, including build-up of hazardous fuels, increasing populations in the wildland urban interface, and ongoing drought. This past decade

fires have burned 50 percent more land than in the previous four decades; the fire season has expanded by 2 months; and the average size of fires has increased by a factor of five since the 1970s. Just this summer, impacts from one of the worst western fire seasons on record have had far-reaching effects. The frequency and severity of these wildfires has and will have a disastrous effect on local economies, natural resources, and our communities and needs to be matched by significant levels of funding to protect people, water, and wildlife.

In addition to the threat of the actual wildfires, critical landscape management activities are often postponed or canceled as a result of fire transfers from non-suppression agency accounts once annual wildfire suppression funds are depleted. Currently, the USDA Forest Service (USFS) and Department of Interior (DOI) are the only agencies required to pay for natural disaster response out of their annual discretionary budgets. Since 2000, these agencies have run out of money to fight emergency fires eight times and in the last 2 years, more than $1 billion was 'borrowed' from USFS programs to cover fire suppression shortfalls. Unfortunately and again in fiscal year 2015, the 10-year average was not enough to meet the USFS suppression needs, forcing the agency to transfer $700 million from non-suppression accounts to make up for the shortfall.

The current wildfire suppression funding model and cycle of transfers and repayments has negatively impacted the ability to implement forest management, among many other activities. Additionally, the increasing 10-year average has not met annual suppression needs since before fiscal year 2002, which is why we are thankful to the subcommittee for the full transfer repayment and increased suppression funding in fiscal year 2016. However, we understand this is not expected to occur every year.

DOI and USFS need a long-term fire funding solution that would result in stable and predictable budgets. Our local economies are incredibly vulnerable to the effects of underfunded Federal land management.

We respectfully request a bipartisan fire funding solution that would (1) access disaster funding, (2) minimize transfers, and (3) address the continued erosion of agency budgets over time, with the goal of reinvesting in key programs that would restore forests to healthier conditions.

[This statement was submitted by Diana Madson, Executive Director.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF STATE ARTS AGENCIES

Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the invitation to prepare this testimony regarding Federal appropriations for the National Endowment for the Arts in fiscal year 2017. I am Pam Breaux, Chief Executive Officer of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA), the organization representing the State and jurisdictional arts agencies of the United States. Today, I urge the subcommittee to support funding the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) at $155 million in fiscal year 2017.

In fiscal year 2016, this subcommittee supported an increase of $2 million in funding for the agency. The States and NASAA are extremely grateful to the subcommittee for this, particularly given the limitations Congress faces as a result of sequestration. As you look to the next budget, NASAA hopes you will once again consider increasing funding for the NEA, which continues to make a substantial impact in communities throughout the United States, even while operating with a budget that is more than $19 million (12 percent) lower than in fiscal year 2010.

In asking for an increase in funding for the NEA, it is important to acknowledge the continued bipartisan support that this subcommittee, and Congress as a whole, has demonstrated for State arts agencies. As you know, through a highly effective Federal-State partnership, the NEA distributes 40 percent of its programmatic funds to State and regional arts agencies each year. The resulting $47.3 million in fiscal year 2016, helped to leverage additional public and private investment in the arts, empowered States and regions to address their unique priorities, and served far more constituents than Federal funds alone could reach. The report accompanying last year's Consolidated Appropriations Act affirmed Congress's support for this important partnership and the 40 percent allocation. We sincerely thank the subcommittee for this acknowledgement.

State arts agencies use their share of NEA funds ($39 million last year), combined with funds from State legislatures, to support approximately 21,000 grants to arts organizations, civic organizations, schools and artists in more than 4,400 communities across the United States. Twenty-five percent of State arts agencies' grant awards go to nonmetropolitan areas, supporting programs that strengthen the civic and economic sustainability of rural America. Twenty-nine percent of State arts

agencies' grant dollars go to arts education, fostering student success in and out of school and providing the critical thinking, creativity and communications skills needed to meet the demands of today's competitive work force.

Congress's continued support of the 40 percent formula is essential to State arts agencies, boosting their ability to drive innovation in their States. Throughout the country, State arts agencies play significant roles in shaping education policy, stimulating economic growth and helping communities thrive as rewarding and productive places to live, conduct business, visit and raise a family. Should Congress support an increase for the NEA, State arts agencies will be in a position to expand their meaningful role helping in every congressional district have full opportunities to experience the economic, civic, educational and cultural benefits that the arts offer.

NASAA and State arts agencies also applaud the work of the NEA in its direct program areas and partnerships with other Federal agencies. The NEA's direct grants support thousands of concerts, performances, readings and exhibitions, with annual live attendance of nearly 20 million people. Especially noteworthy partnerships include the NEA's work with the Department of Defense (to support arts therapy in healing programs at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and the National Intrepid Center of Excellence) and the Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis (to track the economic contributions of arts and cultural production to the U.S. gross domestic product and export portfolio).

In the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016 Committee Report, this subcommittee urged State arts agencies to explore opportunities to work with the military. NASAA's newly released study on State arts and military initiatives recounts that numerous States are either already implementing or considering such programs. In fact, a significant majority (45) of State arts agencies are pursuing at least one program, policy, service or partnership related to serving military and veteran populations through the arts. Further, 72 percent are actively engaged in or considering partnerships to facilitate the work. We look forward to supporting States as they continue this important, ground-breaking work.

Thank you for your consideration. NASAA looks forward to continuing to work productively with this subcommittee, and we stand ready to serve as a resource to you.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CLEAN AIR AGENCIES

On behalf of the National Association of Clean Air Agencies (NACAA), thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on the fiscal year 2017 proposed budget for the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), particularly grants to State and local air pollution control agencies under Sections 103 and 105 of the Clean Air Act, which are part of the State and Tribal Assistance Grant (STAG) program. Specifically, NACAA makes three requests of Congress: (1) State and local air pollution control agencies should be provided with Federal grants in the amount of the President's request—$268.2 million—which is an increase of $40 million over fiscal year 2016 levels; (2) the $40-million increase should not be earmarked for any particular activity (e.g., climate change); rather, agencies should be given the flexibility to use the additional resources on the highest-priority activities in their areas; and (3) grant funds for fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) monitoring should remain under Section 103 authority, rather than being shifted to Section 105 authority, as EPA is proposing.

NACAA is a national, non-partisan, non-profit association of air pollution control agencies in 40 States, the District of Columbia, four Territories and 116 metropolitan areas. The members of NACAA have the primary responsibility under the Clean Air Act for implementing our Nation's clean air program. The air quality professionals in our member agencies have vast experience dedicated to improving air quality in the United States. These observations and recommendations are based upon that experience. The views expressed in this testimony do not necessarily represent the positions of every State and local air pollution control agency in the country.

Air Pollution Is Still a Serious Problem in the United States

Air pollution continues to be a significant public health concern. Every year tens of thousands of people die prematurely as a result of breathing polluted air. Millions are exposed to unhealthful levels of air contaminants, which results in many health problems, such as cancer and damage to respiratory, cardiovascular, neurological

and reproductive systems.[1] The evidence of adverse health impacts continues to mount. For example, in October 2013, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) of the World Health Organization classified outdoor air pollution as carcinogenic to humans. The IARC evaluated particulate matter separately and also classified it as a human carcinogen.[2]

The programs that Federal, State and local agencies have undertaken to address air pollution under the Clean Air Act have been hugely successful. For example, EPA data show that between 2003 and 2014, population-weighted ambient concentrations have declined by 29 percent for $PM_{2.5}$ and 18 percent for ozone.[3]

In spite of these strides, significant problems still exist, posing threats to public health and welfare. According to EPA, in 2014 approximately 57 million people in this country lived in counties that exceeded one or more of the Federal health-based air pollution standards.[4] With respect to hazardous air pollutants (HAPs), the newly released data from EPA's National Air Toxics Assessment (NATA) indicate that in 2011 "all 285 million people in the U.S. ha[d] an increased cancer risk of greater than 10 in one million," while one-half million people have an increased risk of cancer of over 100 in a million, due to exposure to the HAPs included in the NATA analysis.[5]

The task Congress faces of balancing many competing needs is daunting. However, we doubt any of the issues this subcommittee addresses pose more of a public health problem than that of air pollution. This body has the chance to take aim at this critical public health and welfare problem by providing additional Federal grants to those fighting on the front lines—State and local air quality agencies.

The Proposed Increase Is Needed Even Without the Clean Power Plan Requirements

The proposed budget for fiscal year 2017 calls for an increase of $40 million in grants for State and local air quality agencies, for a total of $268.2 million. The $40-million increase was originally intended to include $25 million for implementation of the Clean Power Plan (CPP) and $15 million for what we consider to be "core" activities, such as ongoing and day-to-day elements of our programs. As you know, after the budget was proposed, the Supreme Court stayed the CPP (February 9, 2016) so many State and local agencies' obligations related to this program will not be required during fiscal year 2017. However, we nevertheless urge Congress to provide the full $40-million increase to State and local air agencies because our needs are far greater than the total proposed additional grants could address, even without the requirements of the CPP. Moreover, if given flexibility on how the additional funds are used, State and local air agencies can target the resources to address the issues that are most pressing to their communities.

State and Local Agencies Programs Face Significant Deficits

State and local air pollution control agencies have done their best to operate with insufficient resources for many years, but it has been a struggle. State and local air programs face an annual shortfall of $550 million in Federal grants,[6] which has caused many of these agencies to reduce or eliminate important air pollution programs, postpone necessary air monitoring expenditures and even reduce their workforces. In light of economic hardships, States and localities increasingly rely on Federal grants provided by the Clean Air Act.

The Clean Air Act's Section 105 authorizes Federal grants to cover up to 60 percent of the cost of State and local air programs and requires States and localities to contribute a 40-percent match. In reality, however, State and local air agencies provide over 75 percent of their budgets (not including permit fees under the Federal Title V program). Exacerbating the situation is the fact that Federal grants have decreased by nearly 17 percent in purchasing power since 2000 due to inflation.

State and local air quality programs carry out a host of essential activities to attain and maintain healthful air quality. These include ongoing, day-to-day responsibilities that constitute the foundation or core of our programs, as well as additional efforts designed to address new problems and changing regulatory requirements. While the list of our responsibilities is too lengthy to include in this brief testimony, just a few examples for fiscal year 2017 include continued implementa-

---

[1] Fiscal Year 2014–2018 EPA Strategic Plan (April 10, 2014), page 8.
[2] https://www.iarc.fr/en/media-centre/iarcnews/pdf/pr221_E.pdf.
[3] Fiscal Year 2017 EPA Budget in Brief (February 2016), page 14.
[4] Fiscal Year 2017 EPA Budget in Brief (February 2016), page 14.
[5] http://www.epa.gov/national-air-toxics-assessment/2011-nata-assessment-results.
[6] Investing in Clean Air and Public Health: A Needs Survey of State and Local Air Pollution Control Agencies, (April 2009), NACAA, www.4cleanair.org/Documents/reportneedssurvey042709.pdf.

tion of the health-based national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for multiple pollutants; development and/or revision of State Implementation Plans (SIPs) for the ozone, $PM_{2.5}$ and sulfur dioxide standards; implementation of air toxics standards, including revisions to Maximum Achievable Control Technology (MACT) standards resulting from Risk and Technology Review updates; and implementation of control measures related to visibility and regional haze.

These tasks require many resource- and labor-intensive activities including, among other things, air quality planning; compiling comprehensive emission inventories; carrying out complex modeling; analyzing extensive data; adopting regulations; inspecting facilities and enforcing regulations; addressing complicated transport issues; issuing minor source permits; and informing and involving the public in air quality decisions and issues.

A major responsibility that State and local agencies face relates to air quality monitoring. This piece of our program is critical for determining the extent and location of air quality problems and assessing the efficacy of our programs. As in previous years, our monitoring program in fiscal year 2017 will call for ongoing monitoring as well as revisions to address new and changing requirements. Additionally, it has become obvious that one result of the financial crises of recent years is the postponement of necessary activities related to essential upkeep and maintenance for State and local air monitoring networks. Moreover, the loss of monitoring staff has hampered the program significantly. Simply stated, our monitoring program is in dire need of additional funds for essential infrastructure investments and additional personnel.

I have articulated just some of the difficult fiscal issues facing State and local air pollution control agencies in order to emphasize how important it is for Congress to provide these agencies with the $40-million increase included in the administration's request, even without the requirements of the CPP, and to also allow State and local agencies the flexibility to spend the funds on the highest priority activities in their areas.

NACAA Recommends That Monitoring Grants Remain Under Section 103 Authority

As in previous years, the administration's request proposes to begin to shift the $PM_{2.5}$ monitoring grant program from Section 103 authority to Section 105 authority. When funds are provided under Section 103, no State or local matching funds are needed, while Section 105 grants call for matching funds. We request that these funds remain under Section 103 authority. There are some State and local air quality agencies that are unable to provide additional matching funds. If the program is shifted to Section 105 authority, these agencies could have to refuse critical monitoring grants because they are unable to afford the required match. We have made this recommendation in previous years and State and local air quality agencies are very appreciative that Congress has been agreeable to our request in the past.

NACAA Supports Resources for the "Climate Infrastructure Fund"

NACAA supports the proposed "Climate Infrastructure Fund," which includes $1.65 billion over 10 years to, among other things, retrofit, replace or repower diesel equipment, especially school buses. It is critically important that diesel emissions be reduced and this program will support important efforts to address this problem.

NACAA Supports Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) Funds

NACAA is pleased that the proposed budget includes funding for the Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) program ($10 million). Diesel pollution poses significant threats to public health and the DERA program is an important effort to address emissions from the large legacy fleet of diesel engines. We are concerned that in fiscal year 2016 it appears that the DERA program was increased above the President's request at the expense of the Section 103/105 grants and we strongly urge that any future funding for DERA not be in lieu of increases to State and local air grants.

Conclusion

In summary, NACAA supports the administration's proposal to provide $268.2 million in grants to State and local air pollution control agencies under Sections 103 and 105 of the Clean Air Act for fiscal year 2017, which is an increase of $40 million above fiscal year 2016. NACAA also asks that Congress not "earmark" these funds for specific activities and instead provide State and local air pollution control agencies with the flexibility to use the additional resources on the highest priority activities in their areas. Finally, NACAA requests that that grants for $PM_{2.5}$ monitoring remain under Section 103 authority, rather than being shifted to Section 105 authority.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on these critically important issues and for your consideration of the funding needs of State and local air quality programs.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CLEAN WATER AGENCIES

As the appropriations subcommittee begins to develop legislation to fund EPA in the 2017 fiscal year, the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) appreciates your support of strong funding for programs that help provide clean and safe water infrastructure while making local utility investments more manageable for ratepayers.

As you know, the ongoing water crisis in Flint, Michigan has focused national attention on the needs of our water infrastructure. This has prompted welcome proposals by some Members of Congress to dramatically boost water infrastructure spending next year. One such proposal would provide $2 billion each to the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (SRFs), well-established programs that deliver funding to all States to help communities improve their water and wastewater infrastructure to protect public health. NACWA strongly supports these higher proposed funding levels to dramatically increase SRF appropriations in the 2017 fiscal year while bringing parity to Clean Water and Drinking Water SRF funding levels.

We also recognize that the budgetary situation faced by Congress may prevent total SRF appropriations from reaching these levels in fiscal year 2017. If that is the case, at minimum we urge Congress to reject any cuts to the Clean Water SRF in 2017—including those proposed in the President's budget—and to bring the Drinking Water SRF to an equal level of funding.

The Clean Water SRF is heavily utilized across the United States to help clean water utilities meet their many regulatory requirements under the Clean Water Act through more affordable financing terms which help ensure local ratepayers can afford their clean water bills. Clean Water SRF funds have been instrumental in many communities' successes in complying with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits, implementing secondary (biologic) treatment of wastewater, and reducing the frequency and size of sewer overflows during wet weather events. Clean Water SRFs are also increasingly used for innovative stormwater and nutrient management projects and to implement green infrastructure, which can provide cost-effective water quality improvements while also providing green spaces and improving community quality of life.

Clean water utilities will also be looking to leverage low-cost financing from the Clean Water SRF to implement controls to maintain compliance with new and updated regulatory requirements from EPA. Regulatory and guidance changes ranging from updated water quality standards for ammonia to new air emission standards for Sewage Sludge Incinerators impose costs for clean water utilities. On the enforcement side, municipal wet weather issues will continue to be an enforcement priority for EPA in fiscal year 2017. This is anticipated to likely lead to new Federal consent decrees for which communities will need to finance hundreds of millions of dollars in additional improvements. Many POTWs are also facing increasingly stringent nutrient limits, which can similarly impose compliance costs in the hundreds of millions of dollars for individual communities. The Clean Water SRF serves as an essential tool helping utilities meet their new requirements and limits.

While attaining strong SRF funding levels is clearly essential, in light of the massive costs clean water utilities face we also urge Congress to deliver robust funding to other important water infrastructure programs. In particular, we urge at least $6.5 million to continue EPA's Integrated Municipal Stormwater and Wastewater Planning Approach (Integrated Planning), which helps communities address their EPA regulations cost-effectively and strategically. Integrated Planning allows clean water utilities and their communities to strategically prioritize clean water investments to provide greater "bang for the buck" in addressing environmental and public health issues more holistically and cost-effectively.

Additionally, providing more robust SRF funding levels will help our Nation's water and wastewater systems begin to address the billions of dollars of investment needs they face in the coming decades. EPA has reported that our wastewater systems face $271 billion in documented needs over the next 20 years—investments in publicly owned wastewater conveyance and treatment facilities, sewer overflow correction, and stormwater management. Drinking water systems require $384 billion in infrastructure rehabilitation and improvements over the same timeframe according to an EPA report. And these numbers likely do not reflect the true investment needs facing communities around the Nation. With the crisis in Flint renewing na-

tional attention on water infrastructure, now is the time to take a stand by appropriating strong funding to the programs that help our communities ensure the ongoing delivery and treatment of clean and safe water.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact NACWA for additional information.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE ENERGY OFFICIALS

Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall, and members of the subcommittee, I am David Terry, Executive Director of the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO), which represents the 56 State and Territory Energy Offices. NASEO is submitting this testimony in support of funding for the ENERGY STAR program (within the Climate Protection Partnership Division of the Office of Air and Radiation) at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). NASEO supports funding of at least $55 million, including specific report language directing that the funds be utilized only for the ENERGY STAR program. The ENERGY STAR program is successful, voluntary, and cost-effective. The program has a proven track record—it makes sense, it saves energy and money and Americans embrace it. With a slowly recovering economy, ENERGY STAR helps consumers and businesses control expenditures over the long term. The program is strongly supported by product manufacturers, utilities and homebuilders, and ENERGY STAR leverages the States' voluntary efficiency actions. Voluntary ENERGY STAR activities are occurring in public buildings, such as schools, in conjunction with State Energy Offices, in Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

The ENERGY STAR program is focused on voluntary efforts that reduce the use of energy, promotes energy efficiency and renewable energy, and works with States, local governments, communities and business to achieve these goals in a cooperative, public-private manner. NASEO has worked very closely with EPA and approximately 40 States are ENERGY STAR Partners. With very limited funding, EPA's ENERGY STAR program works closely with the State Energy Offices to give consumers and businesses the opportunity to make better energy decisions and catalyzes product efficiency improvements by manufacturers without regulation or mandates.

ENERGY STAR focuses on energy efficient products as well as buildings (e.g., residential, commercial, and industrial). Americans purchased more than 320 million ENERGY STAR certified products in 2014 across more than 70 product categories for a cumulative total exceeding 5.2 billion products since 1992. The ENERGY STAR label is recognized across the United States. In 2014, 89 percent of households recognized the ENERGY STAR label when it was shown to them. This constitutes an increase of 48 percent since the Consortium for Energy Efficiency first conducted the National Awareness of ENERGY STAR survey in 2000. It makes the work of the State Energy Offices much easier, by working with the public on easily recognized products, services, and targets. In order to obtain the ENERGY STAR label a product has to meet established guidelines. ENERGY STAR's voluntary partnership programs include ENERGY STAR Buildings, ENERGY STAR Homes, ENERGY STAR Small Business, and ENERGY STAR Labeled Products. The program operates by encouraging consumers and working closely with State and local governments to purchase these products and services. Marketplace barriers are also eradicated through education. State Energy Offices are working with EPA to promote ENERGY STAR products, ENERGY STAR for new construction, ENERGY STAR for public housing, etc. A successful example of how State Energy Offices are leveraging this key national program is the Nebraska Energy Office, which since 2005, has utilized ENERGY STAR as the standard for certifying home and office electronics that are eligible under the State's successful and long-running Dollar and Energy Savings Loan program.

In 2014, millions of consumers and 16,000 voluntary partners, that included manufactures, builders, businesses, communities and utilities, tapped the value of ENERGY STAR and achieved impressive financial and environmental results. Their investments in energy-efficient technologies and practices reduced utility bills by $34 billion.

An estimated 93,000 homes were improved through the whole house retrofit program, Home Performance with ENERGY STAR (HPwES) in 2014. This work was performed by 48 locally sponsored programs and more than 2,100 participating contractors across the Nation. Since the program's inception, more than 400,000 homes have been improved through HPwES. Over 30 States, including Alabama, California, Kentucky, Minnesota, Nevada, and Pennsylvania, operate or support the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR programs.

The State Energy Offices are very encouraged with progress made at EPA and in our States to promote programs to make schools more energy efficient, in addition to an expanding ENERGY STAR Business Partners program. In Kentucky, the State has partnered with school districts and engineering firms to advance ENERGY STAR rated schools, resulting in more than 325 ENERGY STAR rated schools in the State, a 67 percent increase since 2012. Over the past few years, Kentucky has moved aggressively to promote and build zero-net energy schools. Other States that have over 150 ENERGY STAR rated schools include Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin. Over 27 percent of Utah's K–12 schools are certified as ENERGY STAR.

EPA provides technical assistance to the State Energy Offices in such areas as ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager (how to rate the performance of buildings), setting an energy target, and financing options for building improvements and building upgrade strategies. ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager is used extensively by State Energy Offices to benchmark performance of State and municipal buildings, saving taxpayer dollars. Portfolio Manager is the industry-leading benchmarking tool used voluntarily by more than 325,000 commercial buildings. Portfolio Manager is used to measure, track, assess, and report energy and water consumption.

Additionally, the industrial sector embraces ENERGY STAR and companies such as GM, Eastman Chemical, Nissan, Raytheon, Boeing and Toyota are recognized for sustained energy excellence by the program. At the close of 2014, the number of industrial sites committed to the ENERGY STAR Challenge for Industry grew, while 306 sites met or exceeded their targets by achieving an average 20 percent reduction in industrial energy intensity.

The State Energy Offices are working cooperatively with our peers in the State environmental agencies and State public utilities commissions to ensure that programs, regulations, projects and policies are developed recognizing both energy and environmental concerns. We have worked closely with this program at EPA to address these issues. We encourage these continued efforts.

CONCLUSION

The ENERGY STAR program saves consumers billions of dollars every year. The payback is enormous. NASEO supports robust program funding of at least $55 million in fiscal year 2017. Funding for the ENERGY STAR program is justified. It's a solid public-private relationship that leverages resources, time and talent to produce tangible results by saving energy and money. NASEO endorses these activities and the State Energy Offices are working very closely with EPA to cooperatively implement a variety of critical national programs without mandates.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE FORESTERS

The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) appreciates the opportunity to submit written public testimony to the Senate and House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies regarding our fiscal year 2017 appropriations recommendations. Our priorities focus primarily on appropriations for the USDA Forest Service (Forest Service) State and Private Forestry (S&PF) programs.

State Foresters deliver technical and financial assistance, along with forest health, water and wildfire protection for more than two-thirds of the Nation's 751 million acres of forests. The Forest Service S&PF mission area provides vital support to deliver these services, which contribute to the socioeconomic and environmental health of rural and urban communities. The comprehensive process for delivering these services is articulated in each State's Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy (State Forest Action Plan), authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill and continued in the Agriculture Act of 2014.

Your support of the following programs is critical to helping States address the many and varied challenges outlined in Forest Action Plans.

Wildland Fire and Forest Fuels

Wildland Fire Funding: State Foresters ask for your continued support to pass legislation that fixes the broken wildfire funding system and addresses much-needed forest management reforms, either separately or in tandem.

The current wildfire suppression funding model and cycle of fire transfers and repayments continues to the challenge the Forest Service's ability to achieve its overall mission and negatively impacts Agency programs of priority to State Foresters. Additionally, the increasing 10-year average has not met annual suppression needs since before fiscal year 2002. We are thankful to the subcommittee for the full transfer repayment and increased suppression funding in fiscal year 2016. However, we understand this is not expected to occur every year. The Department of the Interior and the Forest Service need a long-term fire funding solution that would result in stable and more predictable budgets.

In addition to the wildfire funding challenges are the challenges posed by the Nation's unhealthy, overgrown and fire-prone Federal forests. We support environmentally responsible forestry reforms on Federal lands as part of the funding remedy or as a separate effort.

State Fire Assistance (SFA): More people living in fire-prone landscapes, high fuel loads, drought, and unhealthy landscapes are among the factors that led most State Foresters to identify wildland fire as a priority issue in their State Forest Action Plans. We now grapple with increasingly expensive and complex wildland fires—fires that frequently threaten human life and property. In 2015 there were 68,151 wildfires with a record-breaking more than 10 million acres burned. Eighty percent of the total number of fires were where State and local departments had primary jurisdiction. Twenty-seven percent of the total acres burned were on State and private lands. In 2015, 85 percent of all local and State crews and engine dispatched outside of their geographic area were responding to Federal fires, primarily on initial attack.

Attacking fires when they are small is the key to reducing fatalities, injuries, loss of homes and cutting Federal fire-fighting costs.

SFA and Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) are the fundamental Federal mechanisms for assisting States and local fire departments in responding to wildland fires and in conducting management activities that mitigate fire risk on non-Federal lands. SFA helps train and equip local first responders who are often first to arrive at a wildland fire incident and who play a crucial role in keeping fires and their costs as small as possible. A small investment of SFA funds supports State forestry agencies in accessing and repurposing equipment from the Federal Excess Personal Property and the Firefighter Property programs. In fiscal year 2015, these two programs delivered more than $169 million in equipment for use by State and local first responders. NASF supports funding the State Fire Assistance program at $87 million and Volunteer Fire Assistance at $15 million in fiscal year 2017. These are the 2011/12 enacted levels. The need for increased funding for fire suppression has broad support and the administration's budget recommends a 12 percent funding increase to meet the anticipated fire threat. The need to increase fire suppression funding for State and private lands, where 80 percent of wildfires occur, is just as urgent.

Forest Pests and Invasive Plants

Also among the greatest threats identified in the State Forest Action Plans are native and non-native pests and diseases. These pests and diseases have the potential to displace native trees, shrubs and other vegetation types in forests; the Forest Service estimates that hundreds of native and non-native insects and diseases damage the Nation's forests each year. They are also devastating the trees and forests of America's cities and towns. (The cost of replacing a single street tree is approximately $1000.) The growing number of damaging pests and diseases are often introduced and spread by way of wooden shipping materials, movement of firewood, and through various types of recreation. In 2010, approximately 6.4 million acres suffered mortality from insects and diseases[1] and there is an estimated 81.3 million acres at risk of attack by insects and disease over the next 15 years.[2] These losses threaten clean and abundant water availability, wildlife habitat, clean air, and

[1] Man, Gary. 2011. Major Forest Insect and Disease Conditions in the United States: 2010 Update. Last accessed on March, 5, 2015 at: http://www.fs.fed.us/foresthealth/publications/ConditionsReport_2011.pdf.

[2] Tkacz, Bory, et al. 2014. NIDRM 2012 Report Files: Executive Summary. Last accessed on March, 5, 2015 at: http://www.fs.fed.us/foresthealth/technology/pdfs/2012_RiskMap_Exec_summary.pdf.

other environmental services. Furthermore, extensive areas of high insect or disease mortality can set the stage for large-scale, catastrophic wildfire.

The Cooperative Forest Health Management program supports activities related to prevention, monitoring, suppression, and eradication of insects, diseases, and plants through provision of technical and financial assistance to States and Territories to maintain healthy, productive forest ecosystems on non-Federal forest lands. Forest pests know no bounds. Controlling pests on private lands can stop millions of dollars in damage much of which would occur on public lands. The Cooperative Forest Health Management program plays a critical part in protecting communities already facing outbreaks and in preventing exposure of more forests and trees to the devastating and costly effects of exotic and invasive pests and pathogens. NASF supports funding the Forest Health Management—Cooperative Lands Program at $48 million in fiscal year 2017. (2012 enacted level.)

Assisting Landowners and Maintaining Working Forest Landscapes—Forest Stewardship Program

Working forest landscapes are a key part of the rural landscape, providing an estimated 900,000 jobs, clean water, wood products, and other essential services to millions of Americans. Private forests make up two-thirds of all the forestland in the United States and support an average of eight jobs per 1,000 acres.[3] However, the Forest Service estimates that 57 million acres of private forests in the U.S. are at risk of conversion to urban development over the next two decades. Programs like the Forest Stewardship Program and Forest Legacy Program are key tools identified in the State Forest Action Plans for keeping working forests intact and for providing a full suite of benefits to society. Almost 90 percent of those who have stewardship plans, implement them. Almost 50 percent of the Nation's wood supply comes from small landowners who are the target of this program. Last year this program assisted over 323,000 landowners. Again fires and diseases know no bounds. A robust program has positive impacts on the Nation's watersheds, wildlife habitat and neighboring public lands. NASF supports funding the Forest Stewardship Program at $29 million in fiscal year 2017. $29 million is the fiscal year 2012 enacted amount. The need for increased funding on Federal lands for more active management has broad support and the administration's budget recommends an 8 percent increase over last year's enacted budget line item. The need to increase funding on State and private lands is just as urgent.

Forest Legacy Program

This program provides critical Federal assistance to States and private landowners to keep working forests working through permanent conservation easements and in some cases, fee acquisitions. Each easement acquisition is required to have a long-term forest stewardship plan.

Working forests play an important role to sustain the economic, ecological, and social well-being of America's rural and urban areas through the jobs they support and the benefits they provide, such as wildfire threat reduction, clean air and water, wildlife habitat, and outdoor recreation space. NASF supports funding the Forest Legacy Program at $62 million in fiscal year 2017. (NASF supports the program being fully funded from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and not be included in the discretionary budget cap. NASF also recommends report language requiring coordination with State Foresters prior to recommendation and selection of easements and acquisitions due to land management considerations and tax implications.)

Urban and Community Forest Management Challenges

Urban forests are important to achieving energy savings, improved air quality, neighborhood stability, aesthetic value, reduced noise, and improved quality of life in municipalities and communities around the country. There are demonstrable studies that show positive impacts urban trees and forests have on: childhood asthma, mitigating the impacts of auto exhaust, reducing home heating and air conditioning costs, providing economically viable solutions for storm water absorption, and even reducing crime rates. In fact, urban forests have been shown to provide environmental, social, and economic benefits to the more than 80 percent of Americans living in urban areas.[4] Yet, urban and community forests face serious threats,

[3] Forest2Market. *The Economic Impact of Privately-Owned Forests.* 2009.

[4] United States Census Bureau, *Growth in Urban Population Outpaces Rest of Nation, Census Bureau Reports.* Available at https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/2010_census/cb12-50.html. Last Accessed March 5, 2015.

such as development and urbanization, invasive pests and diseases, and fire in the wildland urban interface (WUI).

Since its expansion under the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1990 (CFAA), the Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) Program has provided technical and financial assistance to promote stewardship of urban forests in communities of all sizes across the country. The program is delivered in close partnership with State Foresters and leverages existing local efforts that have helped thousands of communities and towns manage, maintain, and improve their tree cover and green spaces. The program directly serves more than 7,000 communities across the United States. In terms of climate change mitigation and effectiveness, urban and community activities including tree planting have virtually no detractors. The program has over a 2:1 match for Federal dollars provided for this program. NASF supports funding the Urban and Community Forestry program at $31 million in fiscal year 2017.

Importance of Forest Inventory Data in Monitoring Forest Issues

The Forest Inventory and Analysis program (FIA) enables forest managers and the natural resource community to understand the scope and scale of trends and changes in forest conditions and to make projections of future conditions. Funding for FIA supports State and private lands, which account for two-thirds of America's forests and provide public benefits such as clean air and water, wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, jobs and wood products.

NASF is concerned with the recent proposed and realized reductions to the USDA Forest Service Research and Development budget and recommends a total R&D funding level of $303 million—$83 million allocated to FIA. NASF supports funding the Forest Inventory and Analysis program at $83 million in fiscal year 2017.

Landscape Scale Restoration

National priority Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) projects are a key way that States, in collaboration with the USDA Forest Service and other partners, address critical forest priorities across the landscape. LSR projects focus only on the most critical priorities identified in each State's Forest Action Plan and on achieving national goals as laid out in the State and Private Forestry national themes. As a result, LSR contributes to achieving results across the landscape and to making meaningful local, regional, and national impacts.

Competitive allocation of Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act funds was codified in the 2008 Farm Bill. The LSR budget line item was subsequently included in the fiscal year 2014 appropriations bill as the funding mechanism for a competitive process aimed at addressing critical priorities identified in State Forest Action Plans and based on the tenets of the State and Private Forestry redesign effort—conserve working forest landscapes, protect forests from harm, and enhance public benefit from trees and forests.

LSR allows State forestry agencies to target resources toward the highest priority forest needs in a State, group of States, or region, while also meeting national priorities.

Regional review teams comprised of State and Federal officials with knowledge of the on-the-ground realities within the region carry out a rigorous review process to select the LSR projects that will receive funding within their region. Selected LSR projects are, as a result, the best and most ground-truthed landscape-scale, cross-boundary, outcome-driven projects.

NASF supports funding the Landscape Scale Restoration program at $23 million in fiscal year 2017. NASF does not support increases in this program coming at the expense of other programs described above. NASF also supports report language which requires additional funding over fiscal year 2016 levels for LSR to be allocated for the highest national priorities as identified in each of the State Forest Action Plans as determined by each State Forester.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR AMERICAN INDIAN ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall, and members of the subcommittee, I am Gary Davis, Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma tribal member, and President/CEO of the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development (NCAIED or the National Center). The National Center appreciates this opportunity to express support for fiscal year 2017 funding requests within the Interior appropriations bill that will support access to capital, and business, economic and energy development in Indian Country.

Now in its 5th decade of operations, the National Center assists Indian tribes, tribal enterprises, Alaska Native regional and village corporations, Native Hawaiian Organizations, and American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian business owners and entrepreneurs with their business, financing and contracting needs, including trainings, business development and other guidance, marketing tools, access to capital, and procurement technical assistance. In addition to providing these offerings 24 hours, 7 days a week through our new Native Edge Web portal, we host national and regional Reservation Economic Summits (RES). During March 21–24, we presented our 30th Anniversary National RES in Las Vegas, featuring Business Boot Camp and many other training sessions focused on business and economic development, a full day of procurement and business matchmaking, and a 2-day trade show. Several sessions addressed access to capital, the focus of this statement.

Overview of Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Requests for Indian Programs

The National Center views the President's fiscal year 2017 budget requests as quite responsive to Indian tribes' call for increases in myriad tribal programs, representing roughly 5 percent and 8 percent hikes in funding for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Indian Health Service, respectively, as well as fully funding Contract Support Costs. We are excited about the significant emphasis on Native youth through the Generation Indigenous Initiative, especially the components focused on Youth Entrepreneurship. The National Center hosted a successful "Youth Entrepreneurship Summit" (YES!) at our regional RES New Mexico in November, 2015 for over 200 students who traveled from nearby Pueblos and Indian tribes from out of State. Our RES Oklahoma conference in July, 2016 will feature another full day of YES! sessions for students from tribes in Oklahoma and surrounding States.

Properly Fund Interior's Indian Loan Guarantee Program

One major shortcoming in the fiscal year 2017 budget requests is the paltry funding for the Indian Loan Guarantee Program of the Department of the Interior (DOI). Congress must increase the funding for this important program, as the National Center has testified repeatedly at several hearings conducted by the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs over the last 2 years, and urged at a special Committee briefing hosted for its staff and professional staff of the House and Senate Interior Appropriations Subcommittees last June.

The fiscal year 2017 budget request provides only $7.57 million for a tiny increase to cover inflation, but reduces the current level, $113 million, to $105.9 million for the aggregate value of loans than can be guaranteed—despite the huge demand for this program. Instead, we urge the subcommittee to approve $15 million, a $7.4 million increase that would be modest compared to the huge jump in total value of private sector guaranteed loans that are needed to meet demand for capital in Indian Country. Aggregate loan value could be $225–$250 million, depending on what the Office of Management and Budget would allow.

The DOI loan guarantee program has proven to be a very successful leveraging tool that incentivizes private sector lenders to finance tribal projects, tribal enterprises, and businesses owned by Native Americans. Yet the current funding prevents the program from keeping pace with burgeoning demands for business and economic development capital in Indian Country where most private banks will not lend because they deem the risks too high. The banks (several tribal owned) that DOI has certified to receive these guarantees will lend to tribes and Indian businesses on Indian lands that cannot be used as loan collateral, and will consent to tribal court jurisdiction to resolve disputes or claims (which are rare). While the Small Business Administration (SBA) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) loan guarantee programs may be larger sources of guarantee support, they are not a substitute for the DOI program, for several reasons: (1) the guarantee is lower; (2) SBA's loan documents are not feasible in Indian Country; and (3) loan purpose and USDA product offering are not as flexible as offered by DOI. USDA does not offer a revolving line of credit for working capital, seasonal or cyclical needs. In one recent case, a USDA loan guarantee's terms would have resulted in a default had DOI's program not stepped in with a guarantee structure that allowed the loan to fund a project that will create more than 100 jobs over the loan's term.

Recognizing the need to expand the Indian Loan Guarantee Program, Congress authorized a major increase in 2006 for the aggregate limit on guaranteed loans from $500 million to $1.5 billion. However, due to insufficient funding for the program's credit subsidy, the annual aggregate of guaranteed loans has hovered around only $100 million. In fiscal year 2015, the program was funded at about $7.7 million, and the entire guarantee allocation was exhausted 4 months before the end of the fiscal year—leaving a backlog of pending loan applications approaching another

$100 million. At the current funding level, the guarantee allocation likely will be exhausted even earlier in fiscal year 2016!

The DOI program has a good track record of successful projects, less than a 2.5 percent default rate (lower than those of SBA and USDA), and could infuse hundreds of millions more dollars into Indian Country if expanded significantly, as requested. In Senate Committee on Indian Affairs testimony on June 17, 2015, National Center Board Chairman Derrick Watchman listed six successful projects financed with the support of Indian loan guarantees, and the many jobs those projects created. Below are additional examples:

—A $12 million guaranteed loan enabled Alaska Native village Huna Totem Corporation, Inc. to redevelop an old cannery site into a new dock and tourist destination for visiting cruise ships, creating about 130 year-round and summer jobs—Grand Opening May 23;

—A $2.65 million guaranteed loan to Alaska Native village, Kwethluk, to construct a general store, adding 2–3 jobs, space for small engine repair operations, and greater storage for larger food quantities to afford offering lower prices to village customers;

—Five guaranteed loans, totaling $15 million over many years, helped build the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, owned by 19 Pueblos in New Mexico, and create 200 jobs;

—A series of 10 new guaranteed loans (totaling $47 million) to 5 separate borrowers will finance projects on Navajo Nation, including: a gasoline stop with a convenience store on Navajo, creating 50 temporary and 30 permanent jobs; the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority headquarters building construction and infrastructure improvements, creating over 200 temporary and 100 permanent jobs; and several $150,000+ lines of credit for seasonal working capital for Navajo businesses;

—Two new loans totaling $7.3 million to Big Lagoon Rancheria in California to construct a wellness center to serve the tribe and surrounding area, creating 8–12 additional jobs;

—A $12 million guaranteed loan for a California tribe's resort construction, creating an estimated 100+ jobs;

—A $6.6 million guaranteed refinance for improvements and added services for a Native family's three convenience stores, one on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota;

—A $5.5 million guaranteed loan to construct a new hotel on the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana near Glacier National Park, adding tourism, retail traffic, and 25 jobs;

—Pending loans subject to guarantee for projects in North Dakota: one in Belcourt for a startup hardware/lumber business; and the other for business expansion and start up of a new procurement division of a tribal enterprise of the Three Affiliated Tribes; and

—A $10 million guaranteed loan for a Nevada tribe's economic development project.

As the program produces a remarkable return of $15 in private sector funds for every $1 of Federal funds invested, Congress should appropriate $15 million for the Indian Loan Guarantee Program for fiscal year 2017 to support private lending in a range of $225–$250 million.

Funding for the Indian Loan Guarantee Programs at $15 million is supported by the National Center, National Congress of American Indians, Native American Finance Officers Association and many other national and regional Native American organizations representing Indian tribes, Alaska Native regional and village corporations, tribal enterprises and Native American-owned businesses nationwide.

Other Programs Facilitating Business and Economic Development in Indian Country

The National Center also urges approval of the following fiscal year 2017 budget requests as modest initiatives that leverage or spur substantial development in Indian Country:

Carcieri: The Interior budget requests include general provisions to restore parity among tribes striving to protect and enhance their original land base, or to reacquire some of the lands they lost, by confirming the Secretary of Interior's authority to acquire land in trust for any federally recognized tribe. Approval is imperative.

Streamlining and Capacity Building: Approving the requested increases for the following initiatives will help streamline delivery of technical and financial assistance to accelerate business, economic and energy development in Indian Country:

—$4 million for the BIA's "Native-One-Stop" initiated in 2015 to facilitate tribes' search for and access to Federal resources;

—$1 million to assist tribes in adopting uniform commercial codes to strengthen their legal infrastructure and promote credit and other capital transactions that will spur business and economic development; and

—$5 million for the Indian Energy Service Center for its Tribal Energy Program to provide technical and financial assistance to tribal communities to deploy small to medium-scale renewable energy generation projects.

Support for the Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development: In addition to the increases requested for the energy components of this important Office, we recommend that some additional funding be provided for activities of the Economic Development Division.

In closing, I want to thank the subcommittee for the opportunity to present these requests to increase support for the above programs that invest Federal dollars as leverage to multiply exponentially the amount of private capital invested in business, economic and energy development in Indian Country.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL GROUND WATER ASSOCIATION

The National Ground Water Association (NGWA) requests that $5 million be allocated in the fiscal year 2017 Department of Interior budget to the United States Geological Survey (USGS) account in its Groundwater and Streamflow Information Program to continue implementation and maintenance of the National Ground-Water Monitoring Network (NGWMN). NGWA is the world's largest association of groundwater professionals, representing public and private sector engineers, scientists, water well contractors, manufacturers, and suppliers of groundwater related products and services.

Water is one of the most critical natural resources to human, ecosystem and economic survival. Nationally, nearly 50 percent of the drinking water supply comes from groundwater and in some locations it is relied on by 80 percent of Americans for drinking water. Groundwater also serves as a key source of agricultural irrigation water.

However, this vital unseen resource—on which the Nation's people, food supply, economy and ecosystems rely—is not monitored on a consistent basis across States, nor is most data publicly available. Groundwater levels and quality change over time, and the continued implementation of the NGWMN will allow water resources to be better utilized, managed and protected through data-sharing on an online portal.

As with any valuable natural resource, our groundwater reserves must be monitored to assist in planning and minimizing potential impacts from shortages or supply disruptions. Just as one cannot effectively oversee the Nation's economy without key data; one cannot adequately address the Nation's food, energy, economic, and drinking water security without understanding the extent, availability and sustainability of a critical input—groundwater.

Congress acknowledged the need for enhanced groundwater monitoring by authorizing a national groundwater monitoring network with passage of Public Law 111–11 (Omnibus Public Land Management Act) the SECURE Water Act of 2009 and viability of the network was proven through the completion of pilot projects in six States—Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Montana, New Jersey, and Texas. These States voluntarily pilot tested concepts for a national groundwater monitoring network as developed by the Federal Advisory Committee on Water Information's (ACWI) Subcommittee on Ground Water (SOGW).

$2.6 million in funding was provided in fiscal year 2015 and an additional $3.6 million was provided in fiscal year 2016. The funds are being used to begin implementation of the national network through the creation of cooperative agreements with new and existing data providers. However, this funding will only allow implementation to begin across a handful of States. Additional funding for fiscal year 2017 is requested to allow for implementation across more States.

Once implemented nationwide, the NGWMN would provide consistent, comparable nationwide data that would be accessible through a public Web portal for Federal, State, local government and private sector users. In these tight fiscal times, the proposed network would build on existing State and Federal investments, maximizing their usefulness and leveraging current dollars to build toward systematic nationwide monitoring of the groundwater resource.

Funding from the NGWMN will be used for two purposes:

1. Provide grants to regional, State, and tribal governments to cost share increased expenses to upgrade monitoring networks for the 50 States to meet the standards necessary to understand the Nation's groundwater resources.

2. Support the additional work necessary for USGS to manage a national groundwater monitoring network and provide national data access through an Internet Web portal.

Though the amount requested is small in the context of the Department of Interior's annual budget request, funding is vital when we understand that for a small investment we can begin finally to put in place adequate monitoring of the hidden resource that provides nearly 50 percent of the Nation's drinking water supply and serves as a key driver for our agricultural economy.

Thank you for your considering this testimony.

The National Ground Water Association is a not-for-profit professional society and trade association for the groundwater industry. NGWA is the largest organization of groundwater professionals in the world. Our more than 11,000 members from all 50 States and 72 countries include some of the leading public and private sector groundwater scientists, engineers, water well contractors, manufacturers, and suppliers of groundwater related products and services. The Association's vision is to be the leading community of groundwater professionals that promotes the responsible development, use and management of groundwater resources.

PREPARED STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE NATIONAL GROUNDWATER MONITORING NETWORK

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we ask for your continued support of the National Groundwater Monitoring Network (NGWMN) in the fiscal year 2017 Interior and Environment Appropriations bill. Groundwater is a critical source of drinking water for more than 40 percent of the country, and in some locations is relied on by more than 80 percent of the population. It is a primary source of irrigation water for high-quality agricultural products and an important economic driver for the U.S. economy. Therefore, we the undersigned ask Congress to fund the NGWMN at a level of $5 million for fiscal year 2017.

Drought conditions persist throughout the West, and groundwater depletion has expressed itself through subsidence, lowering of aquifer water-levels below well intakes, and impacts on water quality. Drought conditions underscore the need to develop a comprehensive and publicly accessible groundwater monitoring network.

The NGWMN was authorized in the 2009 SECURE Water Act and is at the beginning stages of implementation, providing Federal support for pilot programs in six States—Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Montana, New Jersey, and Texas and initial appropriations of $2.6 million and $3.6 million provided in fiscal year 2015 and fiscal year 2016. This support allowed for cooperative agreements to be signed between the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and several States. However, support must continue and be expanded to enable broader implementation at a time when stresses to water supplies across the country are felt daily.

The NGWMN is designed to expand and enhance many existing monitoring efforts, but these efforts are not presented in a common platform and often require extensive analysis in order to use the data collected on a national scale, limiting the data's usability. The NGWMN, through a Federal-State cooperative program, provides for the collection of groundwater data from representative wells meeting common criteria, assuring the usability and quality of the data contributed to the network.

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) maintains and updates the network, providing public access through a web portal, allowing anyone with a web browser to see groundwater level and water quality trends for wells in the network. States and other contributors to the NGWMN retain ownership of the collected data.

Ultimately, the network will provide the data required to assess baseline conditions and long-term trends in groundwater levels and water quality in important aquifers at national, multistate, and regional scales—even aquifers shared with Canada and Mexico. The network will also provide data for national, State, and aquifer-level management decisions to help determine the long-term viability of these groundwater sources.

Groundwater's role in securing our Nation's future is invaluable, which is why we request that Congress fund the NGWMN at $5 million for fiscal year 2017. To en-

sure that the funding fulfills the intent of the NGWMN as authorized by the SECURE Water Act, we also request the following report language be included:

> Within Water Resources, the bill includes $5 million for continuation of a National Groundwater Monitoring Network, as requested. The Committee intends at least 50 percent of these funds to be used to provide cost-share grants to State and local entities to upgrade monitoring networks to national standards and to incorporate wells into the network. The funding will also support additional work by the USGS necessary to manage and provide data access through an Internet web portal.

Sincerely,

Alaska Water Well Association
American Geosciences Institute
Arizona Water Well Association
Association of American State Geologists
California Groundwater Association
Colorado Water Well Contractors Association
Empire State Water Well Drillers Association
Florida Ground Water Association
Georgia Association of Groundwater Professionals
Groundwater Resources Association of California
Ground Water Protection Council
Illinois Association of Groundwater Professionals
Irrigation Association
Louisiana Ground Water Association
Michigan Ground Water Association
Minnesota Water Well Association
Montana Water Well Drillers Association
National Ground Water Association
National Utility Contractors Association
Nebraska Well Drillers Association
Nevada Groundwater Association
North Carolina Ground Water Association
South Carolina Ground Water Association
Tennessee Water Well Association
Oregon Ground Water Association
Washington State Ground Water Association
Water Systems Council
Water Quality Association
Wyoming Water Well Association

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL HORSE & BURRO RANGELAND MANAGEMENT COALITION

The National Horse & Burro Rangeland Management Coalition appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the fiscal year 2017 appropriations for the Bureau of Land Management Wild Horse & Burro Program. The National Horse & Burro Rangeland Management Coalition includes a wide range of sportsmen's, livestock, wildlife, and land conservation organizations and professional societies. Collectively, we represent millions of Americans and focus on commonsense, ecologically sound approaches to managing horses and burros to promote healthy wildlife and rangelands for future generations.

Our coalition is concerned about the exponentially growing population of wild horses and burros on our Nation's rangelands and the minimal efforts proposed in the President's fiscal year 2017 budget to reduce their impacts.

As of March 1, 2015, wild horse and burro populations surpassed 58,000 animals on BLM rangelands. This threshold exceeds the BLM estimated ecologically sustainable level of 26,715 horses and burros by more than 31,000. This extreme level of overpopulation negatively impacts the country's rangelands, risking the future of the ecosystem. By continuing to allow horses and burros to exceed sustainable levels, the BLM and Congress are placing the future of wildlife, rangelands, livestock operations, and the horses and burros themselves in jeopardy.

The focus of the BLM Wild Horse & Burro program should revert to its original purpose and stated goal of achieving appropriate management levels (AML). Direct removal of horses and burros from impacted regions will aid in AML being achieved while simultaneously reducing their impact on the supporting ecosystem.

The President's fiscal year 2017 budget proposal plans for the removal of only 2,500 horses and burros from the country's rangelands. Wild horse populations typically grow by 18–20 percent per year and double in size every 4–5 years. This means that even with fiscal year 2016 removals reaching the proposed amount of 2,500 individuals, the current on-range population is likely around 66,000. This is an unacceptable rate of increase for a population that already greatly exceeds AML. Such population numbers will continue to cause an unacceptable level of damage to a valuable asset for our country.

We appreciate the BLM's increased attention to fertility control methods through research partnerships with universities and the U.S. Geological Survey, as we believe that scientifically based use of fertility control and implementation of non-reproducing herds can be an important component of the solution to this problem. However, fertility control alone does not solve the problem and should not be the primary approach. About 85 percent of Herd Management Areas (HMA) are already over AML, some reaching more than 500 percent of their AML. Fertility control methods, if they are effective in reducing pregnancies, will only help maintain population levels in the short term, not reduce them.

Direct removal of wild horses and burros from the range is the only way to achieve AML in a reasonable amount of time. The BLM's efforts to transfer corralled horses and burros to more cost effective eco-sanctuaries and holding facilities as well as the BLM's request for authority to transfer horses and burros to local, State, and Federal agencies are steps in the right direction to free up space for further removals. They will not, however, come close to providing the space needed for the removal of 31,000 excess horses and burros currently on the range.

We are hopeful that these small initiatives will highlight the need for drastic legislative changes to the BLM's management of wild horses and burros. Without an increase in the rate of removal of horses and burros, populations will continue to expand and our Nation will witness not only growing degradation to its rangeland ecosystem, but also growing costs to its taxpayers.

We urge this subcommittee and other Members of Congress to address this increasing problem for our Nation's valuable rangelands by directing the BLM to remove horses at a rate substantial enough to produce significant results and protect our resources.

Thank you for considering the input of our coalition. We invite your questions and welcome the opportunity to discuss this ongoing issue and possible solutions with the subcommittee.

American Farm Bureau Federation
American Sheep Industry Association
Masters of Foxhounds Association
Mule Deer Foundation
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Rifle Association
National Wildlife Refuge Association
Public Lands Council
Public Lands Foundation
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Safari Club International
Society for Range Management
The Wildlife Society

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL HUMANITIES ALLIANCE

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee:

On behalf of the National Humanities Alliance, with our more than 150 member organizations, I write to express strong support for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

OVERVIEW

For fiscal year 2017, we respectfully urge the subcommittee to fund the National Endowment for the Humanities at $155 million.

We would like to thank the subcommittee for appropriating $147.9 million to the NEH for fiscal year 2016, thereby increasing the Endowment's funding by nearly $2 million. This increase was a first step in rebuilding the capacity of NEH, which has been severely eroded in recent years. Despite the increase for fiscal year 2016, the Endowment's current funding is 20 percent below its fiscal year 2010 level, when adjusted for inflation. Modestly increasing NEH's budget to $155 million would allow the Endowment to regain its capacity to support the humanities at a time when the humanities are increasingly called upon to meet national needs.

While we recognize the seriousness of the fiscal situation faced by Congress and the administration, and we understand the difficult choices that are before this subcommittee, we believe that expanding the capacity of NEH should be a priority. In the remainder of this testimony, I will highlight some of the many ways that NEH serves national needs and describe the ways in which the humanities, more generally, have been called upon to help accomplish critical national goals.

NEH SERVES NATIONAL NEEDS

The National Endowment for the Humanities' funding is distributed to the Federal/State Partnership, which supports humanities councils in every State and Territory; Competitive Grants divisions, which award peer-reviewed grants in Research, Education, Preservation, Digital Humanities, Challenge Grants, and Public Programs; and the Common Good Initiative, which harnesses the power of the humanities to address society's pressing challenges. I will highlight just three examples of how NEH grants serve clear national needs.

1. *NEH's Standing Together program aids veterans' assimilation into civilian life and deepens the public awareness of the experience of war.*

In the past 3 years, the NEH has added the Standing Together program to its already critical work. Last year's increased appropriation was critical to expanding this program, although much unmet demand continues to exist. The initiative funds reading groups for veterans that help them process their experiences through discussions of literature on war and homecoming; writing programs for veterans suffering from PTSD; intensive college-preparation programs; and training for Veterans Affairs staff to help them understand the experiences of veterans. One key example is Missouri's Veteran's Writing Workshops, sponsored by the Missouri Humanities Council and executed in collaboration with the VA St. Louis Medical System at Jefferson Barracks, the St. Louis Public Library, and Drury University. These workshops are designed for veterans and their families—helping them to process and better express their experiences through writing and narrative. The fiction, non-fiction, and prose composed in these workshops has been compiled into an anthology series entitled *Proud to Be: Writing by American Warriors,* published by Southeast Missouri State University Press, which allows the broader American public to more fully understand the experience of military service.

2. *NEH plays a key role in the preservation of native languages and cultures.*

NEH supports the documentation and teaching of native languages, history, and culture. A recent grant supported the creation of an online digital archive of approximately 700 objects, art works, and photographs representing the cultural heritage of the Chugach people of southern Alaska. Another grant provided support to make Ojibwe cultural artifacts—including beadwork, recorded songs, historical photographs, and census rolls—accessible online to tribal members, teachers, and the public. NEH's Office of Challenge Grants awarded funding to the Northwest Indian College in Bellingham, Washington to develop programs to preserve the culture and revitalize the language of the Salish people. These are just a few examples of NEH's long-term commitment to sustaining, revitalizing, and preserving Native American languages and cultures.

3. *NEH works in underserved regions.*

Through NEH on the Road, NEH brings museum exhibitions to underserved regions. Between 2014 and 2017, House & Home, the flagship installation at the National Building Museum, will travel to Belton, Texas; Townsend, Tennessee; and Carthage, Missouri among 25 sites total. The Humanities in the Public Square program, launched in late 2015, also promises to play a key role in building rural and underserved communities. One grant awarded under this program to North Dakota State University in Fargo, entitled "Telling Stories, Creating Community: Understanding the Legacies of War at Home," will foster community building through dialogues between veterans, families of veterans, and the larger community in Fargo-Morehead.

In addition to these highlighted programs, each year NEH awards hundreds of competitive, peer-reviewed grants to individual scholars and a broad range of nonprofit educational organizations around the country. Grantees include universities, 2- and 4-year colleges, humanities centers, research institutes, museums, historical societies, libraries, archives, scholarly associations, K–12 schools, local education agencies, public television/film/radio producers, and more. Through its competitive grants programs, NEH supports the preservation of collections that would be otherwise lost, path-breaking research that brings critical knowledge to light, programs for teachers that enrich instruction in schools, and public programs that reach individuals and communities in every district in the country.

Overall, NEH's support is crucial for building and sustaining humanities' infrastructure in all 50 States, serving American citizens at all stages of life.

IMPORTANCE OF THE HUMANITIES TO NATIONAL NEEDS

The humanities are increasingly called upon to play critical roles in our efforts to achieve four national goals: opportunity for all Americans, innovation and economic development, productive global engagement, and strong communities.

Opportunity for All Americans

Many Americans lack access to opportunity because they are deficient in a number of critical skills that are sought by employers. In a recent study conducted by the Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, and the Society for Human Resource Management, employers ranked reading and writing as top inadequacies in new hires. More than a third of employers found high school graduates "deficient" in reading comprehension, and "written communications" topped the list of applied skills found lacking in high school and college graduates. These deficiencies not only limit the economic mobility of individuals, they also carry an economic burden for society as annual spending on remedial writing courses is estimated at more than $3.1 billion for large corporations and $221 million for State employers.

Innovation and Economic Growth

Employers increasingly seek employees who can combine the cultural knowledge and analytical ability fostered by humanities programs with technical knowledge and scientific research fostered by STEM education to create innovation and economic growth. In an effort to serve this demand, the Committee on the Engineer of 2020, a group convened by the National Academy of Engineering, recommends increased interdisciplinary education—including the humanities—in order to train engineers with the broad perspective necessary for 21st century innovation. Similarly, a substantial number of medical schools have integrated humanities coursework into their programs to enhance the cultural knowledge and observational abilities of their graduates with the goal of providing higher quality, more efficient care. Recognizing the role that the humanities play in fostering innovation, countries such as China and India have begun to integrate the humanities into their own education systems.

Productive Global Engagement

As they deal with increasingly complex international relationships, business and military leaders look to the humanities to provide critical knowledge about communities throughout the world. These leaders argue that our ability to engage productively with the world depends on the deep knowledge of the languages, cultures, and histories of rapidly changing areas of the world that the humanities cultivate and maintain. Historians, linguists, anthropologists, archaeologists, and scholars of literature and religion, among others, spend years learning about communities and their deep roots, thereby gaining expertise that informs those who seek to work in these geographic areas. In 2013, former Ambassador to Afghanistan, Karl Eikenberry, described the critical role of the humanities in preparing our citizens for global engagement, "We need a strong cadre of Americans in our government, military, business, civil society, academe, and beyond who have the right skills and experience to help America stay connected with the world and shape outcomes that secure our national interests."

Strong Communities

Finally, with the well-documented decline in critical, community-based social institutions, communities throughout our own country are trying to foster a sense of shared identity and responsibility. In doing so, they rely on the humanities to preserve and explore their history and traditions in order to promote the understanding of common ideals, enduring civic values, and shared cultural heritage. To strengthen communities, humanities councils, museums, libraries, and universities produce vital programs that promote understanding among diverse communities through the cultivation and exchange of knowledge about cultural heritage and history.

CONCLUSION

We recognize that Congress faces difficult choices in allocating funds in this and coming years. We ask the subcommittee to consider modestly increased funding for the humanities through NEH as an investment in opportunity for all Americans, innovation and economic growth, productive global engagement, and strong communities. Thank you for consideration of our request and for your past and continued support for the humanities.

Founded in 1981, the National Humanities Alliance advances national humanities policy in the areas of research, preservation, public programming, and teaching.

More than 150 organizations are members of NHA, including scholarly associations, humanities research centers, colleges, universities, and organizations of museums, libraries, historical societies, humanities councils, and higher education institutions.

[This statement was submitted by Stephen Kidd, Executive Director.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ASSOCIATION

The National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) is a national American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) nonprofit organization. NICWA has provided leadership in the development of public policy that supports tribal self-determination in child welfare and children's mental health systems for over 30 years. This testimony will provide recommendations for the following programs administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in the Department of the Interior: Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention ($43 million), Social Services ($57.3 million), Welfare Assistance ($80 million), Indian Child Welfare Act On or Near Reservation Program (Tribal Priority Allocation—$18.9 million), and Indian Child Welfare Act Off-Reservation Program ($5 million).

Congress has unequivocally recognized that there is nothing "more vital to the continued existence and integrity of Indian tribes than their children." (25 U. S. C. § 1901[3] [2006]). Congress must promulgate a budget that empowers tribes to provide the programs and services necessary to safeguard their children and strengthen their families. A recent report from the Attorney General's Advisory Committee on American Indian/Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence emphasized this very point:

> Congress and the executive branch shall direct sufficient funds to AI/AN tribes to bring funding for tribal criminal and civil justice systems and tribal protection systems into parity with the rest of the United States and shall remove barriers that currently impede the ability of AI/AN nations to effectively address violence in their communities. The Advisory Committee believes that treaties, existing law, and trust responsibilities are not discretionary and demand this action.[1]

As this recommendation suggests, Congress must prioritize the safety and well-being of all children. According to the advisory committee, "AI/AN children are generally served best when tribes have the opportunity to take ownership of the programs and resources they provide."[2] The recommendations below suggest funding increases that will provide tribes with sufficient child welfare funding and avoid unnecessary restraint on tribal decisionmaking. We urge Congress, as they make budgetary decisions for fiscal year 2017, to not forget AI/AN children and families.

PRIORITY PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION

Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act Recommendation.—Appropriate for the first time $43 million for the three grant programs under this law—$10 million for the Indian Child Abuse Treatment Grant Program, $30 million for the Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Grant Program, and $3 million for the Indian Child Resource and Family Service Centers Program to protect AI/AN children from child abuse and neglect.

The Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act (ICPFVPA), Public Law No. 101–630 (1991), was enacted to fill gaps in tribal child welfare services—specifically child protection and child abuse treatment—and to ensure better coordination between child welfare and domestic violence programs. The act authorizes funding for two tribal programs: (1) the Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Program, which funds prevention programming and supports investigations of family violence and emergency shelter services; and (2) the Treatment of Victims of Child Abuse and Neglect program, which funds treatment programs for victims of child abuse. It also authorizes funding to create Indian Child Resource and Family Service Centers at each of the BIA regional offices.

Child abuse prevention funding is vital to the well-being and financial stability of AI/AN communities. Beyond the emotional trauma that maltreatment inflicts, victims of child maltreatment are more likely to require special education services,

---

[1] U. S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (2014). *Attorney General's Advisory Committee on American Indian/Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence: Ending violence so children can thrive* (p. 51). Retrieved from http://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/defendingchildhood/pages/attachments/2014/11/18/finalaianreport.pdf.

[2] *Ibid.*

more likely to be involved in the juvenile and criminal justice systems, more likely to have long-term mental health needs, and have lower earning potential than their peers.[3] Financially, child maltreatment costs tribal communities and the United States $210,012 per victim.[4] Child abuse prevention funding is essential, therefore, to the well-being of families and the social and economic development of tribal communities.

Therefore, tribes, like States, need adequate resources to effectively prevent and respond to family violence in their communities. However, unlike States, tribes do not have access to the key Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) child protection programs, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Basic Funding Program and the Social Services Block Grant (Title XX). The programs authorized under ICPFVPA were created to fill this gap but, without appropriation, tribes are left without funding for child protection and child abuse prevention services.

OTHER PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Social Services Recommendation.—Increase funding by $12.1 million as recommended by the President's proposed Tiwahe Initiative for a total appropriation of $57.3 million so that child and family programs in Indian Country can be strengthened and expanded.

The Social Services Grant Program provides a wide array of family support services filling many funding gaps for tribal programs, and ensuring Federal staff and technical assistance for these programs. These funds are desperately needed. A recent assessment of BIA social services found that, in large part due to inadequate funding:

> BIA and tribal social services staff prepare, authorize, and document various social services activities as part of their daily activities. Some tribes reported frequent vacancies and staff turnover in social services programs and mentioned a need for BIA to provide basic guidance and supporting materials to ensure continuity of services throughout tribal communities . . .
>
> Technical support is one area where roles and responsibilities remain unclear, as demonstrated by BIA's social services contracts with tribes. The contracts, or annual funding agreements, state that BIA will provide technical support with social services issues as needed. Contrary to these agreements, we uncovered reports of insufficient or nonexistent technical support. In some cases, tribes could wait up to three weeks before receiving a response, or they might receive no response at all.[5]

As this assessment describes, the program is drastically underfunded, and tribal programs, families, and children suffer as a result. In fiscal year 2016 this program saw a $5 million increase. This is to be commended and the momentum must continue. Another $12.1 million must be appropriated for this program, as suggested in the President's budget to support the Tiwahe (family) Initiative—children and families depend on it.

Welfare Assistance Recommendation.—Increase current funding levels to $80 million to provide a safety net for Native families and assist grand families and other kinship caregivers in tribal communities.

The Welfare Assistance line item provides five important forms of funding to AI/AN families: (1) general assistance, (2) child assistance, (3) non-medical institution or custodial care of adults, (4) burial assistance, and (5) emergency assistance. These programs often provide the assistance necessary to help a family make ends meet, prevent neglect, and keep their children safely in the home. Currently the need far exceeds the funding provided by this program.

AI/AN adults on reservations—including parents and kinship caregivers—are unemployed at a rate more than two times the unemployment rate for the total population.[6] Thirty-four percent of AI/AN children live in households with incomes below

---

[3] Fang, X., Brown, D. S., Florence, C. S., & Mercy, J. A. (2012). The economic burden of child maltreatment in the United States and implications for prevention. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 36,* 156–65. doi: 10.1016/j.chiabu.2011.10.006.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Department of the Interior, Office of Inspector General. (2012). *Management of social services in BIA: Opportunity for action* (Report No. WR–EV–BIA–0001–2012). (pp. 5–6) Retrieved from http://www.doi.gov/oig/reports/upload/WR-EV-BIA-0001-2012Public.pdf.

[6] Stegman, E. & Ebarb, A. (2010). Sequestering opportunity for American Indians/Alaska Natives. *Center for American Progress.* (Para. 1). Retrieved from https://www.americanprogress.org/

Continued

the poverty line as compared to 20.7 percent of children nationwide.[7] AI/AN families live much closer to financial crisis than the average American family. AI/AN child welfare programs and social service agencies need to have the resources necessary to support families in times of crisis and uncertainty to promote stability and prevent abuse. In light of these identified needs and current underfunding, funds should be increased by $5.2 million to provide tribal governments the resources they need to support families and children in crisis.

ICWA Funding Recommendation.—Increase the ICWA On or Near Reservation Program (TPA) appropriations by $3.4 million to help tribes meet the needs of their communities. Appropriate an additional $5 million for the authorized, but unfunded, Off-Reservation ICWA Program to ensure ICWA protects all children.

	FY 2013 Enacted	FY 2014 Enacted	FY 2015 CAA	FY 2016 Enacted	FY 2017 Recommended
On-Reservation ICWA Program	$10,628,000	$10,710,000	$15,433,000	~$15,641,000	$18,946,000
Off-Reservation	$0	$0	$0	$0	$5,000,000

As the Attorney General's Advisory Committee on American Indian/Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence recently stated "If AI/AN children today are to be provided with a reliable safety net, the letter and spirit of [the Indian Child Welfare Act] must be enforced."[8] ICWA provides protections to AI/AN families in State child welfare and judicial systems. It also recognizes the sovereign authority of tribal nations to provide child welfare services and adjudicate child welfare matters. To effectuate these provisions, ICWA authorized grant programs to fund child welfare services on or near reservations and for ICWA support in off-reservation, urban Indian programs.

ICWA funding is the foundation of most tribal child welfare programs. Compliance with the letter and spirit of ICWA necessitates adequate funding so that tribal child welfare programs can monitor State court proceedings and provide community-based, culturally appropriate services to children and families. At the time that ICWA was passed in 1978, Congress estimated that between $26 million—$62 million would be required to fully fund tribal child welfare programs on or near reservations (S. Rep. No. 95–597, p. 19 (1977)). Even after an important fiscal year 2015 increase, for which we thank Congress, current funding levels fall far short of this estimate—especially after adjusting for inflation. Funding must be increased by an additional $3.4 million for the On or Near Reservation ICWA Program (TPA).

According to the 2010 Census, 67 percent of AI/AN people lived off-reservation. These children and families are best served when State child welfare systems are not only working with the child's tribe, but also with urban Indian child welfare programs. These programs provide assistance to States and the child's tribe, and provide culturally appropriate child welfare services. For this reason, ICWA authorizes child welfare funding for urban Indian programs. From 1979–1996, funding was allocated to urban organizations serving Native children and families. When funded, off-reservation programs provided important services such as recruitment of Native foster care homes, child abuse prevention efforts, and culturally appropriate case management and wraparound services. When funding stopped, the majority of these programs disintegrated even as the population of AI/AN children off-reservation increased. This funding must be reinstated. We recommend a $5 million appropriation to support AI/AN children and families living off-reservation.

---

issues/poverty/news/2013/11/26/80056/sequestering-opportunity-for-american-indians-and-alaska-natives/.

[7] U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau. (2013). *Child health USA 2012* (p. 9). Rockville, MD: Author.

[8] U. S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (2014). *Attorney General's Advisory Committee on American Indian/Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence: Ending violence so children can thrive* (p. 75). Retrieved from http://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/defendingchildhood/pages/attachments/2014/11/18/finalaianreport.pdf.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL INDIAN HEALTH BOARD

Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall and members of the subcommittee, thank you the opportunity to offer this testimony. On behalf of the National Indian Health Board and the 567 federally recognized tribes we serve, I submit this testimony on the Indian Health Service fiscal year 2017 budget.

The Federal promise to provide Indian health services was made long ago. Since the earliest days of the Republic, all branches of the Federal Government have acknowledged the Nation's obligations to the tribes and the special trust relationship between the United States and American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs). The United States assumed this responsibility through a series of treaties with tribes, exchanging compensation and benefits for tribal land and peace. The Snyder Act of 1921 (25 U.S.C. 13) legislatively affirmed this trust responsibility. Since its creation in 1955, IHS has worked to fulfill the Federal promise to provide healthcare to Native people. In 2010, as part of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, Congress reaffirmed the duty of the Federal Government to AI/ANs, declaring that "it is the policy of this Nation, in fulfillment of its special trust responsibilities and legal obligations to Indians—to ensure the highest possible health status for Indians and urban Indians and to provide all resources necessary to effect that policy."[1]

Devastating consequences from historical trauma, poverty, and a lack of adequate treatment resources continue to plague tribal communities. AI/ANs have a life expectancy 4.2 years less than other Americans, but in some areas, the life expectancy is far worse. For instance, in Montana, "white men . . . lived 19 years longer than American Indian men, and white women lived 20 years longer than American Indian women."[2] In South Dakota, in 2014, "for white residents the median age [at death] was 81, compared to 58 for American Indians."[3] AI/ANs also suffer significantly higher mortality rates from suicide, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease than other Americans. According to CDC data, 45.9 percent of Native women experience intimate partner violence, the highest rate of any ethnic group in the United States. American Indian/Alaska Native children have an average of six decayed teeth, when other U.S. children have only one. These health statistics are no surprise when you compare the per capita spending of the IHS and other Federal healthcare programs. In 2015, the IHS per capita expenditures for patient health services were just $3,136, compared to $8,097 per person for healthcare spending nationally.

The following testimony reflects the IHS Tribal Budget Formulation Workgroup recommendations for fiscal year 2017.[4] Tribes recommend $30 billion to fully fund IHS. This includes amounts for personal health services, wrap-around community health services and facility capital investments. Within this $30 billion is: $15.82 billion for Medical Services; $1.66 billion for Dental and Vision Services; $3.71 billion for Community and Public Health Services; $8.77 billion for facility upgrades and upfront costs (non-recurring investments).

Fiscal year 2017 President's Budget Request.—The administration has proposed $5.2 billion for IHS for fiscal year 2017. This is $377 million (7.28 percent) above the fiscal year 2016 level. NIHB appreciates the bipartisan work this subcommittee has undertaken since fiscal year 2008 to ensure that meaningful increases have been awarded to the IHS. However, when considering staffing for new facilities, inflation, medical inflation, population growth, and Contract Support Cost obligations, the effective increase is minimal. For example, of the $377 discretionary increase requested for IHS, almost half ($159 million) is just what is needed to maintain current services, and $82 million is for Contract Support Costs, leaving actual program expansion with just $136 million. We implore this subcommittee, to take the courageous step forward and recommend a budget for Indian Health that truly lives up to the Federal trust responsibility and gives AI/ANs a chance at achieving better health outcomes.

To begin the 12 year phase-in of the full $30 billion request, tribes recommend $6.2 billion in fiscal year 2017. All areas of the IHS budget are important, and we hope to see a strong increase across the IHS budget fiscal year 2017. However, the tribes have identified several priorities including Purchased/Referred Care (PRC); Hospitals & Clinics; Alcohol & Substance Abuse Services; Mental Health; and Dental Services.

---

[1] Indian Health Care Improvement Act, § 103 (2009).

[2] "The State of the State's Health: A Report on the Health of Montanans." Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. 2013. p. 11.

[3] "2014 South Dakota Vital Statistics Report: A State and County Comparison of Leading Health Indicators." South Dakota Department of Health. 2014. P. 62.

[4] The full fiscal year 2017 Tribal Budget Request is available at http://nihb.org/legislative/budget__formulation.php.

Purchased/Referred Care (PRC).—In fiscal year 2017, tribes recommend $1.2 billion for the Purchased/Referred Care (PRC) program. This is $270.4 million over the fiscal year 2017 President's request and $318.6 million above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level. The PRC budget supports essential healthcare services from non-IHS or non-tribal providers and includes inpatient and outpatient care, emergency care, transportation, and medical support services such as diagnostic imaging, physical therapy, laboratory, nutrition, and pharmacy services. In fiscal year 2015, PRC denied over $645 million for an estimated 132,000 services needed. It is critical that this account continue to be prioritized by Congress. Tribal leaders have voiced concern that PRC was flat-funded in fiscal year 2016. This core funding is still a top priority for the tribes, as some areas rely heavily on PRC dollars, and we hope to see continued prioritization by the subcommittee in fiscal year 2017.

Hospitals and Clinics.—In fiscal year 2017, tribes recommend $2.3 billion for Hospitals and Clinics (H&C) which is $300 million over the fiscal year 2016 President's request and $422.8 million over the fiscal year 2016 enacted level. This core budget line item provides for the direct service delivery to AI/ANs. IHS/Tribal/Urban Indian (I/T/U)-managed facilities are often located in rural settings with service at many locations limited to primary care, due to inadequate funding. IHS H&C faces tremendous challenges. Some of these factors include: an increased demand for services related to trends in significant population growth, an increased rate of chronic diseases, rising medical inflation, difficulty in recruiting and retaining providers in rural healthcare settings, and the lack of adequate facilities and equipment. For many AI/ANs, IHS represents the healthcare access in its entirety, both in terms of monetary resources but also facility access. Consequently, any underfunding of H&C equates to no healthcare. For many in Indian Country, there are no alternatives.

Quality of Care Issues—Direct Service Facilities.—Perhaps even more disturbing than the severe lack of resources at IHS, is recent findings by the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) at several hospitals in the Great Plains Area of IHS. In the last year, three hospitals serving tribes in the region have lost, (or received threats of revocation) their ability to bill CMS. This not only severely hampers the critical 3rd Party Revenue on which these facilities depend, but more importantly these findings raise serious questions about the quality of healthcare provided by IHS. At the Winnebago Indian Hospital, Pine Ridge Indian Hospital and the Rosebud Indian Hospital the deficiencies in question are simply unacceptable and more must be done to ensure that IHS management never allows this to happen again. Just last week, NIHB learned that Rosebud Indian Hospital was told it will lose this CMS certification on March 16, despite the fact that an IHS team has been on the ground for the last several months trying to prevent this. While it is our understanding that the agency has recently reached an agreement with CMS to keep the accreditation until at least May 16, we are continued to be troubled by the situation on the ground. NIHB believes that IHS should certainly be held to task by Congress for the poor management of these facilities, but it is also incumbent on Congress to provide IHS with sufficient funding so that the Service is able to safely and effectively carry out its mission. As one tribal leader stated at a Senate hearing on February 3, 2016: "[IHS] is all we have to count on. We don't go there because they have superior healthcare. We go there because it is our treaty right. And we go there because many of us lack the resources to go elsewhere. We're literally at the mercy of IHS."

Mental Health.—In fiscal year 2017, tribes are recommending $154.9 million. This is $43.75 million above the President's fiscal year 2017 request and $72.8 million above fiscal year 2016. Expansion of mental health services are critically needed. Nowhere is the issue of poor coordination perhaps more acute than when it comes to mental and behavioral health services. AI/AN children and communities grapple with complex behavioral health issues at higher rates than any other population. Destructive Federal Indian policies and unresponsive or harmful human service systems have left AI/AN communities with unresolved historical and generational trauma.[5] But access to behavioral health services is limited. In a study of 514 IHS and tribal facilities, 82 percent report providing some type of mental health service such as psychiatric services, behavioral health services, substance abuse treatment, or traditional healing practices, and to improve access 17 percent (87) have implemented telemedicine for mental health services.[6] However, none provide inpatient

[5] Braveheart, M. Y. A., & DeBruyn, I. M. (1998). The American Indian Holocaust: healing historical unresolved grief. *American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research, 8*(2).

[6] Urban Indian Health Institute. (2012). Addressing depression among American Indians and Alaska Natives: A literature review. Seattle, Washington: Urban Indian Health Institute.

psychiatric services.[7] Without access to care, persons in psychiatric distress often end up at the hospital emergency room.[8] We support the administration's request for $21.4 million in behavioral health integration as well as the $3.6 million for the Zero Suicide Initiative. We also support the administration's mandatory funding requests for the Behavioral Health Professions Expansion Fund ($10 million) and the Tribal Crisis Response Fund ($15 million).

Alcohol and Substance Abuse.—In fiscal year 2017, tribes recommend $312.3 million for the Alcohol and Substance Abuse budget. This is $79 million above the President's request and $107 million above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level. Of the challenges facing AI/AN communities and people, no challenge is more far reaching than the epidemic of alcohol and other substance abuse. Now that tribes manage a majority of alcohol and substance abuse programs, IHS is in a supportive role to assist the tribes plan, develop, and implement a variety of treatment modalities. The collaboration has resulted in more consistent evidenced-based and best practice approaches to address substance abuse disorders and addictions. Successful treatment approaches include traditional healing techniques that link the services provided to traditional cultural practices and spiritual support. NIHB strongly supports the administration's request for an extra $15 million for the Substance Use and Suicide Prevention Program.

Dental Health.—For fiscal year 2017, tribes recommend $218.6 million for Dental Health. This is $31.8 more than the President's request and $40.3 million above the fiscal year 2016 level. These critical funds are desperately needed to improve the oral health of AI/ANs. Over 80 percent of AI/AN children ages 6–9 suffer from dental caries, while less than 50 percent of the U.S. population ages 6–9 have experienced cavities. The IHS Dental program supports clinic-based treatment and prevention services, oral health promotion and disease prevention activities. However, access is one of the key issues in improving oral health for tribal communities. Half of AI/AN youth live in a dental shortage area. NIHB and the tribes continue to support the expansion of Dental Therapists (DTs) to tribes outside of Alaska as a safe, reliable, cost-effective means for tribal members to access oral health services. Sadly, provisions in the Indian Healthcare Improvement Act (IHCIA)[9] have made it difficult to use IHS programs to use these effective midlevel providers. We encourage the subcommittee to work with the relevant authorizing Committees to repeal this prohibitive section of the law so that IHS and tribes can utilize scarce discretionary dollars in the most cost-effective way possible.

Contract Support Costs.—NIHB and tribes were pleased to see the separate funding account for contract support costs (CSC) that was created in fiscal year 2016. However, we continue to support the administration's request for mandatory CSC and encourage Congress to work to enact this change as soon as fiscal year 2017.

Other Recommendations.—Tribes have also proposed other budget-related recommendations for IHS in fiscal year 2017. One of these priorities is support for advance appropriations for IHS which would allow tribes to have predictability on the IHS budget and place IHS on parity with other Federal health providers.

The implementation of the IHCIA remains a top priority for Indian Country. IHCIA provides new authorities for Indian healthcare, however additional funding is needed to fully implement the Act. This year, tribes have set priorities for funding the additional provisions of IHCIA as follows: Section 205: Funding for Long-term Care Services ($37 million); Section 704: Comprehensive Behavioral Health Prevention and Treatment Program ($20 million); Section 204: Diabetes Prevention, Treatment, and Control ($20 million); Section 123: Health Professional Chronic Shortage Demonstration Project ($15 million); Section 705: Mental Health Technician Program ($5 million).

As noted above, the trust responsibility for health extends beyond the IHS. We also encourage this subcommittee to work with other agencies at the Department of Health and Human Services to ensure that funds reach tribal communities. Specific funding "set asides" for tribes or language directing the HHS to fund tribal communities specifically could be ways to ensure that appropriated dollars reach tribes.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this statement. We look forward to working with the Appropriations Committee as Congress considers fiscal year 2017 appropriations. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the National Indian Health Board.

---

[7] Indian Health Service. (2011). *Inpatient mental health assessment.* Retrieved from http://www.ihs.gov/newsroom/includes/themes/newihstheme/display__objects/documents/FINAL__IHCIA__InpatientMH__Assessment__Final.pdf.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] 25 U.S.C. 1616l(d).

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL OPERA CENTER OF AMERICA (OPERA AMERICA)

Madam Chairman and distinguished members of the subcommittee, I am grateful for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of OPERA America, its board of directors and its more than 2,000 organizational and individual members. We strongly urge the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies in the Committee on Appropriations to designate a total of $155 million to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) for fiscal year 2017. This testimony and the funding examples described below are intended to highlight the importance of Federal investment in the arts, so critical to sustaining a vibrant cultural community throughout the country.

The NEA makes it possible for everyone to enjoy and benefit from the performing arts. Before the establishment of the NEA in 1965, funding for the arts was mostly limited mostly larger cities. The NEA has helped to strengthen regional dance, opera, theater and other artistic disciplines that Americans enjoy. NEA funding provides access to the arts in regions with histories of inaccessibility due to economic or geographic limitations. The NEA envisions a "nation in which every American benefits from arts engagement, and every community recognizes and celebrates its aspirations and achievements through the arts." The agency has helped the arts become accessible to more Americans, which in turn has increased public participation in the arts.

Opera is a continuously growing art form that can address the diverse needs and backgrounds of our communities. New opera companies are being established in communities that have never before had access to live performances. OPERA America's membership includes 141 professional company members representing 42 States, as well as 5 Canadian provinces and 3 countries. Sixty-seven percent of these companies were established after 1970 and over 43 percent were established since 1980, indicating the growth of opera throughout America over the last 45 years.

In the 2013–2014 season, OPERA America members were involved with 37 world premieres. Since 1900, 950 new operatic works have been produced by professional opera companies in North America. Of that, 478 new operatic works have been produced since 2000. The growth in number and quality of American opera corresponds directly to the investment of the NEA's earlier investment in the New American Works program of the former Opera-Music Theater Program.

Beyond the opera house, opera companies are finding new and exciting ways to bring the essence of opera to other local theaters and community centers, frequently with new and innovative works that reflect the diverse cultures of the cities they serve. Strong partnerships with local schools extend the civic reach of opera companies as they introduce children to a multi-media art form and discover promising young talent.

The NEA is a great investment in the economic growth of every community. Despite diminished resources, including a budget that is $20 million less than it was in 2010, the NEA awarded 2,139 grants in 2015, totaling $103.47 million in appropriated funds. These grants nurture the growth and artistic excellence of thousands of arts organizations and artists in every corner of the country. NEA grants also preserve and enhance our Nation's diverse cultural heritage. The modest public investment in the Nation's cultural life results in both new and classic works of art, reaching the residents of all 50 States and in every congressional district.

The return of the Federal Government's small investment in the arts is striking. In 2013, the American creative sector was measured by the Federal Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). The BEA and the NEA developed an "Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account" which calculated the arts and culture sector's contributions to the gross domestic product (GDP) at 4.2 percent (or $704.2 billion) of current-dollar GDP in 2013. Additionally, the nonprofit performing arts industry generates $135.2 billion annually in economic activity, supports more than 4.13 million full-time equivalent jobs in the arts, and returns $9.59 billion in Federal taxes (*Arts and Economic Prosperity IV,* Americans for the Arts).

On average each NEA grant leverages at almost $10 from other State, local, and private sources. Few other Federal investments realize such economic benefits, not to mention the intangible benefits that only the arts make possible. Even in the face of cutbacks in the recent years, the NEA continues to be a beacon for arts organizations across the country.

The return on investments is not only found in dollars. In 2012, 2.2 million people volunteered 210 million hours with arts and cultural organizations, totaling an estimated value of $5.2 billion—a demonstration that citizens value the arts in their communities.

NEA GRANTS AT WORK

Past NEA funding has directly supported projects in which arts organizations, artists, schools and teachers collaborated to provide opportunities for adults and children to create, perform, and respond to artistic works. NEA funding has also made the art form more widely available in all States, including isolated rural areas and inner cities.

The more than 2,000 Art Works grants were awarded to nonprofit arts organizations for projects that encourage artistic creativity and that bring the arts to millions of Americans. In a striking example of Federal/State partnership, 40 percent of NEA's program dollars are granted to State arts agencies, conditional on each State devoting its own appropriated funds. These grants, combined with State legislative appropriations and other dollars, are distributed widely to strengthen arts infrastructures and ensure broad access to arts.

NEA grants are awarded to opera organizations through its core programs: Art Works; Challenge America Fast Track Grants; and Federal/State Partnerships. In fiscal year 2015, the NEA awarded 68 grants to the opera field through the Art Works category, totaling $2,095,000.

Opera Memphis
$30,000
Memphis, Tennessee

To support "30 Days of Opera." Launched in 2012 as an outreach initiative with the goal of breaking down barriers that prevent new audiences from attending opera, the festival has successfully reached more than 50,000 people with more than 100 performances in at least 80 different locations. The project includes admission-free concerts, opera performances for schools, an original children's opera, pop-up or guerilla opera performances, and a family day at the opera.

Intermountain Opera Bozeman
$12,000
Bozeman, Montana

To support performances of Puccini's "Suor Angelica" and Gianni Schicchi." Conducted by Christopher Allen, the cast included soprano Maria Kanyova and baritone Levi Hernandez. Educational and outreach activities to build audiences included a public workshop, a performance for elementary school students, a class for students at Bozeman High School, and a class for adults at Montana State University.

Shreveport Opera
$13,000
Shreveport, Louisiana

To support the Shreveport Opera Xpress educational and touring program. The program serves as the educational programming arm of the company through which performances and activities reach public school students. Interactive residencies in which public school music teachers will select students for instruction in vocal technique, acting, singing, and stage direction by Shreveport Opera Xpress (SOX) artists are an integral part of the program. Elementary through high school students throughout central and south Louisiana were reached during the 2015–2016 academic year.

The Industry
$12,000
Los Angeles, California

To support artistic and production fees for the premiere of Hopscotch, a mobile opera. Multiple Los Angeles-based composers and librettists were commissioned to each develop three short pieces. The opera was experienced in several ways: via a limited audience inside limousines with the artists as they drive around Los Angeles; at a large central hub where all of the limousine journeys were streamed live; and through the finale of the work when the two audiences converged. The project's multidisciplinary collaborations continued the organization's mission of creating new works that honor the origins of the genre while pushing to expand its traditional boundaries. The performances included a free component at the work's central location, allowing a large audience to experience the performance.

Over 50 million people experienced opera on stage, via radio and TV, in cinemas, and at stadiums, parks and alternative venues through one of OPERA America's Professional Company Members in the 2012–2013 season. The collective expenses of member opera companies totaled over $1 billion. Total government support, including city, county, State, and Federal, amounted to $118 million, representing 10 percent of total operating income.

Despite overwhelming support by the American public for spending Federal tax dollars in support of the arts, the NEA has never recovered from a 40 percent budget cut in the mid-nineties, leaving its programs seriously underfunded. We urge you to continue toward restoration and increase the NEA funding allocation to $155 million for fiscal year 2017.

On behalf of OPERA America, thank you for considering this request.

[This statement was submitted by Marc A. Scorca, President and CEO.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA). Founded in 1919, NPCA is the leading national, independent voice for protecting and enhancing America's National Park System for present and future generations. I appreciate the opportunity to provide our views regarding the National Park Service (NPS) fiscal year 2017 budget.

National parks protect America's heritage and deliver robust economic returns of $10 in economic benefits nationally for every dollar invested in the NPS. NPCA polling indicates the vast popularity of national parks and strong bipartisan support for adequately funding them.

We acknowledge the tremendous challenge the subcommittee faces in setting thoughtful spending priorities, so we are grateful for your consistent support for national parks. NPCA and our partners in the National Parks Second Century Action Coalition commend your subcommittee for supporting a needed increase for the National Park Service in fiscal year 2016, the Service's Centennial year. This level will make an important difference in recovering from years of cuts and inadequate funding. As there are still many needs, we urge you to do your best to build on this support as the System enters its next century of service to the American people.

Fiscal Year 2017 Priorities: NPCA requests appropriated funding for NPS of $3,111,829,000, which is equal to the President's appropriated request, but rejecting his proposal to reduce Heritage Partnership Programs funding. This level includes—but is not limited to—NPCA's priorities of meeting the President's request for:

—$2,524,362,000 for park operations;
—$252,038,000 for construction; and
—$35,000,000 in appropriated funds for the Centennial Challenge.

My testimony outlines these and several other issues:

—The Budget Control Act, overarching budget concerns and the subcommittee's allocation;
—Park operations and construction funding and their connection to the maintenance backlog;
—The Centennial Challenge program;
—The Land and Water Conservation Fund and Historic Preservation Fund;
—National Heritage Areas;
—The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act;
—Policy riders

Budget Control Act (BCA) and budget process: We've been dismayed to see the many challenges to the budget and appropriations process in recent years, and the threat and harm they have brought to national parks. We were deeply dismayed in fiscal year 2013 when the BCA, due to the failure of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction to identify offsets, mandated sequester cuts that were so damaging to national park operations that they resulted in shuttered facilities and thousands of ranger positions going unfilled. We were consequently pleased that the Bipartisan Budget Acts (BBA) of 2013 and 2015 provided needed relief from that indiscriminate and damaging instrument with spending levels that are already austere absent the sequester.

We were alarmed to see the draconian out-year cuts to nondefense discretionary spending proposed in the recent House budget and the challenges that struggle is posing to the appropriations process. Thus we are grateful that the Senate instead deferred to the BBA, fostering a more orderly and functional budget process in your chamber.

The Interior allocation: NPCA believes the allocation provided to the subcommittee in recent years has been insufficient and emblematic of the austere constraints on domestic discretionary investments. In part to address this concern, we continue to urge legislation to address the dysfunctional system of catastrophic wildfire funding that burdens the Interior allocation. We support a clean fire funding

fix, a bipartisan solution that would (1) access disaster funding, (2) minimize transfers, and (3) address the continued erosion of agency budgets over time, with the goal of reinvesting in key programs that would restore forests to healthier conditions.

Further, we feel that the Interior subcommittee allocation is unlikely to ever be sufficient to meet the full needs of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the National Park System backlog, or the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural Schools (SRS) programs, all of which should receive mandatory funding support outside of the Interior bill.

We were disappointed to see the reduction in your fiscal year 2017 302(b) suballocation and understand the deep challenges this will pose in meeting the needs of national parks and other priorities. Therefore, in this context, we are grateful in advance to you and your subcommittee staff for doing what you can to continue the trajectory to restore funding for America's treasures as they begin the next century of service to the American people.

Park operations and the maintenance backlog: The subcommittee's fiscal year 2016 investment will be very helpful for national parks—but we regret to acknowledge that more is needed. The fiscal year 2016 increase in park operations, after adjusting for inflation, still leaves a level $90 million—or 3.6 percent—below levels in fiscal year 2010, when NPCA analysis indicated an annual operations shortfall of approximately a half billion dollars. Many parks remain understaffed: between fiscal year 2010 and fiscal year 2015, discretionary FTEs for the park service were reduced by 2,006 FTEs—an 11.2 percent reduction in staff. As you know, these losses can be damaging, with impacts such as less day-to-day maintenance, less scientific inventory and monitoring, reduced hours or even closed public facilities, fewer visitor programs, and other challenges to parks fulfilling their mission.

The operations request would support $96 million in cyclic maintenance and repair needs. Support for this request would help address the $12 billion deferred maintenance backlog. The backlog continues to threaten the protection of nationally significant resources and, eventually the experience of visitors. In February 2015, NPS estimated that it needed $820 million annually just to keep up with the backlog, but only received $473 million, or less than 60 cents for every dollar needed. While this number also included park transportation infrastructure that is not within the jurisdiction of this subcommittee, funding to deal with the non-roads backlog remains vastly insufficient, and both short- and long-term solutions are needed.

Construction and the backlog: The NPS construction account is a principal mechanism for addressing major repair needs, yet even after the fiscal year 2016 increase in that account, it remains 48 percent below levels of a decade ago after adjusting for inflation. This is why the requested increase for this account is so important to address needed projects throughout the park system.

Mandatory backlog funding: We respect that it can be very difficult to identify budgetary offsets for mandatory programs, yet urge Congress to recognize that a more realistic long-term solution is needed to address the maintenance backlog. Under current allocations established by the BCA, it is difficult to see how this subcommittee will be able to address even the $2.4 billion highest priority non-transportation facilities' needs. NPCA supports enacting legislation to begin reducing the backlog through a mandatory account and encourages Congress to pursue this approach to paying down the backlog's most critical projects over the initial years of the system's new century of service.

Centennial Challenge: We commend this subcommittee for restoring the Centennial Challenge program in fiscal year 2015, and for the increase for the program in fiscal year 2016. This support has leveraged more than 2 dollars for every 1 dollar invested for signature projects across the National Park System that enhance the visiting experience. Many more philanthropic opportunities await, so we hope the subcommittee can support the request for an increase in this exciting program that enjoys strong bipartisan support. Further, we look forward to movement of a centennial bill that includes more robust funding for this important program, and urge members of this subcommittee to support such a bill that we hope will enjoy the bipartisan backing it deserves. That legislation would also include an endowment, another idea helpful in fostering a sustainable long-term funding model for NPS that supplements—but does not supplant—important appropriated dollars.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF): The acquisition of inholdings is directly related to better managing the places in which our Nation already has made a significant investment. Thus we support the administration's appropriated request of $68.2 million for the NPS Federal land acquisition and management portion of LWCF, a critical tool for protecting our national parks. This appropriated request would help prevent incompatible development in 10 NPS units, including Grand Teton National Park. We were pleased the fiscal year 2016 omnibus included better

funding for the LWCF program and a 3-year reauthorization. We urge support for the administration's proposal to partially fund LWCF with mandatory funds in fiscal year 2017 and then phase in full and mandatory funding for the program, to provide this successful program with the dependability it deserves.

Historic Preservation Fund (HPF): The funding authorization for HPF was allowed to expire on October 1, 2015; we were disappointed the authorization was not extended in the omnibus as it was with LWCF. The HPF provides the primary source of funding for State Historic and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices in all 50 States. The HPF also supports the Historic Tax Credit program, responsible for the rehabilitation of over 40,000 buildings, the creation of 2.5 million jobs and the leveraging of $117 billion in private investments in historic preservation projects. H.R. 2817, the bipartisan National Historic Preservation Amendments Act, would both restore the funding authorization for the HPF and extend it through fiscal year 2028. NPCA urges passage of this bill to support continued preservation and rehabilitation of historic sites and structures.

National Heritage Areas (NHAs): The president's proposed 50 percent cut to the National Heritage Area program is an unwarranted attack on a program with a successful track record. In 2013, the 49 existing NHAs generated $13 billion in economic activity and $1.2 billion in tax revenues, and generated over 900,000 volunteer service hours. This mighty program with a modest budget ($19.8 million in fiscal year 2016) deserves support from both Congress and the President.

Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA): We are grateful that this subcommittee has supported multiple short-term extensions of FLREA, now extended through fiscal year 2017. Reauthorization is critical for NPS to retain needed funds of nearly $200 million annually. As NPCA continues to support a long-term reauthorization of FLREA with the respective authorizing committees, we hope this subcommittee will continue to support annual extensions.

Policy Riders: Efforts to attach environmentally damaging policy riders only further threatens the appropriations process, so we were grateful that the final fiscal year 2016 bill was free of riders that threaten parks, their ecosystems, and the health of visitors and wildlife within them. We are deeply concerned to see riders threatening clean water in national parks and their ecosystems in the Senate fiscal year 2017 Energy and Water appropriations bill and urge that fiscal year 2017 and future appropriations bills be free of these damaging and controversial riders.

In conclusion: NPCA has emphasized to this subcommittee and its House counterpart over the years the importance of providing more adequate funding for America's treasures. As the subcommittee has acknowledged, the National Park Service and System are deeply popular with the American public and are important for local economies. As we emphasize the importance of providing staff to serve record numbers of visitors, and staff and resources to address the repairs backlog, we should not forget the profound importance of park sites in preserving and interpreting our natural and cultural heritage—a heritage that defines America's very identity. Outstanding wildlife habitat, geysers, cliffs, Civil War sites that commemorate our fallen ancestors, the places we celebrate—and where we have suffered: this is America's extraordinary National Park System. This subcommittee has recognized these places as priorities; we again commend you for supporting their needs and urge your continuing support.

This subcommittee and its House counterpart have also emphasized the importance of a sustainable funding model for NPS. As you know, NPCA has long explored ideas to support such a model and advocate for mechanisms that, very importantly, do not supplant the Federal responsibility to appropriate funding for our Nation's parks, but supplement these needed funds.

Again, respectfully recognizing your constrained allocation, we urge you to provide the best appropriated level possible for NPS to help the agency recover from years of underfunding. We ask you to support a centennial bill that provides an endowment and more robust support for the Centennial Challenge program. We will seek to leverage new fee opportunities, historic leasing, and other innovative approaches. But we also urge this and future sessions of Congress to identify mandatory support and/or other robust mechanisms to address the deferred maintenance backlog, as well as the backlog of land acquisition needs. As the National Park Service prepares to celebrate its Centennial and to embark on its next century of service to the American people who collectively own these national treasures, we stand to work with you to provide needed support to recover, restore and bolster America's National Park System.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION

Thank you Chairwoman Murkowski, Senator Udall, and other honorable members of the subcommittee for the opportunity to submit written testimony pertaining to funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund's (LWCF) State Assistance Program and Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Program (UPARR) in the fiscal year 2017 Interior appropriations bill.

Overview of Funding Request

As outlined below, we encourage you to renew the Federal investment in the LWCF. However, given that the purpose of the Act is to help preserve, develop, and assure access to outdoor recreation facilities to strengthen the health of U.S. citizens, we urge you to make a greater investment in States and local communities by:

—Allocating a minimum of 40 percent of fiscal year 2016 LWCF appropriations to the State Assistance Program;
—Continuing the innovative, "Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership" (ORLP) competitive grant program in the amount of $12 million;
—Allocating up to $30 million in funding for Urban Park and Recreation Recovery program (UPARR) out of total fiscal year 2017 LWCF appropriations; and,
—Ensuring that any amount allocated to either the ORLP or UPARR program is not done at the expense of the existing core formula grants distributed to the States for conservation and active recreation.

About the National Recreation and Park Association

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), is a nonprofit organization working to advance parks, recreation and environmental conservation efforts nationwide. Our members touch the lives of every American in every community every day. Through our network of more than 50,000 citizen and professional members we represent park and recreation departments in cities, counties, townships, special park districts, and regional park authorities, along with citizens concerned with ensuring close-to-home access to parks and recreation opportunities exist in their communities. Everything we support and do is focused through our three pillars: Conservation; Health & Wellness and Social Equity.

40 Percent Allocation of Total LWCF Appropriations to the State Assistance Program

The LWCF State Assistance Program provides dollar-for-dollar matching grants to States and local communities for the construction of outdoor recreation projects. The land purchased with LWCF State Assistance funding remains the property of the State or local government, and the resources developed through the LWCF remain publicly accessible in perpetuity.

The LWCF provides numerous benefits to local communities across America, and it does so through a dedicated funding source—namely oil and gas leasing revenues from the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). As much as $9 billion has been generated from these leases annually, with only a small fraction provided to the LWCF. Unfortunately an even more miniscule amount is provided to the State Assistance Program. This is in large part due to the fact that current law mandates that a minimum of 40 percent of the total LWCF annual appropriations must be provided to the Federal land acquisition program without specifying an amount for the State Assistance Program. As a result, States and local communities have historically received a very disproportionate share of the total LWCF appropriations, with less than 15 percent of total LWCF funding going to the State Assistance Program since 1998.

With this as background, we thank you very much for your efforts in fiscal year 2016, which led to the highest total appropriation for LWCF in years. You also realized that a higher percentage of overall LWCF dollars should be allocated to the States for the purpose of meeting the ever increasing need for safe and accessible close-to-home recreation. The $110 million for State Assistance in fiscal year 2016 represents approximately one-quarter of overall LWCF appropriations for the year.

While this amount signifies a major improvement over the long-term average of, again, less than 15 percent of total LWCF spending, we call upon the subcommittee to seek a permanent solution to funding the LWCF with the State and Local Assistance Program receiving at least 40 percent of overall LWCF expenditures each year. With four-out-of-five Americans now living in our larger communities, and the fact the original LWCF Act called for 60 percent to State Assistance, it's reasonable that the formula grants to the States for outdoor recreation should receive a more equitable distribution of LWCF dollars annually.

We agree on the importance of preserving and providing access to our national treasures for all to enjoy—and congratulate and recognize the National Park Service

as it celebrates its centennial—we'd like to remind you that many treasured public areas are NOT located on Federal property.

For the reasons outlined below, we are asking you to empower States and local communities to do more to preserve, develop, and assure access to outdoor recreation facilities to strengthen our Nation by allocating 40 percent of total LWCF appropriations to the State Assistance Program in fiscal year 2017.

LWCF State Assistance's Return on Investment and Return on Objective

One of the key aspects of the LWCF State Assistance Program is the ability to create jobs. The outdoor recreation industry, as such is supported by LWCF State Assistance, is an economic powerhouse in the United States. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, the industry generates $646 billion in consumer spending and supports over 6 million jobs annually.[1] In fact, our own research has determined that America's local and regional public park agencies generated nearly $140 billion in economic activity and supported nearly 1 million jobs from their operations and capital spending alone in 2013.[2]

Considering there are 7,800 State and over 100,000 locally managed parks throughout the country, it is obvious that outdoor recreation is most prevalent at the State and local level, and it is the LWCF State Assistance Program which provides the vast majority of places, spaces, and opportunities for outdoor recreation which stimulates the outdoor economy.

When viewed through the lens of the importance of the American outdoor recreation industry, the LWCF State Assistance Program has, for more than four decades, achieved a proven return on investment (ROI) demonstrated by the fact that $4.1 billion in Federal support has been matched and leveraged to provide more than $8.2 billion in total public investment. But the benefits of this program, don't stop there, as the State Assistance Program has not only provided a ROI, but has also done a tremendous job of providing an outstanding "return on objective" for the American taxpayer by ensuring access for all.

Not everyone has the ability to visit one of our treasured national parks, and even those who do so are unable to on a regular basis. Their visits are often destination vacations or once-in-a-lifetime trips. To the average American, however, the neighborhood park—down the street, open and accessible to the public, and without an admission fee—is the most important public space in their lives. The State Assistance Program has played a critical role in the creation of these important places, with more than 40,400 grant projects covering nearly every county across America.

The LWCF State Assistance Program is dedicated to ensuring that Americans have access to close-to-home public recreation opportunities. It is a means by which the subcommittee can provide investment to critically important local park infrastructure, including: a new soccer field at Sisterhood Park in Anchorage, Alaska; enhancements at Bluewater Lake State Park near Perwitt, New Mexico; and an accessible playground at Fall Creek Falls State Park in Spencer, Tennessee. Each of the aforementioned communities benefited from State Assistance grant funding since 2013.

LWCF State Assistance Provides Health and Environmental Benefits

In addition to creating jobs and ensuring access for all, the LWCF State Assistance Program delivers tangible health benefits, contributing to the overall health and well-being of Americans. The National Park Service recognizes this through its "Find Your Park" initiative, which aims to increase public recognition of parks and public lands (including State, local, and regional park and trail systems) as places for the promotion of physical, mental, and social health. The CDC reports obesity is now a leading cause of chronic disease and identifies increased access to parks, green space, and recreation opportunities is essential to becoming a healthier nation and reducing unsustainable healthcare costs.

The LWCF State Assistance Program also significantly contributes to protecting the environment and promoting environmental stewardship. LWCF State Assistance projects have a historical record of contributing to reduced and delayed storm water runoff volumes, enhanced groundwater recharge, storm water pollutant reductions, reduced sewer overflow events, increased carbon sequestration, urban heat island mitigation and reduced energy demands, resulting in improved air quality, increased wildlife habitat, and increased land values on the local level.

---

[1] Outdoor Industry Association, "The Outdoor Recreation Economy Report 2012."

[2] NRPA, "The Economic Impact of Local Parks" published 2015.

Revitalizing Urban Parks and Recreation through Funding of UPARR

While the LWCF has indeed benefited virtually every community in the country, many of our Nation's cities and urbanized counties face distinct challenges that require additional resources. Recognizing this fact as well as the importance of public parks and recreation to larger urban renewal and community development efforts, Congress established the Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Program (UPARR) to provide matching grants directly to localities in metropolitan areas. Over the course of two decades UPARR provided $272 million for nearly 1,500 projects in 380 communities. This enabled neighborhoods across the country to restore both outdoor and indoor recreation facilities; support innovative recreational programming and enhance delivery of services and programs that provided constructive alternatives to at-risk youth.

Despite its successes, UPARR has not been funded since fiscal year 2002, yet many of the urban open space and recreation challenges still exist today. NRPA is very pleased to see UPARR in the President's fiscal year 2017 budget and calls on Congress to update and fund this needed program to enable metropolitan areas to address quality of life, health and wellness, and conservation issues as they work to make their communities more attractive for families and businesses alike. Both LWCF State Assistance and UPARR are critical to providing Americans close to home recreation opportunities. The programs complement each other and NRPA implores Congress to fund UPARR from total LWCF appropriations but not at the expense of the already underfunded State Assistance Program.

Maintaining The Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Competitive Grant Program

With UPARR now dormant for over a decade, we appreciate greatly your recognition for the need to target some State Assistance dollars to assist our most underserved, urban communities. Your support has led to the development of what is now known as the ORLP. This national competitive grant program complements the traditional State Assistance formula grants program by focusing on national priorities, specifically helping urban communities to acquire or develop land to create or reinvigorate public parks and other outdoor recreation spaces in ways that significantly improve local communities and encourage people to connect (or re-connect) with the outdoors.

NRPA is pleased to have worked with NPS to help develop the pilot for this initiative and believes it will prove successful in highlighting the innovative projects and partnerships the State Assistance Program provides across America. This year, NPS intends to award as many as 40 ORLP grants to support the revitalization and protection of close-to-home parks and recreation opportunities in underserved areas.

We ask that you maintain funding for the ORLP at $12 million for fiscal year 2017. Also, as this program is included as part of the overall funding for the State Assistance Program, we ask the subcommittee to ensure that any continued funding for the ORLP does not negatively impact the total amount provided to the critical formula grants to the States for conservation and outdoor recreation.

Madam Chair and members of the subcommittee, few programs can address so many national priorities as effectively as the LWCF State Assistance Program. This subcommittee and Congress have the rare opportunity to achieve national goals, all without costing the individual American taxpayer a penny, and can do so by adopting three simple recommendations: Allocate a minimum of 40 percent of LWCF funding to the State Assistance Program; continue the innovative ORLP grant program, and address the need for improved infrastructure in urban areas by allocating a portion of the total LWCF funding to UPARR.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share NRPA's recommendations and your consideration of our request.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL TRIBAL CONTRACT SUPPORT COST COALITION

My name is Lloyd Miller and I am a partner in the law firm of Sonosky, Chambers, Sachse, Miller and Munson, LLP. I submit outside written testimony on behalf of the National Tribal Contract Support Cost (NTCSC) Coalition. The Coalition is comprised of 21 tribes and tribal organizations situated in 11 States. Collectively, they operate contracts to administer almost $500 million in IHS and BIA programs

on behalf of over 250 Native American Tribes.[1] The NTCSC Coalition was created to assure that the Federal Government honors the United States' contractual obligation to add full contract support cost funding to every contract and compact awarded under the Indian Self-Determination Act. I also litigated the Supreme Court *Cherokee* and *Arctic Slope* cases against the Indian Health Service, and co-litigated the *Ramah* class action case against the Bureau of Indian Affairs, all of which held that IHS and BIA contracts with Indian Tribes are true, binding contracts which must be paid in full no less than any other government contract. As a direct result of these litigations, the government since 2012 has agreed to pay over $1.75 billion in contract damages to Native American Tribes and tribal organizations, and close to $2 billion if we include judgments awarded in earlier years.

No single enactment has had a more profound impact on tribal communities than the Indian Self-Determination Act of 1975. Since its enactment, tribes and intertribal organizations have taken control over vast portions of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Indian Health Service, including services previously provided by the Federal Government in the areas of healthcare, education, law enforcement and land and natural resource protection. Today, not a single tribe in the United States is without at least one self-determination contract with the IHS or the BIA. Collectively, the tribes administer nearly $3 billion in essential Federal Government functions employing an estimated 35,000 people.

Under all of these contracts, the tribes must cover contract support costs—essentially overhead—to responsibly manage their programs. They have to make payroll. They have to manage their finances and their information technology systems. They have to buy insurance. They have to procure goods and services. All of the same things the Government has to do, the tribes have to do—and even more: the tribes must complete costly annual audits, negotiate indirect cost rates, and comply with a raft of unfunded Federal mandates.

Full payment of contract support costs is essential to keeping faith with the Government's contractual commitments, honoring the Government's trust responsibility, and permitting the tribes to prudently carry out the contracted programs, from law enforcement to range management to full-on hospital operations. And since these costs are fixed, when the Government does not pay them, tribes pay them out of program funds or tribal trust funds. For many years, appropriators have well understood the nature of the Government's obligation in this area:

> The Committee believes that both the Bureau [of Indian Affairs] and the Indian Health Service should pay all contract support costs for which it has contractually agreed and directs the Service to include the full cost of the contract support obligations in its fiscal year 2013 budget submission.

H.R. Rep. No. 112–151, at 98 (2011). See also *id.* at 42 (addressing the BIA). The Supreme Court has agreed with Congress's assessment: "Consistent with longstanding principles of Government contracting law, we hold that the Government must pay each tribe's contract support costs in full." *Salazar v. Ramah Navajo Chapter,* 132 S. Ct. 2181, 2186 (2012). See also *Arctic Slope Native Ass'n, Ltd. v. Sebelius,* No. 2010–1013, Order at 6, 2012 WL 3599217 (Fed. Cir. Aug. 22, 2012), *on remand from* 133 S. Ct. 22 (2012) (applying the *Ramah* ruling to the Indian Health Service). Today it is beyond any debate that the payment of contract support costs is a binding contractual obligation owed to all tribes that operate BIA and IHS contracts. The only issue remaining has been how to meet that obligation.

Thanks to the vision and decisive action of congressional appropriators, fiscal year 2014 was the first year in which contract support costs were paid in full through the ordinary appropriations process. For the agencies, particularly IHS, it was a rocky start, as early mistaken estimates gave way to the reality that the agency had missed the mark by millions of dollars. A major reprogramming action was necessary to make tribes whole, threatening direct services. Although IHS weathered the storm with a minimum of disruption to direct service operations, doing so re-

[1] The NTCSCC is comprised of the: Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (Alaska), Arctic Slope Native Association (Alaska), Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes (Alaska), Cherokee Nation (Oklahoma), Chickasaw Nation, Chippewa Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boy's Reservation (Montana), Choctaw Nation (Oklahoma), Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (Montana), Copper River Native Association (Alaska), Forest County Potawatomi Community (Wisconsin), Kodiak Area Native Association (Alaska), Little River Band of Ottawa Indians (Michigan), Pueblo of Zuni (New Mexico), Riverside-San Bernardino County Indian Health (California), Shoshone Bannock Tribes (Idaho), Shoshone-Paiute Tribes (Idaho, Nevada), Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (Alaska), Spirit Lake Tribe (North Dakota), Tanana Chiefs Conference (Alaska), Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation (Alaska), and Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board (43 tribes in Idaho, Washington, Oregon).

quired diverting nearly all of the increases that Congress had appropriated that year for program services.

The 2014 disruptions were avoided in fiscal year 2015, thanks to better planning and more accurate agency projections. Even still, the threat to ongoing program operations was palpable, given the prior year's experience. That threat led directly to bold and unprecedented action for fiscal year 2016 in establishing an entirely separate contract support cost account, and to allocate to that account an uncapped amount for the payment of these costs. The solution was as elegant as it was brilliant: (1) it avoided the substantial difficulties of transferring these payments to the mandatory side of the ledger; (2) it removed any possible threat to ongoing program operations; and (3) at the same time it assured full payment of the Government's contract obligations to the tribes. The tribal experience in 2014, 2015 and 2016 is that the new system is now working, and even working quite well. The National Tribal Contract Support Cost Coalition fully supports this approach and encourages the subcommittee, with one modification, to continue this year's approach in future years.

The one modification we strongly request is to eliminate the agency-requested "proviso" that was included in these new IHS and BIA accounts. The proviso addresses contract funds that go unspent in a given fiscal year. Existing law already addresses that issue. *See* 25 U.S.C. 450(a)(4) ("For each fiscal year during which a self-determination contract is in effect, any savings attributable to the operation of a Federal program, function, service, or activity under a self-determination contract by a tribe or tribal organization (including a cost reimbursement construction contract) shall (A) be used to provide additional services or benefits under the contract; or (B) be expended by the tribe or tribal organization in the succeeding fiscal year, as provided in section 13a of this title."). At the risk of stating the obvious, all funds paid under self-determination contracts or compacts must be spent under those contracts to deliver (or support the delivery of) healthcare to Indian people. The new proviso is somewhat in conflict this existing law. Worse yet, it will require new accounting rules to track subaccounts across fiscal years, at significant expense but with no discernible benefit to the taxpayer, the Treasury, or Indian people. Nothing in the new mechanism for contract support cost payments justifies changing the longstanding rules controlling how those funds are accounted for and spent. We therefore respectfully request that the subcommittee delete the proviso going forward.

As it did last year, the administration has also proposed to transfer CSC appropriations from the discretionary side of the budget to the mandatory side of the budget, starting in fiscal year 2018. The National Tribal Contract Support Cost Coalition strongly supports the President's proposal, and indeed would prefer a proposal to make such a provision permanent.[2] That said, we recognize that the proposal will have difficult sledding without an offset, and unfortunately none has been proposed by the administration. We stand ready to work with the subcommittee this year and next to explore how best to move forward with a mandatory appropriation.

We applaud the IHS and BIA for their efforts over the past several months to work closely with tribes in the development of internal guidelines for calculating and reconciling CSC payments. Each agency now has a draft policy ready for tribal consultation, and we are encouraged by these efforts. That said, the Coalition is quite concerned that the IHS approach remains terribly over-complicated, partly due to the agency's insistence on maintaining what we believe are untenable legal positions that the Office of General Counsel prefers to litigate.

For instance, IHS wants to litigate the proposition that a tribe may not receive any contract support costs for an activity (say, information technology costs or facil-

[2] A time-limited mandatory appropriation is ill-suited to paying a permanent obligation, because each renewal is subject to the vagaries of the political process. The best example of those vagaries is reflected in the history of the time-limited mandatory appropriation enacted for the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI). Public Law No. 105–33, § 4922, 111 Stat. 251 (1997) (5 years); Public Law No. 107–360, § 1(b), 116 Stat. 3019 (2002) (6 years); Public Law No. 110–173, § 302(b), 121 Stat. 2492, 2515 (2007) (one year); Public Law No. 110–275, § 303(b), 122 Stat. 2494, 2594 (2008) (2 years); Public Law No. 111–309, § 112(2), 124 Stat. 3285, 3289 (2010) (2 years); Public Law No. 112–240, § 625(b), 126 Stat. 2313, 2352–53(2014) (1 year); Public Law No. 113–93, § 204(b), 128 Stat. 1040, 1046 (2014) (1 year). This instability is orders of magnitude more destabilizing when it comes to the payment of contract support costs for the delivery of core governmental functions, including the annual operation of police departments, schools and entire hospitals and clinics serving many of the Nation's most vulnerable populations. It is one thing for a discrete program to end; it is quite another for an entire hospital or police department to close or be substantially cut back because contract support cost payments suddenly cease. One can imagine the grave instability that would ensue if by March 2020, Congress had not yet renewed a 3-year measure and yet the Budget Committee was developing its discretionary caps for the coming year and the subcommittee elected to hold hearings.

ity support costs) if that activity was already partly funded in the program budget that was paid to the tribe under the contract. But Congress has already stated precisely the opposite—that if program funds for given costs are insufficient as compared to what is necessary and reasonable under the circumstances, then contract support costs are to be paid to make up the difference. *See* S. Rep. No. 103–374, at 9 (1994) ("[I]n the event the Secretarial amount under [§ 450j–1(a)(1)] for a particular function proves to be insufficient in light of a contractor's needs for prudent management of the contract, contract support costs are to be available to supplement such sums.")

We respectfully urge the subcommittee to underscore these instructions, direct the agencies to further simplify the contracting process, and instruct the agencies not to seek to reduce tribal contract support cost entitlements.

To further simplify and streamline contracting activities, we also respectfully suggest that the subcommittee urge the agencies to explore using multi-year arrangements for fixed rates or fixed lump-sum amounts subject to inflationary adjustments.

Finally, the Coalition respectfully urges the subcommittee to clarify once and for all that other funds under this subcommittee's jurisdiction that are paid to tribes and tribal organizations that contract with IHS under the Indian Self-Determination Act, shall be paid to the tribes under those contracts and compacts—not under separate grant agreements—and that tribal contract support cost requirements are to be calculated on such funds. Although this was the agency's practice between 2008 and 2012, the agency changed course after the 2012 *Ramah* decision and, for the last 2 years, has only awarded methamphetamine and suicide prevention initiative (MSPI) funds and domestic violence prevention initiative (DVPI) funds under grant instruments. Not only does using grants instead of existing contracts and compacts considerably over-complicate the accounting and reporting process; denying tribes contract support costs on these funds and future behavioral health funds forces tribes to divert scarce program dollars to cover overhead costs. On average, IHS's change in position—undertaken without any tribal consultation whatsoever—has reduced these behavioral health program funding amounts nationwide by 25 percent. Congress should not tolerate this irrational, arbitrary and capricious change to these programs.

I thank the subcommittee for the opportunity to provide written testimony on behalf of the National Tribal Contract Support Cost Coalition concerning the fiscal year 2017 budget.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Madame Chairman, Senator Udall, and members of the subcommittee, I appreciate this opportunity to present the National Trust for Historic Preservation's recommendations for fiscal year 2017 appropriations. My name is Tom Cassidy and I am the Director of Government Relations and Policy. The National Trust is a privately-funded nonprofit organization chartered by Congress in 1949. We work to save America's historic places to enrich our future.

The Nation faces a challenging fiscal environment. The National Trust recognizes there is a need for fiscal restraint and cost-effective Federal investments. However, we do not believe that preservation, conservation and recreation programs should suffer from disproportionate funding reductions. We look forward to working with you, Madame Chairman, as you address the ongoing needs for investments to sustain our Nation's rich heritage of cultural and historic resources that generate lasting economic vitality for communities throughout the Nation.

Historic Preservation Fund.—The Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) is the principal source of funding to implement the Nation's historic preservation programs. Like the Land and Water Conservation Fund, its dedicated revenues are generated from oil and gas development on the Outer Continental Shelf.

The National Park Service distributes HPF grants that are matched by State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs). Inadequate HPF funding limits support for preservation activities such as survey, nomination of properties to the National Register of Historic Places, public education, project review required by the National Historic Preservation Act and for the Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (HTC). The HTC is the largest Federal investment in historic preservation. It has catalyzed the rehabilitation of more than 41250 buildings. Since its creation more than 30 years ago, the HTC has created 2.5 million jobs and leveraged more than $117.6 billion in private investment.

The National Trust applauds the administration's request of $87.41M for the HPF. Most of the increase over fiscal year 2016 enacted is attributable to the $25

million for competitive grants to preserve the sites and stories of the Civil Rights movement and $3 million for grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities. In addition, the administration requested an additional $2 million over fiscal year 2016 enacted for grants to Tribal Historic Preservation Officers. There are presently 158 THPOs recognized by NPS—a dramatic increase from the 12 tribes who received funding in fiscal year 1996, the first year of THPO funding. The National Trust enthusiastically endorses these well-deserved increases for preservation activities. The request would also continue for a fourth year the successful $500,000 competitive grants program for the survey and nomination of properties associated with communities currently underrepresented in the National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks. Recent studies have documented that less than 8 percent of such listings identify culturally diverse properties.

However, the National Trust is disappointed that the administration did not request any funding increase to the SHPOs. We will work with the preservation community to urge the appropriations subommittee to provide much needed increases for SHPOs to ensure that they can provide essential preservation services to businesses and communities throughout the Nation.

National Park Service: Operation of the National Park System and Cultural Resources Stewardship.—The National Park Service (NPS) is responsible for 411 units of the National Park System ranging from the battlefields where our ancestors fought and died to places that stir the soul like the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, the gateway for millions of new Americans. Three-quarters of our parks were created to protect our most important historic and cultural resources. Over the past 20 years, more than 40 new parks have been added to the park system, many of which preserve historic places and themes that have been underrepresented within the system.

We support the President's budget proposal of $154 million above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level for National Park Service Operations. The increase includes several Centennial Initiative requests of great importance to the preservation community, including increases of $49.2 million for repair and rehabilitation projects, $46.6 million for cyclic maintenance, and $2 million for the Cultural Resource Challenge.

Repair and Rehabilitation.—The Repair and Rehabilitation Program is a part of the overall service wide deferred maintenance strategy that directs funds to high priority mission critical and mission dependent assets with deferred maintenance projects less than $1 million. Approximately $4.5 billion of the overall deferred maintenance backlog is for the 27,000 properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places within National Park units. The deferred maintenance backlog on these properties is the result of repair and rehabilitation maintenance not being performed in a timely manner.

Cyclic Maintenance.—Investing in cyclic maintenance required to maintain historic structures is essential to abate the continued growth of the deferred maintenance backlog. The kind of projects addressed by cyclic maintenance funding includes roofing of buildings, re-pointing masonry walls, painting, sealing and stabilizing archaeological sites.

Leasing Historic Structures in National Parks.—In recent years, the Committee has repeatedly included report language encouraging the NPS to utilize leases as a means to mitigate the main The Service continues to move slowly to implement the policy changes he Service is slow to implement the policy changes necessary to facilitate more leasing and catalyze even broader use of this important authority. We recommend that the subcommittee request the NPS to report on its actions to expand this public-private approach to bring private investment into the parks.

Visitor Services: New Responsibilities and Critical Needs.—We support the requested $3.2 million increase to support the operations of newly established units of the National Park System including the recently established Pullman National Monument in Illinois and Honouliuli National Monument in Hawaii. The requested increase would also support the critical operating needs of parks with Civil Rights stories, including the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail and the Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site.

Visitor Services: Centennial Initiatives, Every Kid in a Park.—We support the administration's ongoing efforts to increase the exposure of our national park to young people, particularly those from underserved communities, through the Every Kid in a Park campaign.

As part of our commitment, and assist the NPS reduce the maintenance backlog of historic properties, the National Trust launched the HOPE (Hands-On Preservation Experience) Crew initiative in 2014 to train young adults in preservation skills while helping protect and restore historic sites. Youth and veterans are trained in the preservation skills necessary to perform preservation work in the parks and other Federal lands through a cooperative agreement between the NPS, other Fed-

eral land management agencies, and several NGOs including the Student Conservation Association and The Corps Network. In the first 2 years of the program, HOPE Crew has engaged over 300 Corpsmembers (youth and veteran), spent 60,000 hours completing 67 projects and supporting over 8 million dollars of preservation work, including rehabilitating structures at Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, Little Big Horn Battlefield National Monument, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and Shenandoah National Park. Projects like these help reduce the maintenance backlog while also providing job skills and education for the next generation of stewards of America's most important historic sites.

National Park Service: Construction.—We support the requested increase of $37 million over fiscal year 2016 enacted for the Line Item Construction program. This account addresses the deferred maintenance for the NPS' highest priority non-transportation assets with projects larger than $1 million. We also support the President's request that this fund be used for the repair and stabilization of important historic structures as opposed to new construction. Of the 6,735 highest priority non-transportation assets approximately 4,000 have deferred maintenance needs. Examples of these needs include critical health and safety issues in the lobby of the Many Glacier Hotel in Glacier National Park; the rehabilitation of historic cottages, and reroofing Ebenezer Church and seven historic houses at Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site; and the rehabilitation of the Lincoln Memorial to provide accessible spaces, restrooms and pathways.

National Park Service: National Heritage Areas.—We recommend funding for National Heritage Areas (NHAs) at the fiscal year 2016 enacted level or higher. The administration's repeated proposals to reduce NHA funding, justified as "encouraging self-sufficiency," would severely impair the sustainability of the program and most likely have the exact opposite effect by rendering many NHAs not self-sufficient, but rather unable to function. National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis has described National Heritage Areas as "places where small investments pay huge dividends." We agree.

National Park Service: Centennial Challenge.—We support the $35 million Centennial Challenge to provide dedicated Federal funding to match donations for signature National Park Service projects and programs. This funding will allow the NPS to leverage private contributions to enhance visitor services and improve cultural and natural resources across the parks in the Service.

Bureau of Land Management: Cultural Resources Management.—The BLM oversees the largest, most diverse and scientifically important collection of historic and cultural resources on our Nation's public lands as well as the museum collections and data associated with them, including 10 million artifacts and specimens, 366,232 documented cultural sites, 3,965 monitored archaeological sites, 431 maintained historic structures and 108 properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This program funds National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 review of 13,000 land use proposals each year, compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act and Government-to-Government consultation with Indian Tribes and Alaska Native Governments. Since fiscal year 2003 this program has lost 19 FTEs while the demand for Section 106 compliance has remained even or increased. The loss of personnel has diminished the BLM's ability to review land proposals like transmission lines, energy development and recreation permits.

We support the administration's fiscal year 2017 request of $17.3M, a modest increase of $1.2M above fiscal year 2016 enacted. The increased support is necessary to fulfill BLM's statutory requirements for Section 106 reviews of land use proposals, and NHPA's Section 110 requirements for inventory and protection cultural resources. The increase would support 60 on-the-ground surveys of sensitive areas, site protection and stabilization projects for priority sites vulnerable to unauthorized activities and damage due to fire, erosion and changing water levels. Projects will also update predictive modeling and data analysis to enhance the BLM's ability to address large-scale, cross jurisdictional land-use projects.

Bureau of Land Management: National Landscape Conservation System.—The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) National Landscape Conservation System (National Conservation Lands) includes 31 million acres of congressionally and presidentially designated lands, including National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, National Scenic and Historic Trails, and Wild and Scenic Rivers.

As the Nation's newest system of protected lands, the National Conservation Lands encompass some of our country's most significant historic and cultural resources, yet the BLM's ability to steward these resources is undermined by insufficient funding. The National Conservation Lands are just one-tenth of BLM managed lands but they host one-third of all BLM's visitors. Without sufficient funding, the

BLM struggles to complete essential resource protection, such as signing trails, inventorying and protecting cultural sites from looting and vandalism.

We support the administration's fiscal year 2017 request of $83.1 million, a $14 million increase over fiscal year 2016 enacted, in order to prevent critical damage to the resources found in these areas, ensure proper management and provide for a quality visitor experience. This funding level would enable BLM to hire essential management and law enforcement staff, monitor and protect natural and cultural resources, close unauthorized routes that damage fragile cultural sites and undertake needed ecosystem and species restoration projects.

Land and Water Conservation Fund.—The National Trust supports robust funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Many of the Nation's most significant historic and cultural landscapes have been permanently protected through LWCF investments, including Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site, Canyons of the Ancients National Monument and Harpers Ferry National Historic Park. Culturally significant projects in the fiscal year 2017 request include Aqua Fria National Monument (Arizona), Galisteo Basin ACEC (New Mexico), Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park (Texas), Hawaii Volcanoes National Park (Hawaii), Appalachian Trail (West Virginia), Lewis & Clark National Historic Park (Oregon/Washington) and the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (District of Columbia/Delaware/Maryland/Virginia). We strongly support the administration's request for the American Battlefield Protection Program Grants.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the National Trust's recommendations for the fiscal year 2017 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE ASSOCIATION

Chair Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall, and members of the subcommittee:

On behalf of the National Wildlife Refuge Association and its membership of representatives from Refuge Friends organizations and concerned citizens, thank you for your support for the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS), particularly for the funding increase for fiscal year 2016. We appreciate the opportunity to offer comments on the fiscal year 2017 Interior appropriations bill and respectfully request:

—$506.6 million for the Operations and Maintenance (O&M) accounts of the NWRS, including $5 million for the Pacific Marine Monuments;
—$900 million for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), with $150 million allocated for the FWS, including these high priority requests:
  —$10 million for Everglades Headwaters NWR and Conservation Area (Florida);
  —$5 million for Silvio O. Conte NFWR (Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts);
  —$3 million for Cache River NWR (Arizona);
  —$2 million for Bear River Watershed Conservation Area (Wyoming, Idaho, Utah);
  —$2 million for Blackwater NWR (Maryland);
  —$1.4 million for Balcones Canyonlands NWR (Texas);
  —$2 million for Clark River NWR (Kentucky);
  —$6.2 million for Hakalau Forest NWR (Hawaii); and
  —$8 million for the Dakota Grasslands Conservation Area (North Dakota, South Dakota);
—$50 million for the Refuge Fund;
—$75 million for the FWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program;
—$15 million for the FWS Coastal Program;
—$60 million for FWS for Preparedness and Hazardous Fuels Reduction (under DOI);
—$70 million for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program;
—$47.6 million for the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund;
—$6 million for the Neotropical Migratory Bird Fund; and
—$13 million for the Multinational Species Conservation Fund.

We understand our Nation's challenging fiscal constraints, but cutting funding to programs that are economic drivers and job creators in local communities only exacerbates an already difficult situation. For example, the NWRS averages almost $5 in economic return for every $1 appropriated. Budgets have not kept pace with rising costs, and the gap between the funding needed to maintain these programs and the funding appropriated has widened dramatically.

Now, with the expansion of the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument, the Refuge System is responsible for over half a billion acres of land and water and therefore must have adequate funding to keep pace with this newly expanded area of responsibility. The Service is also expanding their outreach by working to make conservation more accessible to the American public via urban refuges and urban partnerships. To begin bridging these gaps, the Refuge Association urges Congress to fund these critical programs that leverage Federal dollars and serve as economic drivers.

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM—OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

The Refuge Association chairs the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE), a diverse coalition of 23 sporting, conservation, and scientific organizations representing more than 16 million Americans that supports increased funding for the Refuge System. CARE estimates the NWRS needs at least $900 million annually to manage its 150 million acres and 418 million acres of national marine monuments, yet it is currently funded at roughly half that amount—at less than $1 per acre. The Refuge System cannot fulfill its obligation to the American public, our wildlife, and 48.5 million annual visitors without increases in maintenance and operation funds.

Funding for the Refuge System has declined substantially from a funding level of $503 million in fiscal year 2010 to its current $481 million—$77 million below what it needs to keep pace with inflation and salary increases. This has forced the Service to cut back on programs and create efficiencies whenever possible. Because of these new efficiencies, the Service has cut its deferred maintenance backlog in half from $2.7 billion to $1.17 billion as of the end of fiscal year 2015. But budget cuts also led to the loss of 500 positions since fiscal year 2011 and thus an increase in the operations backlog, now at $735 million. Because most refuge lands and waters are highly managed, this deterioration in staffing has had a dramatic impact resulting in significant declines in habitat protection and management, hunting, fishing, volunteerism and scientific research.

For instance, visitor services staff has declined by 15 percent, forcing a reduction in public programs and hours of operation, yet there is more demand than ever for recreational opportunities on refuges. Hunting visits are up 2 percent since fiscal year 2011 and fishing visits are down 5 percent, but photography participation is up 52 percent and auto tour visits are up 14 percent. Visitation to all refuges since fiscal year 2011 has increased by 9 percent. Overall, more people are looking to recreate on wildlife refuges, but fewer staff is available to provide those opportunities.

Reductions in visitor services can be extremely troubling to constituencies who want to visit. At Tualatin NWR in Oregon, elimination of the visitor services position cut all teacher training workshops and community outreach. Prior to this loss, over 100 teachers were trained each year at the refuge. Patuxent Research Refuge in Maryland—the refuge closest to the Nation's capital —has closed its visitor's center every Thursday due to budget shortfalls, reduced programs for schools, and lost half its visitor services staff.

Equally troubling is a 15 percent drop in the number of volunteers since fiscal year 2011. At a time when record numbers of Americans are retiring and have the capability to give back, the Service's ability to oversee their efforts has been curtailed. Volunteers provide an additional 20 percent of work on our national wildlife refuges, yet they are being turned away when the System needs them the most.

During these years of challenging budgets, the Refuge System's potential to drive local economies and create jobs is of paramount importance. Banking On Nature, a report issued by the FWS in 2013, shows that even during the worst recession since the Great Depression, the Refuge System saw economic output in local communities increase 20 percent to $2.4 billion, visitation increase 30 percent to 46.5 million, an average return on investment increase of 22 percent to $4.87 for every $1 appropriated, and supported jobs increase 23 percent to 35,000.

Not included within the request of $506.6 million is the need for an additional $6 million to recoup costs related to the armed occupation of the Malheur NWR in Oregon. For 40 days this winter, armed occupiers took over the refuge, causing injury to infrastructure and habitat. This funding includes costs already incurred by the Service for additional law enforcement as well as the cost to repair damages in order to open the refuge. Without these additional funds, all costs will come out of the Service's operating budget, reducing the amount available to the rest of the System.

In addition, invasive species control is critically required at the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee NWR in Florida. This refuge is owned by the State of Florida and

managed by the Service, and invasive weeds have degraded much of the 230 square mile refuge. $5 million annually is required each year for 5 years to remove invasive species, plus an additional $3 million each year thereafter to maintain invasive species control.

The Refuge Association appreciates the subcommittee's consideration of our request of $506.6 million for fiscal year 2017 for National Wildlife Refuge System Operations and Maintenance. We additionally request $6 million for costs related to the Malheur NWR occupation and $5 million for invasive species control at the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee NWR.

STRATEGIC GROWTH—LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND (LWCF)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is an essential tool for protecting the integrity of the Refuge System and is the primary funding source for land and conservation easement acquisition by Federal land agencies. Some in Congress have argued that public lands like the Refuge System can't manage what they have and thus, all land acquisition should end. However, in the past 20 years, lands contained within the Refuge System have only grown by 5.6 percent, while at the same time, visitation has grown by 30 percent. The real cause of rising operations and maintenance costs is that the public is hungry for more opportunities to recreate.

Increasingly, LWCF is being used to conserve working lands and local culture through the acquisition of easements that secure conservation protection while leaving the land in private ownership and on the tax rolls. Easements are powerful tools that foster public-private partnerships with ranchers, farmers and foresters to conserve wildlife, habitat and a uniquely American way of life. Innovative landscape-scale initiatives using easements have broad community and State support in New England's Connecticut River Watershed, the Everglades Headwaters, the Bear River Watershed, and the Dakota Grasslands. These iconic landscapes remain privately managed, generating tax income for local communities, securing our Nation's food, and balancing resource use and resource protection for wildlife.

In many cases, however, land acquisition is required to conserve intact and functional natural habitat. The Refuge System is responsible for safeguarding population levels of a range of species, including many that require specific habitat conditions, such as beaches for sea turtles and isolated springs for endemic desert fish. Others require multiple habitat types during their life cycle. By acquiring critical habitat areas and linking conserved lands, the Refuge System enhances the integrity of the System and strengthens our network of habitat to give wildlife space and time to respond to changes, whether from climate or changing land use patterns.

The Refuge Association calls on Congress to fund LWCF at $900 million per year, with $150 million provided in fiscal year 2017 to the USFWS for conservation easements and refuge in-holdings, including the projects enumerated at the beginning of this statement and those advocated by Refuge Friends.

COMMITMENT TO REFUGE COMMUNITIES—REFUGE FUND

The Refuge System uses net income derived from permits and timber harvests to make payments to local communities to offset property tax revenue lost when the federally acquired lands are removed from local tax rolls. The System relies on congressional appropriations to the Refuge Fund to compensate for the shortfall between revenues and tax replacement obligations. However, declining revenues and lack of appropriations have resulted in the Service paying less than 50 percent of its tax-offset obligations since 2001. The negative impact on local communities is felt even more starkly in difficult economic times and reduced funding threatens the partnerships that are so important for successful conservation.

The Refuge Association requests $50 million for the Refuge Fund. We also call for a review of the Refuge Revenue Sharing Act of 1935 as amended, and consideration of conversion to a Payment-in-Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program to be consistent with other Federal land management agencies and to provide Refuge communities with more equitable payments.

PARTNERSHIPS—PARTNERS FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE PROGRAM (PARTNERS PROGRAM)

With 75 percent of all fish and wildlife species dependent upon private lands for their survival, the Partners Program is one of the most powerful tools for protecting wildlife where it lives. By building effective partnerships between public agencies and private landowners to conserve America's expansive working landscapes, the Partners Program has implemented nearly 29,000 restoration projects in the past 25 years, restoring over one million acres of wetlands, three million acres of up-

lands, and 11,000 miles of streams. The Partners Program leverages Federal dollars, generating nearly $16 in economic return for every $1 appropriated for projects.

The Partners Program is playing a key role in conserving greater sage-grouse habitat in the intermountain west. To this end, we request an additional $78 million for the Interior agencies to implement sagebrush steppe habitat conservation and monitoring efforts that will leverage $300 million in Department of Agriculture investments.

The Refuge Association and the landowner-led Partners for Conservation request $75 million for fiscal year 2017. Such a funding level would result in an additional $400 million worth of conservation across the Nation.

We believe that with sound conservation policy, adequate funding, and the power of more than 40,000 dedicated volunteers, the Refuge System can fulfill its mission to provide wildlife dependent recreation for Americans and protect the habitat for more than 700 species of birds, 220 species of mammals, 250 reptile and amphibian species and more than 1,000 species of fish.

We look forward to working with Congress in 2016 to accomplish this goal and appreciate your consideration of our requests. Please let our staff know if you have any questions.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to submit recommendations for fiscal year 2017 appropriations. The Nature Conservancy is an international, non-profit conservation organization working around the world to protect ecologically important lands and waters for nature and people. Our mission is to conserve the lands and waters upon which all life depends.

As we enter the fiscal year 2017 budget cycle and another year of a challenging fiscal environment, the Conservancy continues to recognize the need for fiscal austerity. The Conservancy also wishes to thank this subcommittee for the final fiscal year 2016 funding levels for Department of Interior conservation programs. Our budget recommendations this year reflect a balanced approach with funding levels consistent in most cases with fiscal year 2016 funding levels or, in rare instances, reflecting specific program needs. Of particular note, we wish to work with this subcommittee and the authorizing committees on identifying permanent funding solutions for wildfire funding, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program and Secure Rural Schools. The Conservancy is concerned about the increasing impacts of wildfire suppression funding on Interior funding levels and urges the subcommittee to adopt a bipartisan fire funding solution. The Interior Bureaus (and USDA Forest Service) need a stable and efficient budgeting process that provides firefighters with the necessary upfront resources to address wildfire disasters, while also providing the stability to perform activities that restore forests and reduce fire risk and costs to communities. A solution to the current fire funding problem must include all three of the following: (1) accesses disaster funding, (2) minimizes impacts from transfers/borrowing, and (3) addresses the increasing costs of suppression over time. We also strongly support the emphasis on funding for sage grouse conservation in the fiscal year 2017 budget request.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).—The fiscal year 2017 President's budget again proposes the establishment of a dedicated source of long-term funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. In the proposal, the President's budget includes $475 million for LWCF activities through "current authority" or discretionary appropriations and then an additional $425 million in "permanent authority" or mandatory funding for LWCF. The budget then proposes to reach the $900 million funding level in fiscal year 2017 through this blend of current and permanent funding. The Conservancy supports this phased shift to mandatory funding for the LWCF Program. However, consistent with prior years and as noted above, we believe the administration must work closely with the relevant appropriations and authorizing committees to move this proposal forward. Additionally, the Conservancy supports the balanced approach in the budget on both "core" and "collaborative" LWCF projects. Projects in the Upper Rio Grande landscape in Colorado and New Mexico, Rivers of the Chesapeake in Maryland and Virginia, and the Island Forests at Risk landscapes of Hawaii will benefit greatly from the collaborative emphasis. Our core priorities this year include the Silvio O. Conte NFWR (New Hampshire/Vermont/Connecticut/Massachusetts) and the working ranches and agricultural production areas of Florida's Everglades Headwaters NWR & Conservation Area, North Dakota and South Dakota's Dakota Grasslands Conservation Area, Utah, Idaho and Wyoming's Bear River Watershed Conservation Area, Kansas's

Flint Hills Legacy Conservation Area and Montana and Washington's Great Western Checkerboard.

Forest Legacy.—We support a minimum of $62 million for the Forest Legacy Program in current discretionary funding and the $38 million in permanent, mandatory funding (with our aforementioned caveats), totaling $100 million for Forest Legacy Programs.

Endangered Species.—The Conservancy supports a funding level of at least $53 million for the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (CESCF), and also requests the subcommittee give consideration to the additional fiscal year 2017 President's budget request for permanent funding per our earlier request for negotiations to occur between the administration and relevant congressional committees on a path forward for this funding. We also request your continuing support for Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) funding, specifically HCP Land Acquisition Grants where the need has greatly outpaced available resources in recent years.

Wildlife Planning.—The Conservancy continues to support the Western Governors' Association's (WGA) and this subcommittee's efforts to recommend Federal land management agencies utilize State fish and wildlife data and analyses to inform the land use, land planning and related natural resource decisions of those agencies. As an example of strong State-led data systems, WGA has partnered in recent years with State wildlife agencies and the Federal Government to develop statewide GIS mapping tools to identify crucial wildlife habitat and migratory corridors. These geospatial mapping tools, which provide access to credible, broad-scale scientific data—compiled and analyzed by the States—are designed to reduce conflicts and surprises while ensuring wildlife values are better incorporated into land use planning, particularly for large-scale linear projects.

State and Tribal Wildlife Grants.—The Conservancy supports the President's fiscal year 2017 funding request of $67 million for this program. Strong Federal investments are essential to ensure strategic actions are undertaken by State, tribal and Federal agencies and the conservation community to conserve wildlife populations and their habitats and to prevent species from being listed as threatened or endangered.

Wildlife Conservation Programs.—The variety of wildlife conservation programs conducted by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) continue a long and successful tradition of supporting collaborative conservation in the U.S. and internationally. We urge the subcommittee to fund the President's request for such established and successful programs as the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (NMBCA), and the FWS Coastal Program. We support the President's request for the Migratory Bird Joint Ventures and the FWS Migratory Bird Management Program. For the latter, we are particularly supportive of FWS' efforts at developing updated eagle permitting regulations which will both support the development of renewable energy in our country and contribute to sustainable and growing populations of these iconic North American species. We support the President's fiscal year 2017 request for the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and the requested funding for Cooperative Landscape Conservation and Adaptive Science at $17.87 million. The latter will help support DOI's overall commitment to Landscape Conservation Cooperatives and will contribute to collaborative problem solving for some of our Nation's most challenging issues. We also request strong funding this year for the National Fish Habitat Initiative.

International Programs.—The international conservation programs appropriated annually within the Department of Interior are relatively small but are effective and widely respected. They encompass the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's (FWS) Multinational Species Conservation Funds, the FWS Wildlife Without Borders regional and global programs, and the U.S. National Park Service International Program. We urge that fiscal year 2017 levels for these programs remain equivalent to fiscal year 2016 levels at a minimum.

National Wildlife Refuge System.—The Conservancy supports the President's budget request of $506.6 million for the Refuge System's Operations and Maintenance accounts. Found in every U.S. State and Territory, national wildlife refuges conserve a diversity of America's environmentally sensitive and economically vital ecosystems, including oceans, coasts, wetlands, deserts, tundra, prairie, and forests. This represents the funding necessary to maintain management capabilities for the Refuge System.

DOI Wildland Fire Management.—The Wildfire Disaster Funding Act (WDFA) must be approved prior to an fiscal year 2017 appropriations package to adequately fund suppression and provide flexibility for activities that reduce fire risk and long-term suppression costs in fiscal year 2017. The Conservancy greatly appreciates the subcommittee's support of this much-needed fire funding fix.

Hazardous Fuels and Restoration.—Strategic, proactive hazardous fuels treatments have proven safer and more cost-effective in reducing risks to communities and forests by removing overgrown brush and trees, leaving forests in a more natural condition resilient to wildfires. Additionally, drought conditions increase the need for investment in this program. The Conservancy recommends investing in DOI's Hazardous Fuels Program at levels of $178 million, in addition to investing $30 million into the new Resilient Landscapes program designed to restore and maintain fire adapted landscapes and habitats and repeating the subcommittee's fiscal year 2012 instructions for allocating funds to priority landscapes in both WUI and wildland settings.

Sage Grouse Conservation.—This budget requests additional investment to provide needed resources for ongoing efforts to restore and conserve sagebrush habitat and the greater sage-grouse across Federal, State, tribal and private lands. We support the President's budget request for $90 million for sage-grouse conservation at Interior agencies ($79 million—BLM, $4 million—FWS, $4.2 million—USGS and $2.8 million—WFM). The additional budgetary support is needed to implement on-the-ground projects and monitor habitat treatments, address rangeland fire and broader wildland fire prevention, suppression and restoration efforts, and support the partnership and science necessary for effective conservation. The BLM is facing perhaps the single most challenging effort in its history in conserving key sagebrush habitat, addressing identified threats to sage-grouse and promoting sustainable economic development across some 165 million acres in coordination with State and local managers and private land owners. Additional resources for the FWS will be used, inter alia, for developing voluntary prelisting conservation agreements with private landowners who are ready and willing to undertake critical conservation work for the sagebrush steppe ecosystem on large blocks of private lands.

BLM Landscape Approaches to Land Management and Renewable Energy Development.—The Conservancy supports the administration's recommended fiscal year 2017 funding for BLM's initiatives to implement landscape approaches to land management which include Rapid Ecoregional Assessments, Resource Management Planning and the Planning 2.0 initiative, Regional Mitigation Planning, coordination with LCCs, and the Assessment, Inventory, and Monitoring (AIM) Strategy. Many BLM programs contribute to these cross-cutting initiatives including: National Landscape Conservation System—($50.65 million); Resource Management Planning program ($65.2 million); Wildlife and Fisheries management ($108.7 million request); and Threatened & Endangered species management ($21.6 million request). Additionally, the Conservancy supports continued funding for BLM's renewable energy development program at $29 million which includes implementation of the Western Solar Energy Program. Collectively, these efforts will help BLM manage its lands efficiently and effectively for energy development, species and habitat conservation, recreation, and other uses to maximize the public benefit from these lands.

Environmental Protection Agency.—EPA's "geographic" programs including the Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes, Gulf of Mexico, Puget Sound and Mississippi River programs make a significant contribution to protecting habitat and water quality in the large landscapes where they work. The Conservancy urges the subcommittee to continue strong funding for these programs.

Colorado River Basin Recovery Programs.—The Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program and San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program take a balanced approach to recovering four endangered fish species in the Colorado River basin. The Upper Colorado and San Juan recovery programs are highly successful collaborative conservation partnerships involving the States of New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming, as well as Indian tribes, Federal agencies, and water, power and environmental interests. These programs provide critically important Endangered Species Act (ESA) compliance for over 2,450 Federal, tribal, State, and private water projects across the Upper Colorado River Basin. Through these efforts, water use and development has continued in growing western communities in full compliance with the ESA, State water and wildlife law, and interstate compacts. Implementation of the ESA has been greatly streamlined for Federal agencies, tribes and water users. The Conservancy supports the President's fiscal year 2017 Budget request of $1.532 million for FWS for the Colorado River Basin recovery programs, including recovery funds for both the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program and San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program, as well as fish hatchery needs associated with the recovery plans.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit the Nature Conservancy's recommendations for the fiscal year 2017 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

USDA FOREST SERVICE

Thank you Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall, and members of the subcommittee for the opportunity to submit recommendations for fiscal year 2017 appropriations. The Nature Conservancy is an international non-profit conservation organization whose mission is to conserve the lands and waters upon which all life depends.

America's public forests have tremendous national importance but their health puts them at severe risk unless we invest in proper stewardship and forestry. America's forests store and filter more than half of our Nation's water supply, provide jobs to nearly 1 million forest product workers, generate $13.6 billion in recreation based economic activity, are habitat to thousands of forest-dependent wildlife and plant species, offer a million square miles to sportsmen and families for outdoor recreation, and are a major carbon sink that sequester 15 percent of all fossil fuel emissions in the United States.

However megafires, pests, drought, and sprawl place forests at great risk; approximately 62 million acres are in immediate need of urgent restoration to return forests to healthier conditions—and that is on national forests alone. Unfortunately, forest restoration is significantly obstructed by ballooning fire suppression costs.

Again in fiscal year 2015, the 10-year average was not enough to meet Forest Service suppression needs, forcing the agency to transfer $700 million from non-suppression accounts to make up for the shortfall. The current wildfire suppression funding model and cycle of transfers and repayments has negatively impacted the ability to implement forest management, among many other activities. Additionally, the increasing 10-year average continues to constrain the agency's relatively flat budget, which is why we are thankful to the subcommittee for both the full fiscal year 2015 transfer repayment and increased suppression funding in fiscal year 2016.

The Conservancy understands this increased suppression funding level is not guaranteed every year. The Department of the Interior and Forest Service need a long-term fire funding solution that would result in stable and predictable budgets. We respectfully request a bipartisan fire funding solution be included in an appropriations package that would (1) access disaster funding, (2) minimize transfers, and (3) address the continued erosion of agency budgets over time, with the goal of reinvesting in key programs that would restore forests to healthier conditions.

Investing in the following USDA Forest Service programs is critical to meeting forest restoration goals:

Increase funding for Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) to $60 million.—The CFLR program is demonstrating that collaboratively developed forest restoration plans can be implemented at a large scale with benefits for people and the forest. This is a model approach that brings citizens, local government and Federal staff together to determine effective management that is locally appropriate and provides jobs, sustains rural economies, reduces the risk of damaging fires, addresses invasive species, improves wildlife habitat, and decommissions unused, eroding roads. The funding increase will guarantee the existing 23 successful projects can continue, and additional critical projects across America can begin.

Fund the Hazardous Fuels programs at no less than $479 million (and $178 million for Fuels Treatment under the Department of the Interior).—Strategic, proactive hazardous fuels treatments have proven safer and more cost-effective in reducing risks to communities and forests by removing overgrown brush and trees, leaving forests in a more natural condition resilient to wildfires. Drought conditions increase the need for investments in this program to restore and maintain fire adapted landscapes and habitats.

The Conservancy additionally recommends funding levels that support critical restoration programs on national forests. Effective and durable restoration requires integrated approaches that address threats and improve forest health and habitat values while supporting forest-dependent communities:

—*Wildlife & Fisheries Habitat Management maintained at a $140 million funding level* to restore, recover, and maintain wildlife and fish and their habitats on all national forests and grasslands.

—*Vegetation & Watershed Management funded at $185 million* to promote restoration through watershed treatment activities, invasive plant species control, and reforestation of areas impacted by wildfire and other natural events.

—*Legacy Road and Trail Remediation (LRT) maintained at $50 million* to restore river and stream water quality by fixing or removing eroding roads, while pro-

viding construction jobs, supporting vital sportsmen opportunities, and reducing flooding risks from future extreme water flow events.

—*Land Management Planning, Inventory and Monitoring funded at $201 million, including consolidating the two previously separate budget items.* Consolidation will be more efficient for land managers, while supporting the collaborative, community and science based planning featured by the Forest Service 2012 Forest Planning regulation.

Fund Forest Health programs at a total of $111 million ($63 million for Federal and $48 million for Cooperative).—Forest health programs work to protect forests by minimizing the impacts caused by invasive species. Across the Nation large-scale, non-native insect, disease, and invasive plant outbreaks are damaging forest health. These programs help reduce invasions of non-native pests that destroy iconic American trees such as ash, hemlock, and California oaks.

Fund State Fire Assistance (SFA) at $86 million.—SFA provides aid to communities for fuels treatments, firefighter capacity building, fire prevention education, and pre-fire planning. The SFA program is an important complement to the Hazardous Fuels program for Federal lands.

Fund Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) at $24 million.—Through LSR, non-Federal lands have access for competitively selected projects that leverage State funding, restore forests of national importance, and, whenever possible, complement CFLR and other landscape scale restoration efforts.

Fund Forest & Rangeland Research at $293 million.—Forest and Rangeland Research offers scientific basis for policies that improve the health and quality of urban and rural communities. This program is vital for the long-term health and utility of our American forests and rivers, particularly as we face an uncertain climatic future.

Maintain funding for the Joint Fire Science Program at $7 million and maintain funding under Wildland Fire Management (and $6 million under the Department of the Interior).—This small, yet key, program has proven a great success in supporting practical science that reduces fire risk and enhances economic, ecological, and social outcomes nationwide.

Fund Forest Legacy at a minimum of $62 million for the Forest Legacy Program in current discretionary funding and $38 million in permanent, mandatory totaling $100 million.—The Forest Legacy program, in partnership with States, supports efforts to acquire conservation easements and fee simple interests on privately owned forest lands from willing sellers. These acquisitions leverage non-Federal dollars and support long-term sustainable forestry while protecting other ecological, watershed and recreational values for local communities at risk of development or conversation to other uses.

[This statement was submitted by Cecilia Clavet, Senior Policy Advisor.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NEZ PERCE TRIBE

Honorable Chairman and members of the subcommittee, as a member of the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Nez Perce Tribe to this subcommittee as it evaluates and prioritizes the appropriations for IHS, BIA, EPA, the Forest Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service in relation to the needs of tribal nations for fiscal year 2017.

First, on behalf of the Nez Perce Tribe, I want to acknowledge and thank this subcommittee for your efforts on a longstanding bipartisan basis to understand the needs of Indian Country and advocate for increased appropriations to the many programs in your jurisdiction that benefit our citizens, our tribal governments and all members of our communities.

As with any government, the Nez Perce Tribe does a wide array of work and provides a multitude of services to its tribal membership as well as the community at large. The Nez Perce Tribe has a health clinic with a satellite office, a tribal police force, a social services department, a comprehensive natural resource program that does work in forestry, wildlife management, land services and land management, habitat restoration, air quality and smoke management, water quality and sewer service, and also one of the largest fisheries departments of any tribe in the Nation working on recovery of listed species under the Endangered Species Act. The Nez Perce Tribe conducts its extensive governmental functions and obligations through a comprehensive administrative framework, which is necessary for a sovereign nation that preserves and protects the treaty rights of the Nez Perce People in addition to providing the day to day governmental services to its members and the sur-

rounding communities. The Nez Perce Tribe has long been a proponent of self determination for tribes and believes our primary obligation is to protect the treaty-reserved rights of the Nez Perce Tribe and our members. All of the work of the tribe is guided by this principle. As a result, the tribe works extensively with many Federal agencies and proper funding for those agencies and their work with, for and through tribes is of vital importance. This work cannot be accomplished unless the United States continues to affirm and follow through on its trust responsibility to Indian tribes and properly fund programs.

INDIAN HEALTH SERVICES

The Nez Perce Tribe currently operates a healthcare clinic on the Nez Perce Reservation, Nimiipuu Health. The main clinic facility is located in Lapwai, Idaho with a satellite facility located 65 miles away in Kamiah, Idaho. Nimiipuu Health provided annually services at least 3,000 patients each year. These patients annually compute into 40,000 visits which does not include pharmacy and laboratory visits but only medical provider visits. This workload is quite expensive to maintain. Our expenditure total for fiscal year 2014 was $13,942,622. Our Purchased/Referred Care costs for outpatient services for fiscal year 2014 was $4,125,475.

The Nez Perce Tribe supports the $248.7 million increase in funding over the fiscal year 2016 enacted levels proposed in the President's fiscal year 2017 budget. The tribe appreciates that the budget request includes an increase of $159 million for current services, so that the IHS, tribal and urban programs and facilities can keep up with medical and non-medical inflation, population growth and pay costs. Also, the tribe supports the recommendation of a $48.2 million increase in funding proposed for purchased and referred care, which will help to meet the purchased and referred care spending needs of the Nez Perce clinic and others like ours.

The tribe supports $800 million to be allocated for contract support costs so that they are fully funded. In addition, because full funding of these obligations is so important to Indian Country, the tribe supports the administration's innovative proposal to reclassify contract support costs for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Indian Health Service as mandatory and not discretionary beginning in fiscal year 2018. The tribe believes this reclassification should be permanent. Also, such a change in funding should not be accomplished or be off-set by reducing other funding for these agencies that would adversely affect services or programs. Also, this funding should not be unnecessarily reduced by excessive set-asides for administration.

The tribe also supports the administration's legislative proposal for permanent mandatory funding of the Special Diabetes Program at $150 million.

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

The tribe supports the total of $278 million requested for contract support costs proposed in the President's budget, and as stated above, the reclassification of these costs from discretionary to mandatory as well as the 5 percent increase in overall funding for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The tribe also supports the Presidential budget request to include a "Carcieri fix" to address legal issues that have arisen related to the transfer of land into trust which has created uncertainty over the status of lands. This uncertainty only stifles and impedes economic development in Indian Country. A legislative amendment to clarify the sovereign status of these lands is needed now.

In relation to the Bureau of Indian Affairs Public Safety and Justice account, the tribe advocates for at least the $348 million in funding for Law Enforcement that was provided in fiscal year 2016. The Nez Perce Reservation spans 1,200 square miles and covers five counties and has a mixture of tribal and non-tribal residents. The tribe provides a full service law and justice program. The Tribe has a fully trained and staffed police force of 26, a fully staffed tribal court, a prosecutor and public defender, and other personnel to perform related administrative functions. Currently, the Nez Perce Tribe contributes over $1,682,998 annually to cover the shortfall in BIA funding for the tribe's law enforcement, $383,019 for judicial services/probation, $319,360 for prosecutorial services, $163,107 for public defender services and $325,000 for prisoner boarding. This funding comes from tribal taxes and tribal gaming revenues that would otherwise be used for other governmental services. The funding for these programs needs to be increased to account for the shortfalls in funding the tribe has to absorb to continue the operation of these vital services on the reservation. The tribe supports the administration's requested increase of $2.6 million for base funding for tribal courts.

In relation to education, the tribe supports the proposed fiscal year 2017 increase of $3.8 million for the Johnson O'Malley program, and the proposed increases total-

ing $7 million for Scholarships and Adult Education and Special Higher Education Scholarships. These latter increases will help address the rising costs of attending college. The tribe also supports continued level funding (if not increases) for Tribal Education Departments and for Tribal Colleges and Universities that would support institutions such as the Northwest Indian College that operates a satellite campus on the Nez Perce Reservation.

The tribe also relies on the BIA for funding for our work related to endangered species and protection of the tribe's treaty resources including Chinook and steelhead salmon. The funding has also been used to supplement the research efforts of the tribe relative to other sensitive species. We are very appreciative that the administration's fiscal year 2017 budget request proposes increases for ALL Natural Resources Management accounts except Resource Management Program Oversight for the Central Office. Particularly helpful and important to the Nez Perce Tribes is the proposed $1 million increase over fiscal year 2016 for the BIA Endangered Species Program. This account provides tribes, like Nez Perce, with the technical and financial assistance to protect endangered species on trust lands, and this proposed increase is most welcome. Also, the proposed increase of $2.8 million for BIA Natural Resource Tribal Priority Allocations will help increase tribal land and management capabilities.

In addition, the funding provided under the BIA Rights Protection implementation monies are critical to support the exercise of treaty reserved off-reservation hunting and fishing for tribes like the Nez Perce, so we support the proposed $2.5 million increase in fiscal year 2017 for a total of $40.1 million. The BIA single-line dollars do provide the foundation for core program administration and treaty rights protection activities, such as harvest monitoring. And of course, these efforts are central to the tribe's fisheries management responsibilities as established in the treaties and further delineated in litigation regarding implementation of hunting and fishing treaty rights. It is important to understand that this funding is not for equipment but is used for job creation.

The tribe also supports continued funding for the BIA Wildlife and Parks Tribal Priority Allocations. As stated earlier, the tribe has invested a large amount of our personnel and resources in the restoration of salmon through our fisheries programs. The States of Oregon, Washington and Idaho directly benefit from this work as well through sports fisheries. These programs have been successful with funding under the Tribal Management and Development Program which is critical for fish and wildlife management of the tribe. We support the proposed fiscal year 2017 increase of $5 million to the Tribal Management and Development Program.

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE AND FOREST SERVICE

The tribe relies heavily on funding sources within the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Forest Service. First, the Tribal Wildlife Grants program administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is a cost effective expenditure for the Government. This small pot of money has resulted in huge returns from the tribe's perspective. Since 2005, we have received five such grants that have allowed us to work on such diverse issues as gray wolf monitoring, bighorn sheep research, and rare plant conservation. Continued funding for the Tribal Wildlife Grant program will allow recipient tribes to build capacity and maintain involvement in key conservation issues. It should be noted that this competitive grant does not simply dole out funds for projects but awards grants based on the quality of the proposal. The tribe strongly urges this subcommittee to support the administration's $6 million increase of funding for the Tribal Wildlife Grant program as it provides a large return in work for a small investment. It is also one of the few sources of funds tribes can tap into for wildlife research.

Related to forest management, the tribe supports wildfire disaster funding legislation that treats wildfires like other natural disasters and emergencies to help prevent funds from having to be diverted from forest management.

The Nez Perce Reservation and its usual and accustomed areas are rich in natural resources and encompass eleven different national forests. The tribe works closely with each forest administration to properly manage its resources on behalf of the tribe. These range from protecting and properly managing the products of the forest to managing the vast wildlife in each one such as elk, deer, bighorn sheep and wolves. Increased funding is necessary so that the Forest Service can meet these trust obligations and continue to work with tribes such as the Nez Perce on a government to government basis. With regard to management of bighorn sheep, the tribe would like to note the subcommittee has included report language over the last several years that encourages research related to disease transmission between domestic sheep and bighorn sheep. The tribe encourages this type of research man-

date to be restricted to laboratory settings and not be allowed to occur in the field where impact and harm would be harder to control. The bighorn sheep populations within the tribe's aboriginal territories are too fragile and too important to be put at risk.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

On behalf of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Nez Perce Tribe currently implements the Federal Air Rules for Reservations program (FARR) and receives funding from the State and Tribal Assistance Grants Program and Tribal General Assistance Grants. The tribe supports the proposed increase of $30.9 million for these grants because of the importance of these funds for tribal governance. The FARR program monitors air quality and regulates field burning throughout the Nez Perce Reservation. The tribe is located in Region 10 of the EPA and this increase in funding is needed for tribes to meet their air quality needs and operate programs under the delegation of the EPA.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. As you can see, the Nez Perce Tribe does a tremendous amount of work in a variety of areas. It is important that the United States continue to fund this work and uphold and honor its trust obligations to tribes.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NORTHWEST INDIAN FISHERIES COMMISSION

The Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC) is comprised of the 20 tribes that are party to the *United States v. Washington.*[1] We are pleased with the President's fiscal year 2017 budget request, which includes and builds on the support of the subcommittee. It contains funding to support the tribal treaty right, including research and analysis for critical and sustainable management of our natural resources. Our treaty-reserved rights are at risk today as the resources they are dependent on are disappearing and the reason our tribes brought to the Federal Government our Treaty Rights at Risk Initiative.

On behalf of our member tribes, I am providing testimony for the record in support of our fiscal year 2017 natural resources and environmental program funding requests for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). To meet the many natural resources management responsibilities required of the tribes, I submit the following requests for the BIA and EPA.

SUMMARY OF FISCAL YEAR 2017 APPROPRIATIONS REQUESTS

Bureau of Indian Affairs

—Provide $56.5 million for Rights Protection Implementation (collective request)
  —Provide $17.146 million for Western Washington Fisheries Management
  —Provide $3.082 million for Washington State Timber-Fish-Wildlife
  —Provide $4.844 million for U.S./Canada Pacific Salmon Treaty
  —Provide $2.4 million for Salmon Marking
  —Provide $4.5 million for Climate Change
—Provide $10.38 million for BIA Fish, Wildlife & Parks Projects
—Provide $273.0 million for Contract Support
—Provide $30.355 million for Tribal Climate Resilience
—Provide $830,000 for Watershed Restoration

Environmental Protection Agency

—Provide $96.4 million for General Assistance Program
—Provide $50.0 million for Puget Sound
—Provide $5.0 million for Beyond GAP

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUESTS

Bureau of Indian Affairs

Rights Protection Implementation Subactivity

The 41 tribes in the Great Lakes and Pacific Northwest with similar treaty-reserved rights have collectively identified that no less than $52.0 million for Rights Protection Implementation (RPI) is necessary for essential tribal treaty rights management. The President's fiscal year 2017 budget includes $40.161 million for RPI, an increase of $2.523 million over the fiscal year 2016 enacted level of $37.638 mil-

[1] *United States v. Washington,* Boldt Decision (1974) reaffirmed Western Washington Tribes' treaty fishing rights.

lion. The NWIFC has identified an addition need of $4.5 million for RPI Climate Change, bringing our total request for RPI to $56.5 million. A summary of the accounts of interest to us within RPI are further identified below. A breakdown of these accounts in the BIA's Greenbook is not provided for fiscal year 2017.

Provide $17.146 million for BIA Western Washington Fisheries Management.—We respectfully request $17.146 million, an increase of $8.614 million over the fiscal year 2016 enacted level of $8.532 million. Funding for this program allows for continued treaty harvest management, population assessment, habitat protection and data gathering for finfish, shellfish, groundfish, wildlife and other natural resource management needs. Funds provide the necessary capacity for the treaty tribes to co-manage the resources with the State of Washington and to continue to meet court mandates and legal responsibilities.

Provide $3.082 million for BIA Washington State Timber-Fish-Wildlife.—We respectfully request $3.082 million, an increase of $346,000 over the fiscal year 2016 enacted level of $2.736 million. Funding for this program is provided to improve forest practices on State and private lands while providing protection for fish, wildlife and water quality. This will provide the necessary funding for tribal TFW programs to fully participate in the TFW process.

Provide $4.844 million for BIA U.S./Canada Pacific Salmon Treaty.—We respectfully request $4.844 million, an increase of $564,000 over the fiscal year 2016 enacted level of $4.28 million. The Pacific Salmon Treaty (PST) Act of 1985 charges the United States Section of the Pacific Salmon Commission with the responsibility for implementation of the PST, a bilateral treaty with Canada. Tribes assist in meeting the Federal Government's obligations in implementing the treaty by participating in cooperative research and data gathering activities. This will provide sufficient funding to ensure that the tribes can continue to participate effectively in the bilateral PST process.

Provide $2.4 million for BIA Salmon Marking.—We respectfully request $2.4 million, an increase of $1.332 million over the fiscal year 2016 enacted level of $1.068 million. Funding for this program was mandated in 2003 by Congress that required all salmon released from federally funded hatcheries be marked so they could be identified for conservation purposes. This allows tribes to mark salmon at tribal hatcheries and to use these marked fish to scientifically monitor salmon populations and watersheds in western Washington.

Provide $4.5 million for BIA Climate Change.—We respectfully request $4.5 million for Climate Change for our member tribes, an increase of $2.118 million over our fiscal year 2016 allocation. The fiscal year 2016 appropriations provided a collective (Great Lakes and Pacific Northwest) total of $5.442 million, of which our member tribes received $2.382 million. Funding for this program will provide tribes the capacity to identify, respond and adapt to the impacts of our changing climate. There is a glaring need to assess the potential impacts to resources in the face of climate change, which brings different challenges for every tribal community. It is important that tribes be provided the maximum flexibility to develop specific science-based activities to meet their particular needs.

Fish, Wildlife & Parks Projects/Fish, Wildlife and Parks Subactivity

Provide $10.38 million for BIA Fish, Wildlife & Parks Projects.—We support the President's request of $10.38 million, an increase of $2.002 million over the fiscal year 2016 enacted level of $8.378 million. Funding for this program is for Fish Hatchery Operations and Fish Hatchery Maintenance. Funding is provided to tribal hatcheries to support the rearing and releasing of salmon and steelhead for harvest by Indian and non-Indian fisheries in the U.S. and Canada. Tribal fish hatcheries in western Washington are part of the largest fish hatchery system in the world. Hatcheries are a necessary component of fisheries management because of the lack of wild salmon production due to habitat degradation. A critical component to fisheries management is the hatchery production, which play a vital and necessary role in supporting tribal fisheries. They are now essential for maintaining the treaty right to harvest fish. Without hatcheries tribes would lose their most basic ceremonial and subsistence fisheries that are central to our tribal culture. Hatcheries also play a large role in recovering pacific salmon, many of which are listed under the Endangered Species Act.

Funding for Fish Hatchery Maintenance is provided to tribes nationwide based on the ranking of annual maintenance project proposals. A comprehensive needs assessment study for our Western Washington tribes was conducted in fiscal year 2006 by the BIA at the request of Congress, which identified a need of over $48.0 million in necessary hatchery maintenance and rehabilitation costs.

Other Subactivities and Accounts

Provide $273.0 million for BIA Contract Support.—We support the President's request of $273.0 million, an increase of $1.0 million over the fiscal year 2016 enacted level of $272.0 million. We also support the President's legislative proposal to reclassify CSC as mandatory funding beginning in fiscal year 2018. Funding for this function is provided to tribal organizations to ensure they have the capacity to manage Federal programs under self-determination contracts and self-governance compacts. These funds are critical as they directly support our governmental functions, which allow us to fully exercise our right to self-govern.

Provide $30.355 million for BIA Tribal Climate Resilience.—We respectfully request $30.355 million, an increase of $20.4 million over the fiscal year 2016 enacted level of $9.955 million. Funding for this program will contribute to the tribal capacity needed to participate and provide input on climate change issues. It will assist tribes in being able to provide their perspective on climate change adaptation in the form of traditional ecological knowledge necessary to protect their treaty rights.

Provide $830,000 for BIA Watershed Restoration.—We respectfully request $830,000, an increase of $455,000 over the fiscal year 2016 operating plan. The fiscal year 2016 operating plan provided a total of $375,000 to the western Washington treaty tribes. Funding is contained in the Forestry Subactivity—Forestry Projects—Watershed Restoration account and supports our Salmon and Steelhead Habitat Inventory and Assessment Program. This provides environmental data management, analysis, and reporting support and maintains on-going efforts to develop information sharing and exchange tools. It also supports our tribes' ability to adequately participate in watershed resource assessments and salmon recovery work.

Environmental Protection Agency

Provide $96.4 million for EPA General Assistance Program.—We support the President's request of $96.4 million, an increase of $30.924 million over the fiscal year 2016 enacted level of $65.476 million. This funding has built essential tribal capacities and remains critical to the tribes' ability to sustain important environmental protection programs central to the protection of treaty-reserved resources and healthy communities. Funding for this program continues to provide the base capacity for tribal environmental protection programs nationwide.

Provide $50.0 million for EPA Puget Sound.—We respectfully request $50.0 million, an increase of $19.966 million over the President's request of $30.034 million. The Puget Sound Geographic Program provides essential funding that will help protect, restore and enhance Puget Sound, an estuary of national significance. Funding for this program will allow the tribes to participate in the necessary scientific work, implementation measures, and policy discussions on issues that affect our treaty rights. It allows the tribes to participate in implementing the Puget Sound Action Agenda.

Provide $5.0 million for EPA Beyond GAP.—We respectfully request $5.0 million. The President's fiscal year 2017 budget did not include any proposed funding for this new initiative. We request that legislative language be incorporated into the appropriations bill to specifically allow for implementation of tribal programs. We further request an increase to the tribal allocations of program funding in EPA CWA 104, 106 and 319, and CAA 103 and 105 budgets to allow for media-specific implementation priorities. Increasing tribal allocations will allow for an immediate expansion and response to specific implementation needs identified in our Beyond GAP request. The Beyond GAP initiative would advance the EPA/tribal partnership from capacity building and limited programmatic support to more comprehensive and consistent funding supportive of tribal environmental programs capable of implementing a broad range of necessary environmental activities while improving both efficiency and accountability.

CONCLUSION

We respectfully urge the subcommittee to continue to support our efforts to protect and restore our treaty-reserved rights that in turn will provide for thriving communities, cultures and economies. Thank you.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NORTHWEST PORTLAND AREA INDIAN HEALTH BOARD

The Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board (NPAIHB) is a Public Law 93–638 tribal organization that advocates on healthcare issues of 43 federally recognized tribes in the States of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. Our member tribes operate healthcare programs that provide healthcare to over 100,000 American Indian and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) people. NPAIHB appreciates the opportunity to offer

the following testimony on the Indian Health Service (IHS) budget in the Department of Health and Human Services.

The Federal trust responsibility for healthcare and the government-to-government relationship between tribes and the Federal Government, by definition, requires a partnership in the development of the budget. The President's fiscal year 2017 IHS budget continues a positive maintenance of effort for a budget that has suffered a heavy burden of neglect over the past 20 years. Following a fiscal year 2001 increase of 10 percent, from fiscal year 2002 to fiscal year 2008 the average IHS budget increase was less than 2.5 percent. A growing population and medical inflation eroded the purchasing power of Indian health programs. There is no denying that budget shortfalls resulted in greater healthcare disparities between Indian people and the general population over the past 15 years. This gap was addressed in the budget increases of this administration, however, additional funding is needed to improve the health status of AI/AN.

OVERALL

While the President's budget provides a $377 million increase, a 7.9 percent increase above fiscal year 2016 enacted budget, it is not adequate to cover inflation and population growth. In addition, the distribution of the increase within the IHS accounts will not maintain current services as presented. Purchased and Referred Care (PRC), in particular, has lost purchasing power over the last 2 years and this year's funding increase following flat funding in 2016 is inadequate despite the reasonable overall increase in the 2017 budget request.

The NPAIHB requests $482.7 million or a 10 percent increase over the fiscal year 2016 enacted budget. NPAIHB estimates it will take a $296.7 million increase in the fiscal year 2017 budget to fund pay increases, inflation, and population growth in order to maintain current services. In addition, the fiscal year 2016 increase to PRC of $46 million that was eliminated in the enacted budget needs to be restored. Finally, the NPAIHB recommends an additional $140 million in program increases to the PRC Catastrophic Health Emergency Fund (CHEF) ($30 million), dental health ($20 million), mental health ($15 million), alcohol and substance abuse ($20 million), sanitation facilities construction ($10 million), maintenance and improvement ($10 million), small ambulatory facilities ($25 million) and urban Indian health programs ($10 million).

The NPAIHB also makes a plea to fully exempt the IHS budget from sequestrations. Because of the Federal trust responsibility and the chronic and severe underfunding of the Indian health systems, along with the significant health disparities of Indian people, the Congress and administration must exempt the IHS appropriation from discretionary funding budget reductions, and; enact an amendment to the Budget Control Act of 2011 to fully exempt the IHS budget from future sequestrations.

HEALTH SERVICES ACCOUNT

Hospitals & Health Clinics: The Hospitals and Clinics (H&C) item would receive $1.98 billion under the administration's request, a proposed increase of $122.7 million or 6.6 percent over the enacted fiscal year 2017 budget. Staffing costs and program increases will reduce the increase to $63.6 million for current services, $95.8 million is needed, and the President's request will fall short by over $32.1 million. NPAIHB agrees with the $20 million for health information technology (HIT) associated with electronic health records (EHR) and in order to meet Stage 3 meaningful use. The NPAIHB also recommends permanent funding for Tribal Epidemiology Centers at a level that will enable them to be fully functional epidemiological and surveillance centers. The $4.9 million request, a $194,000 increase, for Tribal Epicenters in fiscal year 2017 ignores the fact that funding over the last 10 years has remained flat.

Dental Services: The President's increase for Dental Health services is $8.5 million, a 4.8 percent increase over last year's level. Staffing costs of $2.6 million for new facilities will reduce the overall increase down to $5.9 million. NPAIHB estimates it will take at least $9.2 million to maintain current services. The President's request is $3.3 million less than needed to fund a maintenance budget. Northwest Tribes further recommend an additional $20 million to address the significant oral health disparities in tribal communities.

Mental Health: The President requests $111 million, an increase of $29 million (35.4 percent) over last year's budget, to cover the mental health needs of IHS and tribal health programs. The President's request is close to maintaining current services. The budget leaves only $2.8 million to maintain current services when the $1.2 million required to staff new facilities and $25 million for program increases are

considered. NPAIHB estimates that it will take $4.2 million to fund mandatory cost increases for inflation and population growth. Program increases proposed by the President means the request is adequate to meet current service needs and to address some unmet need and is supported by the NPAIHB. The Northwest Tribes further recommend an additional $15 million to address the significant mental health issues in tribal communities.

Alcohol & Substance Abuse: The President's budget requests an increase of 13.6 percent for Alcohol and Substance abuse programs. This is one of the larger increases in the history of the alcohol and substance abuse program. It includes $16.8 million for program increases to fund significant new initiatives, including the General Indigenous Initiative ($15 million) and Pilot Project for Youth ($1.8 million). In fiscal year 2017, NPAIHB estimates that it will take $10.6 million to fund current services. The President proposed increase of $28 million is $3 million less than needed to fund current services since, in addition to new initiatives, $3.6 million is needed to fund staffing at new facilities. The Northwest Tribes further recommends an additional $20 million to address alcohol and substance abuse issues in tribal communities.

Purchased and Referred Care: PRC is the most important budget line item for Northwest Tribes. The President's requested 2017 increase of $48 million is not sufficient to address inflation and population growth of $62.3 so the President's budget falls short by $60. $60 million in additional funding is needed to maintain the purchasing power of the PRC budget and to restore 2016 current services and maintain that level in fiscal year 2017.

The PRC budget includes a Catastrophic Health Emergency Fund (CHEF) that funds catastrophic healthcare cases with large expenses. Northwest Tribes have always urged the Congress to consider fully funding CHEF since these cases are all well-documented and critical to the financial stability of the small programs that exist in the Portland Area and many other IHS Areas. In fiscal year 2012, the CHEF was increased to $51 million. Following the administration budget sequester it fell to $48.9 million. This year's President's request for CHEF is $53 million, a $1.5 million increase over fiscal year 2016. The NPAIHB supports this proposed increase and requests an additional increase of $30 million to ensure CHEF funding remains available.

Public Health Nursing: The President's request for Public Health Nurses (PHNs) is $82 million, an increase of 7.1 percent over last year's amount. With $1.7 million for staffing new facilities, the balance is not sufficient to fund current services and falls short by $226k.

Health Education: The President's request of $19.5 for fiscal year 2017 is adequate to fund inflation and population growth and is supported by the Northwest Tribes.

Community Health Representatives: The President's request for $62.4 million for fiscal year 2017 is adequate to maintain the current levels of care provided by CHRs and is supported by the Northwest Tribes.

Urban Indian Health Program: The President proposes $48.1 million for the Urban Indian Health Program (UIHP). NPAIHB estimates that it will take $3 million to maintain current services in the UIHP; thus, for this year alone, funding is adequate to maintain the current program, unfortunately more is needed to amend for past years of neglect. The UIHPs provide over 1 million health services to an eligible population of over 650,000 urban Indian people living in 34 locations across the United States. In addition, the NPAIHB recommends additional funding of $10 million for UIHPs.

Indian Health Professions: The President's fiscal year 2017 budget requests an increase that is $351,000 less than needed to maintain the current level of funding for the health professions program. The Indian health system has high vacancies in many of its health professions and will need to begin to grow and train its work force to keep pace with the rest of the Nation. Otherwise, vacancy rates will become even higher.

Tribal Management: The President requests $2.5 million for Tribal Management, which is nearly the same amount that was funded last year. It is less than is needed by $22,000 to maintain current service funding. NPAIHB believes the funding for this program could easily be doubled and the scope of its funded activities expanded.

Direct Operation: The Direct Operations line item funds the cost of management at IHS headquarters and the 12 Area Offices. This year the President's request proposes a decrease in Direct Operations funding by $2.7 million. NPAIHB estimates that $2 million will be needed to maintain current services. Thus, the President's request falls short by $4.7 million.

Self-Governance: The President's request for the Self-Governance item is $5.8 million, a 1.8 percent increase. NPAIHB estimates that it will take at least an addi-

tional $243,000 to maintain current services in fiscal year 2017. This will result in a shortfall in unfunded mandatory costs of $141,000. While this may not seem like much, 7 years ago, Congress reduced the Self Governance line item by $4.7 million, a loss of over 43 percent from the previous year.

CONTRACT SUPPORT COSTS

NPAIHB supports the President's request in fiscal year 2017 is $800 million, an increase of $82 million above fiscal year 2016 enacted level. This is an estimate of additional funds needed to ensure the full CSC need is funded for each tribe. The estimate will be adjusted to reflect the amount necessary to fund the full CSC need when updated information is available. NPAIHB supports the President's request that Congress establish a mandatory appropriation for CSC in fiscal year 2018 with sufficient increases year over year to fully fund the estimated need of the program.

HEALTH FACILITIES

Maintenance and Improvement: The President's request for M&I is $77 million, an increase of $3.3 million over last year's enacted budget. Recognizing the serious need for M&I funds in Indian Country, NPAIHB supports the President's request. The Northwest Tribes also request an additional $10 million for M&I.

Sanitation Facilities Construction: The fiscal year 2017 budget requests $103 million for the Sanitation facilities program. The increase, following last year's $20 million increase, falls short of maintaining the purchasing power of the program by $593,000. Approximately 7.5 percent of all AI/AN homes lack safe water in the home compared to less than 1 percent average nationally. Sanitation is an integral component of disease management.

Health Care Facilities Construction: Northwest Tribes continue to support a moratorium on facilities construction until an equitable funding methodology can be implemented by the IHS. This position has been recommended for the past 8 years so that savings from facilities construction can be redirected to the health services accounts. In addition, Northwest Tribes recommend that the IHS and Congress include appropriation language in the fiscal year 2017 appropriation bill to allow staffing and equipment funding for the small ambulatory construction authorities (Public Law 102–573). In addition, $25 million is requested by the Northwest Tribes for small ambulatory facilities grants.

Facilities & Environmental Support: The President's request of $233.9 million provides a $11 million increase over the fiscal year 2017 level that is adequate to maintain current services and is supported by the NPAIHB.

Equipment: The President's request of $23.6 million is adequate to maintain current services in fiscal year 2017 after last year's $20 million increase and is supported by the NPAIHB.

MANDATORY PROPOSALS

NPAIHB requests an increase in fiscal year 2017 of $50 million for the Special Diabetes Program for Indians and supports funding for the proposed behavioral health initiatives—Tribal Crisis Response Fund at $15 million and Behavioral Health Professions Expansion Fund at $10 million.

CONCLUSION

The NPAIHB requests a 10 percent increase over the fiscal year 2016 enacted level, or $482.7 million, to maintain current services, and funding of mandatory proposals for diabetes and behavioral health. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NORTON SOUND HEALTH CORPORATION

The requests of the Norton Sound Health Corporation (NSHC) for the fiscal year 2017 Indian Health Service (IHS) budget are as follows:

—Direct the IHS to fully fund the Village Built Clinic (VBC) leases and allocate an additional $12.5 million to VBC leases, for a total of $17 million.

—Place contract support costs on a permanent indefinite funding basis and eliminate any provisos on the funding that conflicts with the carryover funding authority in the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA).

—Remove restrictions on the Joint Venture Program to allow staffing packages for clinics that are in the process of construction and also to allow behavioral health service agencies to be eligible for the Program.
—Support at a minimum the administration's request of $10 million for the small ambulatory clinics program.
—Provide the requested $25 million increase for behavioral health.
—Shield the IHS from sequestration and provide advance appropriations.

NSHC is the only regional health system serving northwestern Alaska. It is on the edge of the Bering Sea, just miles from the Russian border. We are not connected by road with any part of the State and are 500 air miles from Anchorage—about the distance from Washington, DC to Portland, Maine. Our service area encompasses 44,000 square miles, approximately the size of Indiana. We are proud that our system includes a tribally owned regional hospital which is operated pursuant to an ISDEAA agreement, and 15 Village Built Clinics (VBCs).[1]

End Chronic Underfunding of Village Built Clinics. The NSHC has testified in prior years about the chronic underfunding of our VBCs. We thank Congress for providing in fiscal year 2016 $2 million in supplemental funding (supplemental to the $4.5 million already being provided) for these clinic leases and for the Administration's request of $11 million in supplemental funds for tribal clinic leases in fiscal year 2017. The bill language provides that these are supplemental funds, while the explanatory language lists the bill funding as a total amount.

The NSHC healthcare system includes 15 VBCs that are essential for us to maintain the Community Health Aide Program (CHAP) in Alaska. As you know, CHAP is mandated by Congress as the instrument for providing basic health services in remote Alaska Native villages and often provides the only local source of healthcare for Alaska Native people in rural areas. We cannot overstate the importance of village built clinics in Alaska. Lease rental amounts for the VBCs have failed to keep pace with costs—the majority of the leases for VBCs have not increased since 1989 and the IHS until this year resisted proposals to increase their funding. As a result, many of the VBCs are unsafe or have had to be closed, leaving some villages in Alaska without a local healthcare facility.

In addition, the President's proposed fiscal year 2017 clinic lease bill language may need some clarification, depending on IHS's interpretation, concerning the references that healthcare be delivered in a space acquired through a "full service lease". In some cases tribes receive VBC funding as part of their recurring base, and so the IHS no longer has "full service leases" in place for those clinics. We know that the appropriations committees do not intend to limit VBC eligibility based on unclear terminology.

In sum, these amounts are a step in the right direction but the 2015 ANHB study that analyzed the funding deficiency statewide for these facilities identified an increased need of $12.5 million. We urge that the full amount needed be appropriated. We also support maintaining this funding as a line item in the bill.

Remove Restrictions on the Joint Venture Construction Program (JVCP) to Support Projects Already in Progress. NSHC has completed the final designs to replace the Village Built Clinics in Gambell and Savoonga on St. Lawrence Island. The total project cost is $12.5 million and NSHC has raised 50 percent of the necessary funds to date. A Notice to Proceed was issued in January 2016 to start construction this summer. Both clinics will be 5200 square feet, doubling the size of the existing clinics. Both sites are shovel-ready. NSHC already contributed $1,900,000 to complete the foundation and $279,521 to complete the final design. The Denali Commission contributed $120,479 toward the final design. NSHC has $600,000 in hand from grant awards secured as of January 4, 2016, and another $3,350,000 in hand as approved by the Board of Directors during 2015 for a total amount of $6,250,000 secured.

NSHC is still fundraising for the other half of the project. Under JVCP regulations, we are not eligible to apply for the next round of JVCP funding for staffing because a Notice to Proceed has been issued. We had no choice but to move the clinic construction forward and could not wait for the next round of JCVP applications to be released. In the Bering Strait Region of Alaska, construction projects must be planned in advance to meet the seasonally limited construction window.

NSHC Request: Allow Tribal Health Organizations to apply for JVCP funding even though a Notice to Proceed has been issued.

---

[1] We serve the communities of: Brevig Mission, Council, Diomede, Elim, Gambell, Golovin, King Island, Koyuk, Mary's Igloo, Nome, St. Michael, Savoonga, Shaktoolik, Shishmaref, Solomon, Stebbins, Teller, Unalakleet, Wales, and White Mountain.

Fund the Small Ambulatory Clinic Program to Help with Construction of Replacement Clinic. The Small Ambulatory Clinic Fund has not been funded in years and we appreciate the administration's request of $10 million for this purpose. It would give tribes an option to competitively compete for construction funds. As noted above NSHC has two shovel-ready projects on St. Lawrence Island, with site work and piling installation completed. NSHC has raised 50 percent of the necessary funds to date, with another $6,250,000 needed to finish construction.

NSHC Wellness and Training Center: Remove the Restriction on Behavioral Health Service Agencies' JVCP Eligibility. The cost of substance abuse remains exorbitant in all aspects of service in the Norton Sound region. The region's law enforcement, correctional centers (prison and a halfway house), women's shelter, and protective services all report 95–100 percent of its cases involve substance abuse. Healthcare costs related to substance abuse and substance-related diagnoses, school and vocational drop-outs, loss of productivity, and loss of life continue to skyrocket as addiction numbers rise.

From 2006 through 2014, 5,008 people presented at the Norton Sound Regional Hospital emergency room for alcohol-related encounters. Of those people, 169 of them returned anywhere for 6–65 visits. Of those 169, more than 55 percent of them also presented as suicidal. Suicides in the region are approximately six times higher than the national average per 100,000 people (74.5 vs. 12.6, respectively) and almost four times higher than the State average (74.5 vs. 19.6, respectively). Unfortunately, the Norton Sound Region also has the highest suicide completion rate in the State. Between 2005 and July 2015, the Norton Sound region (9,400 people (2010 Census) had 76 suicide completions, an average of almost 7 per year. Of those, 67 were male and 9 were female; and 74 of the 76 were Alaska Natives. In all but three cases, substance abuse was a factor.

Treatment services require people within the region to leave their homes and families, and often their treatment is delayed while a bed is secured. The waiting list for treatment averages 6 to 9 months and there is often no other place to refer people. Residents of the Norton Sound Region are often referred to treatment facilities in the lower 48. These facilities are not culturally relevant and the distance is counter-productive to the healing process given the absence of familial and environmental supports. To best support the treatment needs of the people of the region, NSHC has developed a Wellness and Training Center to be located across from the Norton Sound Regional Hospital. This Center has been designed by a local cultural committee and uses an intensive behavioral health outpatient model with a full continuum of care including a sober housing component. It provides for social detox, long-term rehabilitation, and vocational rehabilitation.

NSHC has committed over $600,000 towards planning and designing of the Wellness and Training Center and is committed to seeing this through. Additionally, the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority has awarded NSHC $400,000 over the last 4 years for a Wellness and Training Center planner to facilitate the facility's programmatic development. Current concept and architectural plans estimate the final cost for the facility at $18,000,000.

In addition to requesting capital funding to complete construction of the Center, NSHC submitted a Joint Venture Construction Program pre-application last year to support the staffing component for Center operations. Unfortunately, the current IHS appropriation for this program does not allow for Behavioral Health Services agencies to apply for the funding.

NSHC would like to see IHS support the full spectrum of Behavioral and Mental Health Program needs. The Joint Venture Construction Program would help us fund the additional 10 personnel essential to making the Wellness and Training Center a reality in our region, which will keep people near their home, offer culturally relevant services, and, ultimately, save lives.

NSHC Request: For fiscal year 2017, we ask for advocacy to change regulations for the Joint Venture Construction Program so Behavioral Health Service Projects administered by Tribal Health Organizations can apply.

Contract Support Costs Mandatory Funding. We wish to thank Congress for fully funding Contract Support Costs (CSC) in fiscal year 2016. For fiscal year 2017, we support the President's request for an appropriation of "such sums as may be necessary," with an estimated $800 million for CSC for the IHS in a separate account in the IHS's discretionary budget. However, we disagree with the proviso that was included in the fiscal year 2016 appropriations language and which is also included in the administration's proposed fiscal year 2017 budget, which states: "amounts obligated but not expended by a tribe or tribal organization for contract support costs for such agreements for the current fiscal year shall be applied to contract support costs otherwise due for such agreements for subsequent fiscal years." This proviso is concerning to us because it could be misread to effectively deny the carryover au-

thority granted by the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. We thus ask that the proviso be removed for fiscal year 2017 and not included in future appropriations for CSC. We also support the administration's proposal to fully fund CSC on a mandatory basis in fiscal years 2018–2020, though we would prefer that it begin in fiscal year 2017 and, of course, that it be a permanent, indefinite appropriation. We ask for your active help in working with the Budget Committee and any others on this proposal for mandatory CSC funding.

Funding for Behavioral Health. We appreciate and support the administration's much-needed request of a $25 million increase for a Behavioral Health Integration Initiative. The goal is to integrate behavioral health services into the primary health systems and also to collaborate with services that may be provided outside the primary healthcare delivery system such as substance abuse and mental health services. A portion of the funds ($3.6 million) are to be used for tribes and tribal organizations to establish Zero Suicide programs focusing on the role of medical and behavioral health systems in the prevention of suicide. We know all too well of the high rate of suicides among Native people in Alaska, and young Native people in particular.

Conclusion. Due to page limit constraints we will not repeat our testimony from the last few years in support of protecting the IHS budget from sequestration and also placing the IHS budget on an advance appropriations basis. We hope, however, that these two issues will be addressed in this Congress. Thank you for your consideration of the concerns and requests of the Norton Sound Health Corporation.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE OREGON COALITION SUPPORTING USGS NATIONAL STREAMGAGE NETWORK

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY NATIONAL STREAMFLOW INFORMATION PROGRAM

As a collection of water stakeholders in Oregon we are concerned about ongoing lack of available data on water in our State and we urge your support of the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) National Streamflow Network (formerly known as the National Streamflow Information Program (NSIP) and Cooperative Water Program). We are a diverse group of water stakeholders with a common goal: to advocate for common sense water policies that move Oregon's economy, communities, and environment toward a secure water future. In order to achieve our goal, the members we represent need consistent, accurate and real time data on streams in our State. While we are encouraged by the $150 million increase in the President's request over 2015 enacted levels, and specifically the $1.3 million increase for stream flow information, it is not enough of an increase to fully fund, even with cost-share partners, this immensely important program.

FISCAL YEAR 2017 APPROPRIATIONS

We recognize that our country continues to face difficult economic times and that we must make strategic investments with scarce resources. However, that statement rings true not just in regards to funding, but also our natural resources and more precisely, water. In 2015 the American west suffered from a severe drought and like many other Western States, the conditions in 2015 have deeply impacted Oregon communities, (25 of 36 counties had formal drought declarations). For Oregon, the drought stems from a lack of snowpack that serves as the natural water storage throughout the year for many farms, communities, and fish and wildlife.

The impacts may take longer to show, but drought can be as devastating as earthquakes, hurricanes, and other natural disasters. And like other natural disasters, the best way to survive and help communities recover is through coordinated planning and developing diverse tools to use when these crises occur. However, our communities cannot adequately plan for any water year without accurate streamflow data. While we all have different ideas about the best paths forward, we agree on one thing: the need for increased accurate streamflow data.

The funding for the National Streamflow Network could be leveraged with the current proposal from the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) to reestablish OWRD's engagement in the Cooperative Water Program with USGS. Within the water advocate community in Oregon the need for additional gauges and more readily available data is an issue that is on the forefront of discussions regarding how to best manage our waterways. The funding dollars spent on the National Streamflow Network are dollars that will work toward better data and provide valuable information needed as we work toward a secure water future for Oregon and the Nation.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we applaud the administration on their willingness to increase funding for the USGS National Streamflow Network and we would like to see even more funding allocated to this important program. As we continue to navigate in an uncertain climate, we need the valuable streamflow data this program provides to aid in all our work in developing water management solutions. We respectfully request adequate funding to fully implement the USGS National Streamflow Network for fiscal year 2017.

Sincerely,

Michael Freese
Associated Oregon Industries

Tracy Rutten
League of Oregon Cities

JR Cook
Northeast Oregon Water Association

April Snell
Oregon Water Resources Congress

Rob Kirschner
The Freshwater Trust

Jeff Stone
Oregon Association of Nurseries

Mark Landauer
Special Districts Association of Oregon

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE OREGON WATER RESOURCES CONGRESS

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY'S CLEAN WATER STATE REVOLVING FUND LOAN PROGRAM

The Oregon Water Resources Congress (OWRC) is concerned about continued reductions to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan Program (CWSRF) and is requesting that appropriations for this program be increased to at least $2 billion in fiscal year 2017. The CWSRF is an effective loan program that addresses critical water infrastructure needs while benefitting the environment, local communities, and the economy. However, OWRC is concerned by the recent exclusion of irrigation districts from receiving principal forgiveness under the CWSRF and we urge the subcommittee to address this terminology issue and allow irrigation districts to utilize this valuable tool under the program so that they are able to execute projects that are beneficial to both the environment and the local economy.

OWRC was established in 1912 as a trade association to support the protection of water rights and promote the wise stewardship of water resources statewide. OWRC members are local governmental entities, which include irrigation districts, water control districts, drainage districts, water improvement districts, and other agricultural water suppliers that deliver water to roughly 1/3 of all irrigated land in Oregon. These water stewards operate complex water management systems, including water supply reservoirs, canals, pipelines, and hydropower production.

FISCAL YEAR 2017 APPROPRIATIONS

We recognize that our country is facing difficult economic times and that we must make strategic investments with scarce resources. The CWSRF is a perfect example of the type of program that should have funding increased because it creates jobs while benefitting the environment, and is an efficient return on taxpayer investment. Oregon is facing record levels of unemployment and the CWSRF funded projects provide much needed construction and professional services jobs. Moreover, as a loan program, it is a wise investment that allows local communities to leverage their limited resources and address critical infrastructure needs that would otherwise be unmet.

Nationally, there are large and growing critical water infrastructure needs. In EPA's most recent needs surveys, *The Clean Watersheds Needs Survey 2008: Report to Congress and Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment: Fourth Report to Congress,* the estimated funding need for drinking water infrastructure totaled $335 billion (in 2007 dollars) and wastewater infrastructure needs totaled $298 billion (in 2008 dollars). Appropriations for water infrastructure, specifically CWSRF, should not be declining but remaining strong in order to meet these critical needs. In 2015 appropriations for the CWSRF program was approximately $1.448 billion and declined to $1.394 billion in fiscal year 2016. The President's fiscal year 2017 budget proposes only $979.5 million for the CWRSF program;

a $414.5 million reduction from fiscal year 2016 levels. We are concerned as we see this negative downward trend continuing while the infrastructure needs only become more critical.

OWRC is supportive of the President's Climate Action Plan and related efforts to support actions that help address, mitigate, and adapt to severe weather events, like drought, that are related to climate change. It is important that climate issues are addressed through programs like the CWSRF, and to date, despite a direct connection to water infrastructure the CWSRF funding continues to diminish. In fact, there has not been an increase in funding for CWSRF since 2009; meanwhile, both infrastructure needs and the costs to address those needs continue to grow each year. Continued funding reductions has led to delaying repairs or upgrades which in turn increase the potential for catastrophic failure and is counterproductive to the administration's desire to encourage asset management and sustainable water infrastructure. To the extent practicable, funding for climate change should be incorporated into existing programs with proven successes like the CWSRF.

We also continue to be highly supportive of the administration's desire to expand "green infrastructure," in fact, irrigation districts and other water suppliers in Oregon are on the forefront of "green infrastructure" through innovative piping projects that provide multiple environmental benefits, which is discussed in greater detail below. However, continually reducing the amount of funds available for these types of worthwhile projects is counterproductive to the administration's desire and has created increased uncertainty for potential borrowers about whether adequate funding will be available in future years. CWSRF is often an integral part of an overall package of State, Federal and local funding that necessitates a stronger level of assurance that loan funds will be available for planned water infrastructure projects. Reductions in the CWSRF could lead to loss of grant funding and delay or derail beneficial projects that irrigation districts have been developing for years.

Additionally, OWRC is pleased to see that EPA will continue "strategic partnerships" with the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) and other Federal agencies to improve water quality and address nonpoint source pollution. Oregon had two priority watersheds eligible for funding through the National Water Quality Initiative in 2014 and anticipates that additional watersheds will be included in the future. As Oregon is a delegated State, OWRC also feels strongly that the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is best situated to develop and implement activities to improve these and other impaired waterways in the State. DEQ and its administration of the CWSRF has been an extremely valuable tool in Oregon for improving water quality and efficiently addressing infrastructure challenges that are otherwise cost-prohibitive.

CWSRF NEEDS

What is being proposed for fiscal year 2017 is far short of what is needed to address critical water infrastructure needs in Oregon and across the Nation. This will lead to fewer water infrastructure projects, and therefore a reduction in improvements to water quality. DEQ's most recent "Proposed Intended Use Plan Update #1—State Fiscal Year 2016," lists 22 projects in need of a total of $182,066,339 in Oregon alone. The Federal capitalization grant funding awarded fiscal year 2015 will total $15,758,000, which is wholly inadequate to address and complete these much needed projects.

Unfortunately, due to recent cutbacks and lack of availability of funds, only one water improvement district submitted an application for funding in 2016, Rock Creek District Improvement Company. Rock Creek requested $270,786 for the design and construction of HDPE piping along 1.76 miles of main canal, and qualifies for water efficiency green project reserve funding. OWRC is hopeful that with an increase in money available, more districts will apply for funding to complete projects that will not only benefit the environment and the patrons served by the water delivery system, but also benefit the economy.

CWSRF EXCLUSION OF IRRIGATION DISTRICTS FROM PRINCIPAL FORGIVENESS

OWRC and our members are highly supportive of the CWSRF, including promoting the program to our members and annually submitting Federal appropriations testimony to support increased funding for the CWSRF. We are supportive because it is important funding tool that irrigation districts and other water suppliers are using for innovative piping projects that provide multiple environmental benefits. However, the CWSRF is often an integral part of an overall package of State, Federal and local funding that necessitates a stronger level of assurance that loan funds will be available for planned water infrastructure projects. Irrigation districts are often located in rural communities and have a small number of farmers with

limited capacity to take on loan debt. Even a small reduction in the principal repayment obligations can make the difference in whether or not a district can move forward with a project. Reductions in eligibility for principal forgiveness in the CWSRF could lead to loss of grant funding and delay or derail beneficial projects that irrigation districts have been developing for years.

Six OWRC member districts have successfully received loans from the CWSRF over the last several years and many more will apply if eligible to receive some principal forgiveness. Numerous irrigation districts and other water suppliers need to pipe currently open canals, which reduces sediment and water temperature and provides other water quality improvements as well as increasing water availability for fish and irrigators by reducing water loss from the delivery system. In 2009, four irrigation districts received over $11 million funding in Oregon from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) through the CWSRF for projects which created valuable jobs while improving water quality. These four projects were essential to DEQ not only meeting but exceeding the minimum requirement that 20 percent of the total ARRA funding for the CWSRF be used for "green" projects. Without the irrigation district projects, it is likely that Oregon's CWSRF would not have qualified for ARRA funding.

By excluding irrigation districts from principal forgiveness under the CWSRF, the loan funds become another expensive piece to the funding puzzle and will simply cost too much for districts to take on. If DEQ eliminates the ability of irrigation districts to fund water quality improvement projects, our State will fall short of what is needed to address critical water infrastructure needs in Oregon and across the Nation. It will lead to fewer innovative water infrastructure projects, and therefore a reduction in improvements to water quality. OWRC is hopeful that this terminology issue can be resolved at the Federal level, and allow irrigation districts to apply for funding with principal forgiveness to complete projects that will not only benefit the environment and the patrons served by the water delivery system, but also benefit the economy.

THE IMPORTANCE AND SUCCESS OF LOCAL WATERSHED PLANNING

Oregon's success in watershed planning illustrates that planning efforts work best when diverse interests develop and implement plans at the local watershed level with support from State government. Oregon has recently revised their CWSRF rules; thus making conservation easier and its benefits to be better achieved in the State. As the national model for watershed planning, Oregon does not need a new Federal agency or executive branch office to oversee conservation and restoration efforts. Planning activities are conducted through local watershed councils, volunteer-driven organizations that work with local, State and Federal agencies, economic and environmental interests, agricultural, industrial and municipal water users, local landowners, tribes, and other members of the community. There are over 60 individual watershed councils in Oregon that are already deeply engaged in watershed planning and restoration activities. Watershed planning in Oregon formally began in 1995 with the development of the Oregon Plan for Salmon Recovery and Watershed Enhancement, a statewide strategy developed in response to the Federal listing of several fish species. This strategy led to the creation of the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), a State agency and policy oversight board that funds and promotes voluntary and collaborative efforts that "help create and maintain healthy watersheds and natural habitats that support thriving communities and strong economies" in 1999.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we applaud the CWSRF program for allowing Oregon's DEQ to make targeted loans that address Clean Water Act issues and improve water quality but also help incentivize innovative water management solutions that benefit local communities, agricultural economies, and the environment. This voluntary approach creates and promotes cooperation and collaborative solutions to complex water resources challenges. Conversely, exclusion of irrigation districts from principal forgiveness under the CWSRF program has a very negative effect on jobs and local economies. We respectfully request the appropriation of at least $2 billion for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund for fiscal year 2017.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE OUTDOORS ALLIANCE FOR KIDS

Chairmen Murkowski and Calvert, Ranking Members Udall and McCollum, and Members of the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee:

We, the undersigned members of the Outdoors Alliance for Kids (OAK), thank you for your past support of programs to connect children and youth with the outdoors, and we urge you to sustain funding for fiscal year 2017 programs at the U.S. Department of the Interior, Environmental Protection Agency, and U.S. Forest Service that increase engagement in the outdoors. We also urge you to maintain sufficient funding for agencies to adequately manage our public lands and waters.

OAK is a national strategic partnership of businesses and organizations representing more than 30 million individuals from diverse sectors of the economy with the common interest in expanding the number and quality of opportunities for children, youth, and families to connect with the outdoors. OAK supports public policies and investments that expand outdoor and environmental education opportunities, promote community health and wellness, and engage more youth in environmental stewardship.

We understand that we are in difficult fiscal times, but balancing the budget at the expense of programs and initiatives that ensure children and youth have opportunities to learn, get physically active, and increase their volunteerism in the outdoors will be a detriment to our Nation. Environmental education provides critical tools for a 21st century workforce by giving students the skills to understand complex environmental systems and issues, and prepares students to compete globally and address environmental challenges and opportunities that impact our economy, health, and national security. Community health and wellness investments are critical for the local economy, as well. The prevention of chronic diseases can save lives, as well as promote the physical and mental well-being of all Americans.

Environmental stewardship programs provide young people with opportunities to spend more time outdoors while obtaining job skills at a time when youth unemployment rates are skyrocketing. In addition to contributing to our Nation's robust outdoor recreation economy, youth national service and work programs help address the backlog of maintenance needs piling up on our public lands, address record youth unemployment, and prepare a diverse group of youth to be the next generation of natural resource stewards.

These areas are vital to the success of the United States in the global economy, and to our ability to create a 21st century workforce that is healthy, skilled, and prepared to be the next generation of leaders. The outdoor industry alone provides 6.1 million jobs and $646 billion in direct consumer spending each year. Outdoor recreation, as enjoyed in national, State, and local parks and public lands, provides millions of America's children, youth, and families an opportunity to hike, bike, swim, paddle or simply connect with nature. The outdoor recreation economy generates $39.9 billion in Federal revenue and another $39.7 billion in State and local revenue annually.

OAK supports funding and initiatives to increase outdoor and environmental education, promote community health and wellness, and provide young people with jobs, training, and service and volunteer opportunities that connect them to the outdoors and recreation. We urge the subcommittee to restore funding to allow land management agencies to adequately manage our public lands and waters and to provide robust funding for the following programs that get youth outdoors:

Department of the Interior: OAK supports the Department of the Interior's goal of building the next generation of conservation and community leaders by supporting efforts to get young people to play, learn, serve, and work outdoors. By September 30, 2017, the Department of the Interior hopes to get millions of kids outside engaged in environmental education and to have provided 100,000 work and training opportunities for young adults. To this end, we urge you to support the administration's budget requests of $102.5 million for youth programs across the Department of the Interior, a $37.7 million increase from the fiscal year 2016 enacted level. This includes:

—$38,200,000 for the National Park Service
—$26,300,000 for the U.S. Geological Survey
—$19,000,000 for the Fish and Wildlife Service
—$13,500,000 for the Bureau of Indian Affairs
—$1,000,000 for the Bureau of Land Management
—$3,500,000 for the Bureau of Reclamation
—$1,000,000 for the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

Of the $38.2 million for NPS, $20 million is included for the Every Kid in a Park initiative. The funding would support transportation to bring more than one million

students from Title I schools in urban areas to nearby national parks, and support park level youth engagement coordinators that would ensure park units have programming tailored for young people and their families, especially at high visitation and urban parks. OAK strongly supports this initiative, which will also provide every fourth grader in America and their families with free entrance to National Parks in the 2015–2016 school year. We urge you to support funding within the National Park Service for transportation grants and for dedicated youth coordinators to welcome fourth graders and their families to our National Parks and public lands.

Another key component of the Department's youth efforts will be partnering with Service & Conservation Corps (Corps) and other youth organizations through the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) initiative. The opportunities provided by 21CSC allow youth and veterans to become stewards of America's great outdoors through conservation service, help them obtain important job skills and credentials at a time when youth unemployment is high and young people are missing out on critical job experiences, and improve public health by helping young people develop and maintain active lifestyles. We also urge you to sustain funding for the operational, management, and construction-related accounts of the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Forest Service, all of which could fund cost-effective public-private partnerships with Corps.

In addition, we urge support of the National Park Service Centennial Initiative, including $35 million requested for the Centennial Challenge, to support thousands of veterans, youth, and others to work to upgrade the park system for its 100th anniversary in 2016. The Centennial Challenge is an economically wise program that leverages private dollars to match Federal funds, with at least one private dollar for each Federal dollar, to support projects to improve the visiting experience to our national parks. It is a proven effective program initially launched during the George W. Bush administration, when it leveraged nearly $50 million in donations after an initial Federal investment of $40 million. The $35 million requested for the Centennial Challenge will reinvest in that initiative, and will be instrumental in garnering partner support to prepare park sites across the country for the centennial and the second century of NPS.

OAK also supports permanent reauthorization and full and dedicated funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The Federal land acquisition program and the State and local assistance programs supported by LWCF over the years have created countless opportunities for youth and families to enjoy the outdoors, both in their communities and on Federal public lands. LWCF also supports the new Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program which will create new opportunities for outdoor play as well as development or enhancement of outdoor recreation partnerships in our larger urban communities.

Environmental Protection Agency: OAK urges the subcommittee to fund the National Environmental Education Act (NEEA) programs at the Environmental Protection Agency at $11.1 million. This program implements highly successful, nationwide environmental education programs. These programs support life-long environmental education and stewardship through several highly-leveraged, but under-resourced programs, including the National Environmental Education Training Program to provide professional development for teachers, the National Environmental Education Foundation to leverage public/private partnerships, and an environmental education grant program to support local environmental education providers.

OAK also supports the Urban Waters Federal Partnership, a 14 agency collaboration spearheaded by the Environmental Protection Agency, to restore and connect youth with their waterways in 19 pilot urban locations. While the EPA has not placed a line item in its budget for the UWFP, we commend the EPA for utilizing scarce resources to support this important effort to ensure children, youth and families in urban areas have close to home opportunities to experience nature.

U.S. Forest Service: OAK supports the U.S. Forest Service efforts to engage youth with their natural surroundings, whether that be in urbanized or rural areas. The U.S. Forest Service's multiple conservation education initiatives and outreach activities are integrated throughout the agency. In addition to this outreach, it is also important that children have access to nature nearby. Therefore, OAK supports the following funding levels for two programs within the U.S. Forest Service that ensure children have access to nature:

—$5,000,000 for the Community Forest and Open Space Program (CFP)
—$31,300,000 for the Urban and Community Forestry Program (U&CF)

CFP has made substantial progress in preserving forests by increasing opportunities for Americans to connect with forests in their own communities and fostering

new public-private partnerships. CFP has supported 27 community forest projects in cities and towns across 15 States and Territories. U&CF served more than 200 million people in over 7,700 communities across the United States through the development and maintenance of local urban forestry programs. Both of these programs ensure that children can experience forests and trees in their communities.

OAK also supports other programs within the Forest Service that provide opportunities for youth to connect with nature. Conservation Education programs, Children's Grants programs including More Kids in the Woods and Children's Forests, and the USFS partnership with the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps are all important programs that help the next generation connect with and build an appreciation for the outdoors.

We thank you in advance for your support for these critical programs and look forward to working with you and your staff in the coming year.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

This testimony is submitted on behalf of the following members of the Outdoors Alliance for Kids:

Alliance for Childhood
American Camp Association
American Forests
American Hiking Society
Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Children & Nature Network
Choose Outdoors
Conservation Legacy
Hipcamp
IslandWood
Kids4Trees
Latino Outdoors
Montana Conservation Corps
National Interscholastic Cycling Association
National Recreation and Park Association
National Wildlife Federation
NatureBridge
North American Association for Environmental Education
O'Neill Sea Odyssey
Outdoor Outreach
Outdoors Empowered Network
Public Lands Service Coalition
REI
Sierra Club
SOS Outreach
The Corps Network
The North Face
The Wilderness Society
The Woods Project
TYO: Transforming Youth Outdoors
Wilderness Inquiry
YMCA of the USA

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE PARTNERSHIP FOR THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM

Madame Chairwoman and members of the subcommittee:

The Partnership for the National Trails System appreciates your support over the past 20 years, through operations funding and dedicated Challenge Cost Share funds, for the national scenic and historic trails administered by the National Park Service. We also appreciate your increased allocation of funds to support the trails administered and managed by the Forest Service and for the trails in the Bureau of Land Management's National Landscape Conservation System. To continue the progress that you have fostered, the Partnership requests that you provide annual operations funding for each of the 30 national scenic and historic trails for fiscal year 2017 through these appropriations:

—*National Park Service:* $16.233 million for administration of 23 trails and for coordination of the long-distance trails program by the Washington office. Construction: $357,200 for the Ice Age Trail and $250,000 for the Pacific Crest Trail.

—*USDA Forest Service:* $85 million for trails construction and maintenance (CMTL) with $7.796 million of it to administer 6 trails and $1.3 million to manage parts of 16 trails administered by the NPS or BLM. $600,000 for Iditarod Trail construction and maintenance.

—*Bureau of Land Management:* $2.812 million to administer three trails and for coordination of the National Trails program and $7.14 million to manage portions of 13 trails administered by the Park Service or the Forest Service and for operating five National Historic Trail interpretive centers. Construction: $300,000 for the Iditarod Trail. Maintenance: $300,000 for the Iditarod Trail and $250,000 for the Pacific Crest Trail,

—We ask that you create a $1.5 million National Trails System Challenge Cost Share Program for the National Park Service.

—We ask that you restore the Bureau of Land Management's Challenge Cost Share Program with $3 million of funding and allocate $500,000 of it for the national scenic and historic trails it administers or manages.

We ask that you appropriate $64,208,000 from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the acquisition of 72 tracts along seven national scenic and six national historic trails described in the National Trails System Collaborative Landscape Planning proposal and allocate this funding to the:

—*Bureau of Land Management:* $9,022,000
—*U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:* $7,879,000
—*U.S. Forest Service:* $21,523,000
—*National Park Service:* $25,784,000.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The $16.233 million we request for Park Service operations includes increases for some of the trails to continue the progress and new initiatives made possible by the additional funding Congress provided several years ago. An increase of $570,000 for the Old Spanish Trail will enable the Park Service to begin implementing the Trail's new Comprehensive Management Plan working with the Old Spanish Trail Association to increase volunteer participation in signing, interpreting, and educating the public about the trail. The Park Service will be better able to collaborate with the Bureau of Land Management in administering the trail and to consult with other agencies to protect the cultural and natural resources along it from destruction by energy projects.

We request an increase of $660,000 to expand Park Service efforts to protect cultural landscapes at more than 200 sites along the Santa Fe Trail, to develop GIS mapping, and to fund public educational and community outreach programs of the Santa Fe Trail Association. Increases of $313,224 for the Oregon Trail and $255,192 for the California Trail will enable the Park Service to work with the Oregon-California Trails Association to develop digital and social media to connect with youth in the cities along these trails providing information about their many layers of history and to better protect the historical and cultural heritage sites and landscapes along them from destruction by energy development in the West. We request an increase of $300,000 to $833,000 for the Ala Kahakai Trail to enable the Park Service to work with E Mau Na Ala Hele, the Ala Kahakai Trail Association, and other community organizations to care for resources on the land and with the University of Hawaii to conduct archaeological and cultural landscape studies along this trail.

The $1,020,000 we request for the 4,200 mile North Country Trail will enable the Park Service to provide greater support for the regional GIS mapping, trail building, trail management, and training of volunteers led by the North Country Trail Association. The $1,278,000 we request for the Ice Age Trail includes a $443,000 increase to build partner and citizen capacity for building new and maintaining existing trail, protecting the natural and cultural resources on the lands purchased for the trail, and to provide the Park Service with a planner to accelerate planning of the land protection corridor for the trail.

Construction: We request that you provide $357,200 for the Ice Age Trail to build 30 miles of new trail and several trailhead parking lots and $250,000 for the Pacific Crest Trail for trail construction projects.

Challenge Cost Share programs are one of the most effective and efficient ways for Federal agencies to accomplish a wide array of projects for public benefit while also sustaining partnerships involving countless private citizens in doing public service work. We request that you restore the Bureau of Land Management Challenge Cost Share program, appropriate $3 million to fund it, and allocate $.5 million of that to fund projects along the national scenic and historic trails. We ask you to create a National Park Service National Trails System Challenge Cost Share program with $1.5 million funding to continue the steady progress toward making these trails fully available for public enjoyment as a wise investment of public money that will generate public benefits many times greater than its sum.

USDA—FOREST SERVICE

We ask you to appropriate $85 million for trails construction and maintenance (CMTL) to begin to address the considerable maintenance backlog on the trails in the National Forest System. Within this appropriation we request that you provide $7.796 million as a separate budgetary item specifically for the Arizona, Continental Divide, Florida, Pacific Crest, and Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trails and the Nez Perce National Historic Trail within the over-all appropriation for Capital Improvements and Maintenance for Trails. Recognizing the on-the-ground manage-

ment responsibility the Forest Service has for 1024 miles of the Appalachian Trail, more than 650 miles of the North Country Trail, and sections of the Ice Age, Anza, Caminos Real de Tierra Adentro and de Tejas, Lewis & Clark, California, Iditarod, Mormon Pioneer, Old Spanish, Oregon, Overmountain Victory, Pony Express, Trail of Tears and Santa Fe Trails, we ask you to appropriate $1.3 million specifically for these trails.

The Partnership's request of $7.796 million includes $1.5 million to enable the Forest Service and Florida Trail Association to continue trail maintenance, to control invasive species, do ecosystem restoration, and otherwise manage 4,625 acres of new Florida Trail land. The $7.996 million request also includes $2.1 million for the Pacific Crest Trail, $2 million for the Continental Divide Trail, $1 million for the Pacific Northwest Trail, $826,000 for the Nez Perce Trail, and $570,000 for the Arizona Trail. Some of the additional funds requested will enable the Forest Service to develop Comprehensive Management Plans for the latter three trails. We also request $600,000 of additional funding for construction and for maintenance of sections of the Iditarod Trail.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Although considerably more money is needed to fully administer the National Conservation Lands System and protect its resources, we request that you appropriate $83.099 million in base funding for the System. We ask that you appropriate as new permanent base funding $250,000 for National Trails System Program Coordination, $1,000,000 for the Iditarod Trail, $230,000 for El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Trail, $1,332,000 for the Old Spanish Trail, and $4,000,000 for the Bureau to manage 4,645 miles of 13 other national scenic and historic trails. We request $300,000 to construct new sections of the Iditarod Trail and to maintain these trails: Iditarod Trail—$300,000 and Pacific Crest Trail—$250,000. We also request $3,140,000 to operate five historic trails interpretive centers.

We ask you to restore the Bureau's Challenge Cost Share program, provide $3 million for it and, direct $500,000 for National Trails System projects.

To promote greater management transparency and accountability for the National Trails and the whole National Landscape Conservation System, we urge you to request expenditure and accomplishment reports for each of the NLCS Units for fiscal year 2016 and fiscal year 2017 and to direct the Bureau to include unit-level allocations within major sub-activities for each of the scenic and historic trails, and wild and scenic rivers—as the Bureau has done for the national monuments, wilderness, and conservation areas—within a new activity account for the National Landscape Conservation System in fiscal year 2018. The Bureau's lack of a unified budget account for National Trails prevents the agency from efficiently planning, implementing, reporting, and taking advantage of cost-saving and leveraging partnerships and volunteer contributions for every activity related to these national resources.

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

The Partnership strongly supports the President's budget proposal to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund at the authorized $900 million, with $475 million from discretionary sources and $425 million in mandatory funds for the component programs funded under LWCF. Within this amount we request that you appropriate $64,208,000 for the National Trails System Collaborative Landscape Planning proposal to acquire 72 parcels along 13 national scenic and historic trails detailed here:

Bureau of Land Management
$9,022,000
12 parcels
7,409 acres

Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail (Montana): $1,750,000 for preservation of pristine trail, landscape, and habitat and to provide recreation access along the Upper Missouri National Wild and Scenic River.

Nez Perce National Historic Trail (Idaho): $3,100,000 for trail and resource conservation of sage grouse and pronghorn habitat at one of the last remaining working ranches at Henry's Lake.

Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (Oregon, California): $3,172,000 for trail and resource protection within the Cascade Siskiyou National Monument in Southern Oregon and in the Mojave Desert in Southern California.

Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (Maryland): $1,000,000 for preservation of threatened and endangered species habitat, increased recreation access and watershed connectivity.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
$7,879,000
13 parcels
6,510 acres

Appalachian National Scenic Trail (Pennsylvania): $4,000,000 to connect conservation habitats for bog turtles, black bear, Indiana bats, flying squirrels, and bald eagles along the Kittatinny Ridge.

California National Historic Trail (Idaho): $2,500,000 to protect the largest breeding concentration of Sandhill Cranes, as well as, a haven for other waterfowl from a current farming threat.

Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail (Washington): $1,379,000 to preserve unique ecosystems while increasing public recreational access near Julia Butler Hansen, Ridgefield, Franz Lake, Lewis and Clark, and Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuges.

U.S. Forest Service
$21,523,000
29 parcels
7,930 acres

Appalachian National Scenic Trail (Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia): $4,588,000 to relocate trail, preserve trail view sheds, provide ecological connectivity, and protect watersheds near or adjacent to the Pond Mountain Wilderness, the Roan Highlands, Rice Creek Valley, and George Washington and Jefferson NFs.

Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (Montana): $2,400,000 to protect pristine riparian habitat within the Gila National Forest and increase public recreational access via multi-user trails.

Florida National Scenic Trail (Florida): $42,000 to close a trail gap and provide connectivity and public access between protected areas along the Withlacoochee River adjacent to Suwanee River State Park.

Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (California, Washington): $14,493,000 to provide critical scenic protection to the hiker experience, improve trail location and protect wildlife habitats in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest and provide recreational access adjacent to the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

National Park Service
$25,784,000
18 parcels
6,398 acres

Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail (Hawaii): $6,000,000 to protect 444 archaeological sites at an ancient coastal indigenous gathering area that hosts a wealth of native plants and wildlife both above and below ground in lava tubes.

Appalachian National Scenic Trail (New York, Massachusetts): $2,982,000 to support connectivity of riparian and forest habitats in the Hinsdale Flats of the Berkshire-Taconic landscape and to preserve iconic scenic viewsheds.

Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (Virginia): $4,250,000 to provide public access to the site of a major encounter between John Smith and indigenous peoples and protect a major migratory bird stopover habitat.

Ice Age National Scenic Trail (Wisconsin): $1,200,000 to close gaps in the trail and provide urban access in the City of St. Croix and preserve pristine northern hardwood forest and riparian habitat along tributaries to the St. Croix National Scenic River.

North Country National Scenic Trail (Michigan, Pennsylvania): $6,722,000 to protect over 2,500 acres along the Sturgeon River downstream from the Ottawa National Forest in Upper Michigan and to connect Moraine and McConnell's Mill State Parks in Pennsylvania providing recreational access via the NCNST.

Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail (Tennessee): $1,430,000 to protect the historically significant Shelving Rock Encampment site, preserve the original roadbed, and facilitate interpretation of the site.

Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (New York): $3,000,000 to protect the Potomac and Shenandoah River corridors, provide connectivity of wetland and forest habitats, and optimal location for new trail.

PRIVATE SECTOR SUPPORT FOR THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM

Public-spirited partnerships between private citizens and public agencies have been a hallmark of the National Trails System since its inception. These partnerships create the enduring strength of the Trails System and the trail communities that sustain it by combining the local, grass-roots energy and responsiveness of volunteers with the responsible continuity of public agencies. They also provide private financial support for public projects, often resulting in a greater than equal match of funds.

The private trail organizations' commitment to the success of these trail-sustaining partnerships grows even as Congress' support for the trails has grown. In 2015 the trail organizations fostered 1,073,026 hours of documented volunteer labor valued at $24,754,710 to help sustain the national scenic and historic trails. The organizations also raised private sector contributions of $12,396,728 for the trails.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE PERFORMING ARTS ALLIANCE

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the subcommittee, we thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony on behalf of the Performing Arts Alliance (PAA). We urge the subcommittee to appropriate $155 million to the National Endowment for the Arts for fiscal year 2017. PAA member organizations include:

- Alternate ROOTS
- American Composers Forum
- Association of Performing Arts Presenters
- Chamber Music America
- Chorus America
- Dance/USA
- Fractured Atlas
- League of American Orchestras
- National Alliance for Musical Theatre
- National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures
- National Performance Network
- Network of Ensemble Theaters
- New Music USA
- OPERA America
- Theatre Communications Group

The Performing Arts Alliance is a national network of more than 33,000 organizational and individual members comprising the professional, nonprofit performing arts fields. We submit this testimony to highlight the importance of Federal investment in the arts.

For 50 years, the National Endowment for the Arts has held a significant Federal leadership role for the arts and culture in America. Its grants reach every congressional district and support arts organizations serving their communities in a variety of ways. Through the support of direct NEA grants and NEA partnerships with State arts agencies, arts organizations are helping people experience high-quality artistic presentations, access arts education and opportunities for artistic development, find their voices and share their stories, and have critical dialogue about important social issues.

The following examples of recent NEA grantees within the PAA network are a sample of the significant ways performing arts organizations are able to serve their communities with the support of the NEA.

—*NEA grants support arts education projects that offer professional development to educators and arts learning opportunities for students.*

Chamber Music America member Community Music Works in Providence, Rhode Island received fiscal year 2015 Art Works support to provide free lessons in instrumental music, music theory, and improvisation to local at-risk children and youth. The organization also provided a leadership development program for advanced students as well as performance opportunities.

AXIS Dance Company in Oakland, California, recently received Art Works support for its Dance Access Education and Outreach programs to be offered in the Bay Area and in cities nationwide as the company tours. AXIS' events—such as dance classes, teacher trainings and youth dance camps—will be offered to youth and adults with and without disabilities. Included in the offerings are a dance apprentice program for students with spinal cord injuries and movement experiences for veterans. AXIS is a member of Dance/USA.

The Integration of the Arts and Literacy Academy was developed by the Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts in Louisville, Kentucky to offer professional development programs for arts teachers and teachers of literacy, reading, and English language arts. Supported by fiscal year 2016 Art Works funding, this project will help teachers from rural, urban, and suburban Kentucky schools learn to integrate music, dance, drama, and visual arts with creative writing and interactive story-

telling based on children's books. The Center for the Performing Arts is a member of the Association of Performing Arts Presenters.

—*With the support of NEA funds, arts organizations are developing works that address current affairs and create safe spaces for community dialogue on social Issues.*

Metro Theater Company in St. Louis, Missouri, a member of Theatre Communications Group, is addressing issues of race and social justice in its production of "And in This Corner. . . . Cassius Clay" by Idris Goodwin. The presentation is supported by fiscal year 2016 Art Works funding. Set in Louisville, Kentucky, during the 1950s and early 1960s, the play portrays prize-fighter Cassius Clay's boyhood through his mid-20s, during the Jim Crow era in the South. As contemporary St. Louis communities process the aftermath of the present-day shooting events in Ferguson, aspects of the play may resonate, such as the police officer who mentors Clay and introduces him to boxing. Outreach activities associated with this production will encourage civic engagement and youth empowerment.

Sandglass Theatre in Putney, Vermont received fiscal year 2015 Art Works support for its biannual International Puppets in the Green Mountains Festival, which will feature performances by international puppet artists around the theme of immigration and humanization, as well as the Voices of Community Series, a theater series exploring issues of diversity with residencies by visiting artists. Sandglass is a member of the National Performance Network.

—*NEA funds benefit every congressional district, expanding access to exemplary artistry to all people in all U.S. communities.*

With the support of fiscal year 2016 Challenge America funding, Pro Musica in Joplin, Missouri is able to offer free public performances and outreach activities by artists such as Project Trio and the Harlem Quartet, intended to serve rural communities. This organization is a member of Chamber Music America. The Quartet's outreach activities include audience talk-backs about the music, instrumentation, and composers whose work is being performed.

The St. Louis Children's Choir—a member of Chorus America—has used fiscal year 2016 Art Works funding to support its Serving St. Louis through Song community engagement project. The choir will bring its music to St. Louis Area elementary, middle, and language-immersion schools, the St. Louis Juvenile Detention Center, the St. Louis Children's Hospital, and residential care facilities for senior citizens.

Manship Theatre in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, a member of Dance/USA, received fiscal year 2016 Challenge America support for residency projects with tap dance artists Savion Glover, Marshall Davis, Jr., and jazz drummer Jack Dejohnette. Glover and Davis will give a lecture and demonstration at Family Youth Services Center, in partnership with the East Baton Rouge Department of Juvenile Services. Together, all three artists will perform at a public concert at Manship Theatre.

Great Falls Symphony in Great Falls, Montana, is able to offer outreach concerts and lead master classes for rural high school students with the support of an fiscal year 2016 Challenge America Fast Track grant. The Symphony, a member of the League of American Orchestras, will also perform in a concert preview that will be aired on Montana's public radio station and perform during an open rehearsal for local piano students and piano teachers.

—*NEA grants support projects that help people from different communities share their stories and histories, helping audiences make connections across cultures.*

Knoxville Opera, a member of OPERA America, received an fiscal year 2016 Challenge America Fast Track Grant to support OPERAtion Outreach!, a series of free public performances, in-school productions, and education programs intended to engage underserved audiences of East Tennessee. In addition to presentations of classic works such as Puccini's "Tosca," Knoxville Opera will present its African-American Voices Series, highlighting the importance of diversifying the opera field. The series will feature African-American opera artists discussing their careers, achievements, and experiences as minorities within the field.

Miracle Theatre Group (Milagro), in Portland, Oregon, received fiscal year 2016 Art Works support for the West Coast premiere of "Contigo Pan y Cebolla" by Hector Quintero. The tragic comedy is set in Havana during the late 1950s just prior to the Cuban revolution. It centers on a poor family struggling to make ends meet as costs increase but wages remain stagnant. The play is a popular work of Cuban realism and will be produced in its original Spanish. The theater will host a series of bilingual post-play conversations with community members and local scholars to

illuminate Cuban history. Milagro is a member of the National Association for Latino Arts and Cultures.

Portland Playhouse, in Portland, Oregon (a member of Theatre Communications Group), received Artworks Support for the development and West Coast premiere of "You for Me for You" by Mia Chung. The play tells the story of two North Korean sisters facing starvation at the hands of a corrupt regime who are separated when they decide to flee the country. The work invites audiences to rethink perceptions of North Korea and the immigrant experience. In partnership with the Korean American Coalition and Asian American Network of Oregon, the theater plans to stimulate public dialogue around the themes of the play by hosting talkback discussions with artists.

—*NEA grants support projects that provide valuable opportunities for artistic development for young and emerging artists.*

The NOCCA Institute (New Orleans Center for Creative Arts), a member of Chamber Music America, received fiscal year 2016 Art Works funding for its Artists-in-Residence Program. Visiting artists convened for master classes, concerts, and other activities with youth, emerging and mid-career artists, and the general public.

With the support of fiscal year 2016 Art Works funds, Dorset Theatre Festival in Dorset, Vermont—a member of Theatre Communications Group (TCG) —administered its New Play Development Program. Via a new works incubator to nurture new voices in theatre, the program will mentor playwrights in the development of new plays from conception to production. A similar effort to support new voices is underway at the Nashville Repertory Theatre due in part to support from Art Works funding. The Theatre's Ingram New Works Project will aid the creation of new plays by participating playwrights who will write plays of their choice, rather than a play chosen by the institution. This theatre is also a member of TCG.

The artistic programming of the arts organizations supported by the National Endowment for the Arts gives vitality to their communities in numerous ways beyond the examples provided here. The Federal investment in the NEA places value on the role of arts and culture in our society, and it realizes significant returns that are both measurable and intangible. We celebrate the NEA's fiscal year 2016 budget increase—the first since fiscal year 2011—and urge you to please support no less than $155 million to the National Endowment for the Arts in fiscal year 2017. Thank you for considering our request.

[This statement was submitted by Mario Garcia Durham, Chair, and Cristine Davis, General Manager.]

PREPARED STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS TO CONSERVE AND IMPROVE AMERICA'S FORESTS

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

The President's fiscal year 17 budget reflects the difficult budget decisions that the ever increasing costs of wildfires and budget constraints present. Even in this tight budget climate, the undersigned organizations believe that investments in key Federal programs to conserve and improve America's forests—rural and urban, private and public—are critically important. These investments create jobs, mitigate pollution and carbon emissions, enhance and protect our drinking water, contribute to healthy, livable communities, and encourage forest product innovation and utilization, helping the Nation to foster strong economic growth in rural areas.

The U.S. Forest Service State and Private Forestry Deputy Area (S&PF) serves as a lynchpin for the conservation of America's forests. S&PF supports a broad range of programs in partnerships with State and national forestry and conservation organizations interested in America's forests. Providing this important technical and financial assistance to private landowners and the resource managers responsible for managing more than 60 percent of America's forests helps to increase the pace and scale of landscape scale restoration work, improve the resilience of the Nation's forests, and protect communities and the environment from forest pests, invasive species and wildland fires.

Fiscal year 2017 funding for the following S&PF programs will help improve the health of the Nation's forests and encourage economic growth in a sector that sustains more than one million jobs in the United States. Our funding level requests include:

—*$29 million for the Forest Stewardship Program:* Administered in cooperation with State forestry agencies, this program plays a fundamental role in keeping forests as forests. Forest Insects, diseases and wild fire know no bounds be-

tween Federal and non-Federal forests. Assisting some of the 22 million private landowners in managing non-Federal forests can help minimize the impacts to Federal lands saving the Federal taxpayer millions of dollars. Almost 90 percent of those who have stewardship plans are actively implementing them to manage for wildlife, clean water, climate mitigation, and forest products.

—*$100 million for the Forest Health Management Programs—$52 million Federal Lands and $48 million Cooperative Lands:* Pests and disease area national problem affecting private and public lands. The USFS Forest Health Management Program supports efforts to prevent, contain, and eradicate these costly and dangerous pests and pathogens affecting trees and forests.

—*$31 million for the Urban and Community Forestry Program:* Benefiting more than 220 million people, this program provides assistance to communities managing local, urban, and community forestry resources to keep trees and forests in our communities healthy. These urban forests provide quantifiable energy savings, stormwater impact reduction, and human health benefits in return.

—*$87 million for State and $15 million for Volunteer Fire Assistance Programs:* Initial attack is the key to reducing large fire costs and these programs are critical to these suppression efforts. State and volunteer fire crews are deployed to assist on Federal fires and other emergency or disaster situations, in compliance with national safety and training standards.

—*$23.5 million for Landscape Scale Restoration:* S&PF works collaboratively with States and other partners using State Forest Action Plans to target resources to the highest priority forest needs across ownerships to achieve results with meaningful local, regional, and national impacts.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Forests
American Forest Foundation
CarbonVerde
Forest Business Network
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Association of Forest Service Retirees
National Association of State Foresters
National Wild Turkey Federation
National Woodland Owners Association
The National Wildfire Institute
The Nature Conservancy
The Pinchot Institute for Conservation
Society of American Foresters

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE PUYALLUP TRIBE OF INDIANS

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony concerning the fiscal year 2017 appropriations for American Indian and Alaskan Native programs within the BIA and IHS. My name is David Z. Bean, Tribal Council Member for the Puyallup Tribe of Indians.

The Puyallup Tribe is an independent sovereign nation having historically negotiated with several foreign nations including the United States in the Medicine Creek Treaty of 1854. This relationship is rooted in Article I, Section 8, of the United States Constitution, Federal laws and numerous Executive orders. The governing body of the Puyallup Tribe of Indians is the Puyallup Tribal Council which upholds the Tribe's sovereign responsibility of self-determination and self-governance for the benefit of the 5,006 Puyallup tribal members and the 25,000 plus members from approximately 355 federally recognized tribes who utilize our services. The Puyallup Reservation is located in the urbanized Seattle-Tacoma area of the State of Washington. The 18,061 acre reservation is a "checkerboard" of tribal lands, Indian-owned fee land and non-Indian owned fee land. Our reservation land includes parts of six different municipalities (Tacoma, Fife, Milton, Puyallup, Edgewood and Federal Way).

The following written testimony being submitted to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee documents the Puyallup Tribe's views on the President's fiscal year 2017 Federal budget. The focus of the written testimony will be on the President's proposed budget for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Indian Health Service (IHS). Within the BIA budget, $2.9 billion is proposed for fiscal year 2017, an increase of $138 million above the fiscal year 2016 levels. For the IHS, $5.2 billion is proposed, an increase of $378 million over the fiscal year 2016 enacted level. Included in both budgets the President proposes to fully fund Contract Support Costs (CSC) in fiscal year 2017. The budget provides $278 million for BIA CSCs and $800 million for IHS CSCs. We appreciate the increased funding being proposed for the

BIA and IHS and funding CSCs at 100 percent. However, years of inadequate funding and the effects of inflation have impacted the tribe's ability to fully exercise self-determination and self-governance. As negotiations proceed on the fiscal year 2017 budget and future appropriations, it is paramount that Congress fully fund Indian program needs.

DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR—BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

Public Safety & Justice: The fiscal year 2017 budget request includes $373.5 million for BIA Public Safety & Justice. This represents a $4 million decrease over the fiscal year 2016 enacted level. Funding for detention facilities is of great importance to the Puyallup Tribe. In fiscal year 2009, we received a Department of Justice ARRA grant, in the amount of $7.9 million to construct a 28 bed adult corrections facility. Construction on the facility was completed in February 2014 and came online in May 2014. Over the past years the Puyallup Tribe has worked closely with the BIA Office of Justice Services to identify the operating and staffing costs associated this facility. The agreed upon estimated cost of operating the facility was set at $2.6 million annually. The BIA base funding offered to the tribe in fiscal year 2015 was $704,198 or 27 percent of actual need, with no increases to base funding in fiscal year 2016 or fiscal year 2017. Thus, while we support the $1.0 million increase in the President's proposed fiscal year 2017 funding for Detention & Corrections, this increase is not sufficient to fund the staffing and operating needs of Indian Country detention facilities, some of which lie vacant due to lack of funds. We are requesting support from the subcommittee to include Committee report language that would direct Office of Justice Services to submit a plan for funding the staffing and operating needs of the detention facilities in Indian country.

In addition, we operate a tribal court program through a Public Law 93–638 contract with the BIA. In fiscal year 2015, our base funding was increased from $45,000 to $194,996 and remains this amount for fiscal year 2017. While the increase to our tribal court base funding was appreciated, it does not equal the amount of tribal funds necessary to fully operate the tribal court program. In fiscal year 2016, the tribe has allocated $1.172 million of tribal funds for the tribal court budget. Again, while the Puyallup Tribe supports the $2.5 million increase for tribal court funding for fiscal year 2017, we agree with the National Congress of American Indian's request that an additional $82.0 million be allocated to BIA to increase base funding for tribal courts. This increase would assist with the implementation of the Tribal Law and Order Act and the Violence Against Women Act. Further, we are strongly opposed to the $8.2 million decrease proposed for the tribal courts initiative to better support tribal courts in Public Law 280 States.

Natural Resources Management: The Puyallup Tribe has treaty and governmental obligations and responsibilities to manage its natural resources for uses beneficial to the tribal membership and the regional communities. Despite our diligent program efforts, the fisheries resource is degrading and economic losses are incurred by Native and Non-native fishermen and surrounding communities. Our resource management responsibilities cover thousands of square miles in the Puget Sound region of the State of Washington.

For fiscal year 2017, a minimum funding level of $8.5 million is necessary for the Rights Protection Implementation—BIA Western Washington (Bolts) Fisheries Management program. However, we agree with the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission and the National Congress of American Indians that an overall $52 million increase for the Rights Protection Implementation funding is necessary to ensure compliance with Federal court orders through effective tribal self-regulatory and co-management systems. This increase in funding would provide new monies for harvest management, habitat protection, stock enhancement, shellfish, enforcement, wildlife and other natural resource management needs. As the aboriginal owners and guardians of our lands and waters it is essential that adequate funding is provided to allow tribes to carry-out our inherent stewardship of these resources.

The Puyallup Tribe continues to operate a number of salmon hatcheries that benefit Indian and non-Indian commercial and sport fisheries in the Pacific Northwest/Puget Sound. We work cooperatively with the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, neighboring tribes, Federal agencies and State fishery managers to insure the success and sustainability of our hatchery programs. The tribe supports the President's fiscal year 2017 budget request of $10.38 million for Fish Hatcheries Operations and Fish Hatchery Maintenance.

The Timber, Fish and Wildlife (TFW) Supplemental and U.S./Canada Pacific Salmon Treaty programs has allowed for the expansion of tribal participation in the State forest practice rules and regulations and participation in inter-tribal organizations to address specific treaties and legal cases which relate to multi-national fish-

ing rights, harvest allocations and resource management practices. We request subcommittee support the funding recommendations of the NWIFC for the fiscal year 2017 TFW Supplemental program and the U.S./Canada Pacific Salmon Treaty program.

The Puyallup Wildlife Management program has been the lead agency in management activities to benefit the South Rainier elk herd since 2004. The South Rainier elk herd is the primary stock of elk harvested by the Puyallup Tribe. The tribe has not only established more reliable methods for population monitoring, but has also been proactive in initiating habitat enhancement projects, research and land acquisition to ensure sustainable populations of elk for future generations. Funds that are available to the tribe have been on a very competitive basis with a limited amount per program via USFWS Tribal Wildlife grants and the BIA Unresolved Hunting and Fishing Rights grant program. We request subcommittee support to provide base funding to the tribes' Wildlife Management Program in the amount of $150,000 through the BIA Unresolved Hunting and Fishing Rights program in fiscal year 2017 appropriations.

Education: The Puyallup Tribe operates the pre–K to 12 Chief Leschi Schools which included a verified 2014–2015 School student enrollment of 910+ students, including ECEAP and FACE programs. With an increasing number of pre-kindergarten enrollment, Chief Leschi Schools will exceed design capacity in the near future. Additional space will be necessary to provide quality educational services to the students and tribal community. Additionally, the cost of operation and maintenance of the Chief Leschi School facilities continues to increase in the areas of supplies, energy and student transportation costs. The fiscal year 2017 budget request for the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) is $912 million, an increase of $60 million over the fiscal year 2016 enacted level. While this increase is appreciated, once again the funding level does not meet the actual operational needs of tribal education programs. The tribe will continue to work with Congress, BIE and the National Congress of American Indians to increase funding in fiscal year 2017, including: Tribal Grant Support Cost for Tribally Operated Schools—$78 million; Student Transportation—$73 million; School Facilities Accounts—$109 million in facilities operations and $109 million in facilities maintenance, Indian School Equalization Program (ISEP)—$431 million and Construction/Repair of BIE Schools—$263.4 million.

Operations of Indian Programs & Tribal Priority Allocations: The President's fiscal year 2017 budget is in drastic need for increased funding for the BIA Operations of Indian Programs. Within the Operations of Indian Programs is the Tribal Priority Allocations (TPA). The TPA budget functions include the majority of funding used to support on-going services at the "local tribal" level, including: natural resources management, child welfare, other education, housing and other tribal government services. These functions have not received adequate and consistent funding to allow tribes the resources to fully exercise self-determination and self-governance. Further, the small increases that "TPA" has received over the past few years has not been adequate to keep pace with inflation. Specifically we support the $3.4 million requested increase for Indian Child Welfare funding; the $12.3 million requested increase for social services; and finally we support the $3 million requested increase for natural resource programs within TPA.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES—INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE

The Inadequate funding of the Indian Health Service (IHS) is the most substantial impediment to the current Indian Health system. The Puyallup Tribe has been operating healthcare programs since 1976 through the Indian Self-determination Act, Public Law 93–638. The Puyallup Tribal Health Authority (PTHA) operates a comprehensive ambulatory care program to the Native American population in Pierce County, Washington. The current patient load exceeds 9,000, of which approximately 1,700 are tribal members. There are no IHS hospitals in the Portland Area so all specialties and hospital care have been paid for out of our contract care allocation. The Purchased/Referred Care (PRC) allocation to PTHA remains inadequate to meet the actual need. In fiscal year 2004, the Puyallup Tribe subsidized PRC with a $2.8 million dollar contribution. In fiscal year 2016, the tribal PRC subsidy has grown to $6.2 million. Given that the PTHA service population is only comprised of 17 percent Puyallup tribal members, tribal budget priorities in fiscal year 2011 through fiscal year 2016 have made continued subsidies to the PTHA financially difficult for the Puyallup Tribe. The fiscal year 2017 budget requests $5.2 billion in discretionary budget authority for the Indian Health Service. This represents a $378 million increase over the fiscal year 2016 enacted level. For Health Services programs the fiscal year 2017 budget requests funding for Clinical Services ($3.47

billion), Purchased/Referred Care ($962 million), Facilities Maintenance & Improvement ($77 million) and Contract Support ($800 million). The Puyallup Tribe fully supports funding increases for existing IHS programs and will work with Congress to continue efforts to increase funding for IHS and the critical programs administered by the agency which so many Indian tribes perform under Indian Self-Determination Act contracts and agreements.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE PVC PIPE ASSOCIATION

The Uni-Bell PVC Pipe Association is a not-for-profit organization representing 95 percent of the manufacturing capacity of the North American PVC pipe industry. Our pipe producing members operate over 90 facilities in the U.S. and our associate members (suppliers) hundreds more. PVC pipe extrusion facilities are found in 32 States across the United States: California has the most plants (9), followed by Texas (6), Arizona (5) and Pennsylvania (5).

The PVC pipe industry serves a vast and complex market including 54,000 drinking water systems, 10,000 wastewater facilities and 15,000 sewer and wastewater contracting firms. PVC water and sewer pipe producers contribute in excess of $14 billion annually to the U.S. economy and support over 25,000 jobs.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) manages taxpayer dollars under the State Revolving Fund's (SRF's) for water and wastewater projects in every State. It is important for all States and municipalities receiving Federal funding to use open and free bidding processes and to consider all approved piping materials so that the most cost effective, longest lasting and best performing piping is used.

According to the U.S. Conference of Mayors, underground pipes represent 60 percent ($2.28 trillion) of the $3.8 trillion needed in investments for water and wastewater infrastructure over the next 20 years. As a result, it is here that open procurement policies and practices should be focused.

Since the 1970s the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Development Program has required that the funding it provides rural municipalities for water and sewer projects be spent in an open and competitive manner. It is time for the EPA to have similar requirements.

Richard Anderson, Ph.D., Senior Advisor to U.S. Conference of Mayors Water Council, who is also a proponent of procurement reform for underground infrastructure, reports that water and sewer pipelines are deteriorating faster than the rate at which they can be replaced because of corrosion, which is the leading cause of the water main break epidemic in North America (estimated at some 300,000 breaks annually). According to a 2002 congressional study, corrosion is also a drag on the economy, costing U.S. drinking water and wastewater systems over $50.7 billion annually. As a result, any comprehensive and truly sustainable underground infrastructure strategy must address corrosion.

Today's corrosion crisis is due to the materials used in America's piping networks over the last hundred years. At first, cast iron was used, with ductile iron gradually replacing it as the material of choice. Both now suffer from corrosion. In fact, studies have shown that newer iron pipes do not last as long as older versions because of their thinner walls.

The burden of old technology materials is not limited to the cost of repairing and replacing failed pipelines. It includes the cost of losing treated water from leaking systems. Leaking pipes made from old technology materials lose an estimated 2.6 trillion gallons of drinking water annually, or 17 percent of all treated water pumped in the United States.

The solution to these problems begins with sustainability, durability and corrosion resistance, and this is why more utilities must actively consider all approved piping materials like PVC in their bidding processes. Increased durability means fewer leaks, better water conservation and lower costs. As a result, any comprehensive action plan for water and wastewater infrastructure renewal must also include reform of municipal procurement practices that limit competition, shackle innovation and increase costs.

We believe that to get the most efficient and sustainable use of Federal money for water and wastewater projects, free and open competition must be the operating standard. Federal grants provided to municipalities should have open competition stipulations similar to those required by the USDA Rural Development Program for water and sewer projects. In this way Federal dollars obtain maximum value for taxpayers. When products are excluded from bidding, taxpayers suffer as does the efficiency of our infrastructure.

With over 2 million miles in service, PVC pipe has been celebrated by *Engineering News Record* as one of the top 20 engineering advancements of the last 125 years.

A study by the American Water Works Research Foundation recently quantified the life expectancy of PVC pipe at more than 110 years—making it excellent for long-term asset management and sustainability. Furthermore, PVC pipe is more efficient to manufacture, taking four times less energy to make than concrete pressure pipe, and half that used for iron pipe.

As well, PVC pipe is cost effective, has watertight joints and its lightweight reduces transportation and installation costs, yielding additional greenhouse gas reductions. It is also totally recyclable, though most of it has yet to enter the recycling stream given its great durability.

The PVC pipe industry has published the first North American industry-wide environmental product declaration (EPD) for PVC water and sewer piping, which has been verified by NSF Sustainability, a division of global public health organization NSF International. PVC pipe is designed to minimize environmental impacts due to its corrosion resistance, enabling long-term durability. This third-party verified, ISO 14025 compliant EPD was the next step in validating the safety and sustainability of PVC piping products. With the completion of this EPD, the PVC pipe industry has demonstrated its continued commitment to product safety and transparency.

—*Environmental Product Declaration for PVC Water and Sewer Piping—NSF international*

http://www.uni-bell.org/communication/images/environmental__product__declaration__for__water__and__sewer__piping.pdf

Numerous organizations have published studies on the need to update procurement practices to more cost effectively finance our underground infrastructure. Below are links to some of these reports:

—*Procurement Process Improvements Yield Cost-Effective Public Benefits*

http://www.uni-bell.org/communication/images/uscm__muncipalprocurement__onepage.pdf

—*Reforming Our Nation's Approach to the Infrastructure Crisis: How Competition, Oversight, and Innovation Can Lower Water and Sewer Rates in the United States*

http://www.uni-bell.org/kcfinder/upload/files/NTU%20Report%281%29.pdf

—*Lowering Costs in Water Infrastructure through Procurement Reform: A Strategy for State Governments*

http://www.uni-bell.org/resources/Lowering%20Costs%20in%20Water%20Infrastructure__ALEC%20FINAL.pdf

—*Fixing America's Crumbling Underground Water Infrastructure: Competitive Bidding Offers a Way Out*

http://www.uni-bell.org/resources/FixingAmericasWaterInfrastructure.pdf

Also please find links to water main break rate and pipe longevity studies by Utah State University's Buried Structures Laboratory, which determined that PVC has the lowest break rate of all water piping materials and the longest lifespan:

—*Water Main Break Rates in the USA and Canada: A Comprehensive Study*

http://www.uni-bell.org/kcfinder/upload/files/UtahStateWaterBreakRates__FINAL__TH__Ver5lowrez.pdf

—*PVC Pipe Longevity Report: A Comprehensive Study on PVC Pipe Excavations, Testing, & Life Cycle Analysis*

http://www.uni-bell.org/communication/images/unibell__24__page__low__res1.pdf

The PVC pipe industry thanks you for letting us submit a statement for this important hearing and we will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

[This statement was submitted by Bruce Hollands, Executive Director.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE RED CLIFF BAND OF LAKE SUPERIOR CHIPPEWA

Testimony Addresses: Bureau of Indian Affairs

Lake Superior Co-Management Program Write-up for the Tribal Management/Development Program (TMDP) Funding

This write-up was developed in conjunction with BIA Central Office staff

Of the proposed increase to TMDP, $750,000 will be provided to support Lake Superior Co-Management (LSCM) tribes (Red Cliff, Bad River). The LSCM tribes are experiencing the effects of climate change disproportionately due to their cultural and functional reliance on Lake Superior, as well as their inability to relocate treaty-defined reservations. The reservations of the LSCM tribes border Lake Superior coastal shoreline, and the tribes actively participate in commercial and subsistence fish harvest across six management units and 7,051,090 surface acres of Lake Superior. The reservations' economies are fundamentally based and inextricably linked to the continued sustainable harvest of wild, native fish stocks in the 1842 ceded waters of Lake Superior.

Tribal commercial fishing on Lake Superior under the Treaty of 1842 (7 Stat. 591) and Treaty of 1854 (10 Stat.1109) with the Chippewa was affirmed in *State v. Gurnoe,* 53 Wis. 2d 390 (1972), which dismissed State prosecution against tribal fishermen and initiated the current system of self-regulation. The U.S. District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin also dismissed allegations against tribal fishermen in *U.S. v. Peterson,* 82CR7OU (1984), in light of the regulatory provisions contained in the Lake Superior Fishing Agreement, first adopted in 1981, between the Red Cliff and Bad River Tribes and State of Wisconsin. While the rights of these tribes to manage the Lake Superior fishery was made clear in court decisions, the exact jurisdictional boundaries and roles of each tribe in cooperation with the State was determined through negotiated efforts. Prior to, and since the Federal court's decision in *U.S. v. Peterson,* the tribes have maintained sovereign rights to regulate Treaty harvest and to cooperatively manage the shared fishery resource in Lake Superior through subsequent negotiated renditions of the Lake Superior Fishing Agreement in coordination with the State of Wisconsin in 1991, 1995, and 2005. LSCM tribes (Red Cliff and Bad River) each currently receive base TMDP funding for on-reservation management of fish and wildlife resources. Funding of LSCM will provide the funding required for Red Cliff and Bad River to co-manage tribal resources in compliance with the Lake Superior Fishing Agreement within the jurisdictions also managed by the State. This increase to LSCM (Red Cliff and Bad River) is needed to improve conservation enforcement, commercial monitoring, and data-driven fishery management activities within the co-managed jurisdictions of Lake Superior in cooperation with the State.

Since the Gurnoe Decision (1972) reaffirmed the rights of the Chippewa tribes to engage in reservation-based fish harvest, LSCM tribes have developed natural resource programs to demonstrate their co-management authority on Lake Superior and ensure sustainable fishery management. The core functions of these programs, namely fish stock assessments, conservation enforcement and harvest monitoring, have resulted in the most spatially and temporally comprehensive database to quantify climate change impacts. The LSCM has regional and national benefit as vulnerability assessments and climate resiliency strategies are developed for the world's greatest freshwater ecosystem.

Justification

—A major funding shortfall of Tribal Management and Development funding to the Bad River and Red Cliff Tribes has resulted in an unmet obligation by BIA to support treaty harvest and management responsibilities by the tribes across 7,000,000 surface acres of ceded territory on Lake Superior.

—Red Cliff and Bad River operate exclusively in Wisconsin waters of Lake Superior and directly negotiate terms under the Lake Superior Fishing Agreement, first signed in 1981, with the State of Wisconsin. Subsequent renditions of the Agreement occurred in 1991, 1995, and 2005; a 2016 Agreement is currently being negotiated.

—U.S. District Court dismissed allegations on Red Cliff commercial fishermen in *U.S. v. Peterson,* 82CR7OU (1984),[4] in light of the regulatory provisions contained in the 1981 Lake Superior Fishing Agreement. The Federal decision relied upon the standing Agreement with the State in dismissing the case.

—Fish stock assessments, on-board harvest monitoring and conservation enforcement are the foundation of the Lake Superior Co-Management program. These activities are not supported through the assistance of an intertribal agency in Wisconsin waters.

—History and tradition are important to us:

> The Red Cliff Reservation, A third member of the La Pointe Agency Group, is about 24 miles by rail from Ashland. It contains 191 Indians, a particularly industrious and deserving lot of people. A good many of the Red Cliff Indians obtain their chief employment at the Bayfield sawmills, and many others have until recently earned a fair subsistence by fishing with nets in the bay along the border of the reservation. Their fish they would pack and ship in kegs to

> the market, working on a cooperative system. Now the State of Wisconsin has adopted laws which forbid their net fishery, although the Treaty of 1854 between the Tribe and the United States Government guarantees them this privilege. They cannot understand the conflict of State laws with Federal treaties, and still consider themselves entitled to fish, though they have made no attempt to assert their rights aggressively since some of the fishermen were arrested by the State authorities.
>
> — 28th Annual Report of the Board of Indian commissioners, 1896.

But modern tribal fisheries require conscientious, data-driven management. Please support us.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RESTORE AMERICA'S ESTUARIES

Restore America's Estuaries is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that has been working since 1995 to restore our Nation's greatest estuaries. Our mission is to restore and protect estuaries as essential resources for our Nation. Restore America's Estuaries is an alliance of community-based coastal conservation organizations across the Nation that protect and restore coastal and estuarine habitat. Our member organizations include: American Littoral Society, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, Save the Sound—a program of the Connecticut Fund for the Environment, Galveston Bay Foundation, North Carolina Coastal Federation, EarthCorps, Save The Bay—San Francisco, Save the Bay—Narragansett Bay, and Tampa Bay Watch. Collectively, we represent over 250,000 members nationwide.

As you develop the fiscal year 2017 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies appropriations bill, Restore America's Estuaries and our members encourage you to provide the following funding levels within the Department of Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) for core programs that significantly support coastal community and ecosystem resilience and local economies:

—*$15 million for USFWS Coastal Program*
(Interior: USFWS: Resource Management: Habitat Conservation: Coastal Program)

—*$27.2 million for USEPA National Estuary Program*
(USEPA: Water: Ecosystems: National Estuary Program/Coastal Waterways)

These non-regulatory investments strengthen and revitalize America's coastal communities by protecting and restoring habitat, improving local water quality, and enhancing resilience. Healthy coastlines protect communities from flood damage and extreme weather, improve commercial fisheries, safeguard vital infrastructure, and support tourism and recreational opportunities.

USFWS COASTAL PROGRAM

The Coastal Program (CP) is a voluntary, incentive-based program that provides technical and financial assistance to coastal communities and landowners to protect and restore fish and wildlife habitat on public and private lands in 24 priority coastal ecosystems throughout the United States, including the Great Lakes. The Coastal Program works collaboratively within the USFWS to coordinate strategic priorities and make landscape-scale progress with other Federal, State, local, and non-governmental partners and private landowners. Since 1985, the Coastal Program has:

—*Partnered* with more than 5,000 Federal, tribal, State, and local agencies, non-governmental organizations, corporations, and private landowners.
—*Restored* 546,390 acres of wetland and upland habitat and 2,590 miles of stream habitat.
—*Protected* more than 2.1 million acres of coastal habitat.
—*Provided* technical assistance to a diverse range of conservation partners.

Our coastal communities and ecosystems are on the front lines of changing coastal conditions and increasing extreme weather. Support for the USFWS Coastal Program helps interested communities and partners address the new set of challenges facing coastal communities. The Coastal Program is the USFWS's key conservation tool delivering on-the-ground habitat restoration and technical assistance. Despite the Program's relatively small cost, it has a tremendous impact. In 2015 alone, the Coastal Program, along with 455 local partners, completed 266 projects restoring or protecting more than 90,000 acres of wetlands and uplands and 194 miles of stream habitat. A recent estimate by USFWS Coastal Program staff shows that the pro-

gram leverages, on average, $8 non-Federal dollars for every Federal dollar spent. This makes the Coastal Program one of the most cost-effective habitat restoration programs within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Coastal Program stimulates local economies by supporting jobs necessary to deliver habitat conservation projects, including environmental consultants, engineers, construction workers, surveyors, assessors, and nursery and landscape workers. These jobs generate indirect economic activities that benefit local hotels, restaurants, stores, and gas stations. In total, the Coastal Program estimates that the average project supports 60 jobs and stimulates 40 businesses resulting in nearly 13 dollars in economic returns for each dollar of Federal investment. Additionally, restoration jobs cannot be outsourced and $0.90 of every dollar spent on restoration stays within the State.

In Puget Sound, Washington, the Coastal Program invested $20,000 to support a project to clean up and remove old and abandoned fishing gear from the water, resulting in a direct economic impact to the local economy of $51,000. Lost and abandoned fishing gear like nets, lines, crab and shrimp traps pose many problems for people, fish and marine animals. Each year, derelict crab pots are estimated to trap and kill 372,000 Dungeness crabs, resulting in losses to the fishery of $1.2 million—30–40 percent of the value of the annual commercial catch of Dungeness crab in Puget Sound. This project removed 84 gillnets—preventing the loss of approximately 370,000 crabs and returning an estimated value of well over $1.5 million to the crab fishery alone.

In San Diego Bay, California, the Coastal Program provided funding and technical assistance to project partners to restore 300 acres of wetland, mudflat, and upland habitat to benefit more than 90 species of resident and migratory birds. Project partners transformed highly degraded salt ponds into lush habitat by breaching levees, regrading soils, and planting native vegetation. Just days after the completion of the project, tens of thousands of birds descended on the newly-restored habitat to rest, roost, and feed. Not only did this project restore a "Globally Important Bird Area," as designated by the American Bird Conservancy, but it also created 130 jobs and generated $13.4 million for the local economy.

At recent funding levels of approximately $13.3 million, the Coastal Program is able to provide technical assistance and support to partners, but can only provide limited project dollars. A modest increase over the President's budget request would help the Coastal Program increase their capacity to leverage willing and interested partners to deliver highly-effective habitat conservation and restoration programs that prevent Federal listing of species, promote species recovery, enhance coastal resilience, and boost local economies.

Restore America's Estuaries urges your continued support and funding for the USFWS Coastal Program and asks that you provide $15 million for fiscal year 2017.

USEPA NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

The National Estuary Program (NEP) is a non-regulatory network of voluntary community-based programs that safeguards the health of important coastal ecosystems across the country. The program utilizes a consensus-building process to identify goals, objectives, and actions that reflect local environmental and economic priorities.

Currently there are 28 estuaries located along the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific coasts and in Puerto Rico that have been designated as estuaries of national significance. Each NEP focuses its work within a particular place or boundary, called a study area, which includes the estuary and surrounding watershed.

Each National Estuary Program demonstrates real environmental results through on-the-ground habitat restoration and protection. Their efforts reflect local environmental and economic priorities and involve the community as equal partners throughout the decisionmaking process. Collectively, NEPs have restored and protected more than 1.5 million acres of land since 2000.

Restore America's Estuaries urges your continued support of the National Estuary Program and asks that you provide $27.2 million for USEPA National Estuary Program/Coastal Waterways. Within this amount for fiscal year 2017, no less than $600,000 should be directed to each of the 28 NEPs in the field.

CONCLUSION

Restore America's Estuaries greatly appreciates the support this subcommittee has provided in the past for these important programs. These programs effectively accomplish on-the-ground restoration work which results in major benefits:

1. *Economic Growth and Jobs.*—Coastal habitat restoration creates between 17 and 33 direct jobs for each million dollars invested, depending on the type of

restoration. That is more than twice as many jobs as the oil and gas sector and road construction industries combined. The restored area supports increased tourism and valuable ecosystem services, including flood mitigation, shoreline protection, and enhanced fisheries, among others.

2. *Leveraging Private Funding.*—In 2015, Federal investment in the USFWS Coastal Program leveraged non-Federal dollars at a ratio of 34 to 1. The NEPs leveraged non-Federal dollars at a ratio of 15 to 1. In a time of shrinking resources, these are rates of return we cannot afford to ignore.
3. *Resiliency.*—Restoring coastal wetlands knocks down storm waves and reduces devastating storm surges before they reach the shore, protecting lives, property, and vital infrastructure for the nearly 40 percent of Americans that live in coastal communities.

We greatly appreciate you taking our requests into consideration as you move forward in the fiscal year 2017 appropriations process. We stand ready to work with you and your staff to ensure the health of our Nation's estuaries and coasts.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE RIVERSIDE-SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY INDIAN HEALTH, INC.

My name is Brandie Miranda Greany and I am a member of the Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indians and the Treasurer of Riverside-San Bernardino County Indian Health, Inc. Thank you for the opportunity to submit outside written testimony concerning the 2017 appropriations for the Indian Health Service.

Riverside-San Bernardino County Indian Health is a consortium of nine tribes located in Riverside and San Bernardino counties. Our member tribes are the Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indians, the Cahuilla Band of Indians, the Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians, the Ramona Band of Cahuilla Indians, the Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians, the Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians, the Agua-Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, the Morongo Band of Mission Indians, and the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians. We operate several health centers under a self-governance compact with the Indian Health Service and we are very proud of the vast array of services offered at our clinics, including medical, dental, optical, behavioral health, pharmacy, laboratory, environmental health, community health representative, and nutrition services.

We serve over 15,000 Native Americans and 3,000 related family members, and experience over 100,000 patient visits each year. Our service area includes two of the largest counties in the contiguous United States, so our member tribes have joined together to develop a way to economically and efficiently provide healthcare services for our people. We also provide healthcare for three other local tribes: the Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians, the Cabazon Band of Mission Indians, and the Augustine Band of Cahuilla Indians. Almost two-thirds of our patients come either from these three local tribes or from members of other non-consortium tribes who reside in our two-county service area.

Given the number of patients we treat, our IHS dollars can only go so far. But we are thankful for the support of Congress and the funding provided to ensure our people are healthy. We were very appreciative that Congress heard our voices last year, and we hope that the subcommittee will continue to pressure IHS to honor the Government's trust responsibility to provide culturally competent and high-quality healthcare for Native Americans.

MANDATORY CSC APPROPRIATIONS

I want to take this opportunity to express my sincerest gratitude for this subcommittee's heroic work to achieve full funding for our compact with IHS. We were only able to find a path forward on this contentious issue because of the subcommittee's unrelenting determination to make full funding of Contract Support Costs (CSCs) a key priority in its work to uphold the trust responsibility and contractual obligations of the United States to our Native Nations.

The subcommittee heard our request and included critical language moving CSC to a separate account and providing uncapped appropriations to ensure that our contracts would be fully honored. The subcommittee's action eliminates the threat from IHS—a threat realized in fiscal year 2015—to cut direct care services in order to fully honor our contracts. Fortunately, this subcommittee took the steps necessary to protect tribal programs and services from this threat, and we agree with the subcommittee's approach for dealing with this issue.

There is one aspect of the administration's new CSC language which we hope will be changed moving forward. At the agency's insistence, a proviso was included

which addresses the tracking of unspent CSC funds. Unintentionally, this proviso will lead to serious problems, and it should be removed. First, it creates an extremely complicated accounting for those funds, with no value to the Federal Government, the taxpayer, or the tribes. Second, existing law (namely, the Indian Self-Determination Act of 1975) already addresses how to account for unspent funds and commands that such funds must be spent in the next year to carry out the compact or contract. Existing law has worked well for over 40 years, and we therefore strongly urge that the subcommittee remove this provision in fiscal year 2017 and future years.

Lastly we respectfully request that the Committee direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to promptly file her annual CSC shortfall reports. Reports have not been filed for fiscal year 2012–2015, and the last data published for fiscal year 2011 is over 5 years old.

RPMS COMPUTER SYSTEM

For decades, the Indian Health Service has utilized the Resource and Patient Management System (RPMS) computer system as both a practice management software and an electronic health record (EHR). It serves as the patient registration, scheduling, healthcare record, and population management tool, and also as the third party billing system. Although IT technology has rapidly transformed healthcare in the United States, the IHS RPMS system has failed to keep up. The Federal Government has invested billions to incentivize hospitals and providers to digitize health records, but IHS's RPMS computer system struggles to develop and make products available that are functional. The roll out to the users and the utility of the RPMS system lags far behind systems found in the private sector.

In short, IHS's RPMS system is falling far behind standard healthcare industry requirements. It has always been cumbersome, but now is so difficult to use that our doctors are unable to document their services accurately, timely, or completely. This is a red flag that the patients and providers who depend on the IHS system of care are in serious jeopardy.

IHS leadership insists that the RPMS shortcomings are caused by a lack of resources. This may be true. After all, the IHS budget for research and development is zero, while only $20 million was requested for IHS IT upgrades in 2017. The VA has 2,000 computer programmers, or more than 16 times the number of IHS programmers, compared to IHS's 120 computer programmers. Worse yet, IHS has a 3-year backlog for user requests which grows every year. Simply stated, IHS has not invested adequate resources into the RPMS system and this failure is adversely impacting the ability of the tribes to provide healthcare services to Native Americans.

The most recent disaster related to this issue was the failed implementation of the new ICD–10 codes that were to be in place last October 1, 2015. IHS was unprepared with the RPMS computer system and its roll out to tribes. Even more frustrating for the tribes is that IHS seems to be unable to correct these problems for many years to come. IHS states that it does not have the resources to make these changes within the next few years, yet it doesn't ask Congress for the necessary help to remedy the problem. This leaves the tribes in an untenable position.

Today, tribes are left to their own solutions, which includes considering outside vendors to purchase an Electronic Health Record system that includes Patient Records, Dental, Optical, Pharmacy, Behavioral Health Services, Registration, Coding, and Billing. But these EHR software systems are very expensive, and most Tribes simply do not have the financial resources needed to purchase them. Most tribes have therefore been left with no choice but to keep the IHS RPMS computer system, despite its failure to properly transition to the required ICD–10 conversion.

Overall, the impact to patient care is unacceptable, and the impact to program operations and the distribution of costs is untenable. Rather than invest in software solutions that would allow the programs to operate efficiently, the poorly designed RPMS system multiplies the cost of delivering healthcare. While America's healthcare industry is massively improving the functionality of EHR systems, IHS lags far behind and patient care is suffering.

We recommend that this subcommittee direct IHS to purchase an outside Electronic Health Record (EHR) system that will bring the tribes into the 21st Century for medical recordkeeping. IHS must stop throwing good money into an old, outdated RPMS system. IHS could spend millions to try to upgrade the RPMS over the next few years, but that effort is doomed to fail because the RPMS platform is simply ill-suited to today's demands. The far less costly option is to direct IHS to do an open market purchase of a modern-day EHR system. We recommend that the subcommittee direct that IHS provide an estimate and a spending plan for what it would cost to purchase and install such an EHR system within 90 days of enact-

ment of the fiscal year 2017 appropriations measure and to include a funding request in the fiscal year 2018 budget for the agency.

Thank you for affording us the opportunity to submit written testimony.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARY C. ROBINSON

Dear Senators:

As an American citizen and taxpayer, I strongly oppose the BLM's proposal to conduct dangerous sterilization experiments on wild mares at the Wild Horse Corral Facility in Hines. According to the Environmental Assessment (EA), the BLM is deciding whether or not to proceed with one or more of the proposed sterilization procedures. The weight of scientific evidence and public opinion clearly supports a BLM decision NOT to proceed with any of these sterilization procedures.

The sterilization procedures that BLM is proposing to conduct on federally protected wild mares are dangerous, costly and impractical for use in the field, due to the serious health risks they pose to the horses and their unborn foals, and also due to the great expense of purchasing the equipment and training the number of veterinarians necessary to implement these procedures on the range.

It makes no sense to spend millions of taxpayer dollars on these risky invasive experiments when proven, humane, and relatively inexpensive fertility control technology in the form of the PZP vaccine is readily available but vastly underutilized by the BLM.

The EA is completely inadequate in analyzing the impacts of these experimental procedures on mares. In addition, the BLM has deliberately avoided public opposition to this controversial and grotesque research proposal by skipping the scoping stage of the environmental analysis process. As a result, the public has been deprived of the opportunity to provide input into the impacts of and alternatives to these procedures that must be analyzed under the rules of the National Environmental Policy Act.

1. Ovariectomy via Colposcopy

This is an outdated and archaic procedure that has been supplanted by more modern laparoscopic surgery. The EA fails to analyze the impacts of and alternatives to this procedure to mares and never once mentions the availability of more modern techniques! This proposed sterilization experiment is an intra-vaginal complex surgical procedure, which is hardly ever performed in domestic horses (never mind in wild ones), due to its inherently dangerous risks.

—The blind nature of this surgery increases the risk of intra-abdominal hemorrhage, but the EA never even addresses this issue or the availability of more modern laparoscopic techniques that allow the surgeon to visualize the abdominal structures.

—The lack of a sterile environment subjects the mares to a high risk of infection, something that is ignored by the EA.

—The procedure carries with it a significant risk of hemorrhage and evisceration (protrusion of the intestines through the surgical incision), which is why it requires strict follow-up care when used in domestic horses, including pain relief and 4-7 days of stall rest, the first 48 hours of which is spent in crossties to prevent the mare from lying down. It is not possible to provide this required post-operative care to wild mares, yet the EA minimizes the impacts of this fact, citing the opinion of an un-named veterinarian, instead of the published science and National Research Council review, which clearly indicate the risks and impacts of this outdated procedure on wild mares.

—The procedure will cause mares in early stages of pregnancy to abort their fetuses and may cause loss of pregnancy for mares in the mid-stage of pregnancy as well. This is unacceptable.

This pursuit of ovariectomy research is directly counter to the recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences National Research Council (NRC) in its 2013 report, "Using Science to Improve the BLM Wild Horse and Burro Program: A Way Forward." That NRC report concluded that: "The possibility that ovariectomy may be followed by prolonged bleeding or peritoneal infection makes it inadvisable for field application."

2. Minimally Invasive Sterilization Techniques

The other sterilization procedures that BLM proposes to research, while less invasive than ovariectomy, should also be abandoned due to the inability to provide post-operative care and the impracticality of implementing these procedures—which have never before been done in wild or domestic horses—on a broad scale in a field

setting. The EA fails to analyze the impacts of precedent-setting procedures that have never before been performed in horses, and as well as the inability to provide required post-operative care. The EA also omits analysis of the economic impacts and practicalities of implementing these procedures on the range.

In proceeding with these experiments, the BLM has ignored the NRC recommendation that these techniques should first be perfected in domestic mares, who can be easily handled and will be accessible for close monitoring and post-operative care, before attempting them in wild horses.

It is unconscionable that the BLM is proceeding with these draconian experiments that endanger the lives of the un-consenting equine subjects and their unborn foals, particularly when a proven non-invasive and safe fertility control method exists in the readily available PZP birth control vaccine. Instead of wasting millions of tax dollars to fund experiments on inhumane and impractical sterilization experiments, the agency should instead focus resources on vaccinating sufficient numbers of mares with the PZP fertility control vaccine, which is documented through 30 years of experience and published science, to be safe, effective, cost-effective and successful in managing wild horse populations.

Again, as a taxpayer and wild horse lover, I am outraged that the BLM is even considering pursuing such inhumane, barbaric and wasteful experimentation on wild horses and I find the BLM's Environmental Analysis of its impacts to be woefully inadequate. As a result, I strongly urge the BLM to abandon these proposed experiments in favor of using proven, more cost-effective and humane fertility control methods.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE SAC AND FOX NATION

On behalf of the Sac and Fox Nation thank you for the opportunity to present our requests for the fiscal year 2017 budgets for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the Indian Health Service (IHS), and for Tribal Environmental Funding. The Sac and Fox Nation is home of Jim Thorpe, one of the most versatile athletes of modern sports who earned Olympic gold medals for the 1912 pentathlon and decathlon.

The Nation supports and appreciates the President's fiscal year 2017 budget proposal for an overall increase of 5 percent for BIA over the fiscal year 2016 enacted level to provide for a total of $2.9 billion dollars. In turn, the Indian Health Service (IHS) would receive a little more than a 13 percent increase bringing the total IHS budget up to $5.2 billion dollars.

Moreover, It is extremely important to express our support of the President's treatment of Contract Support Costs (CSC) as it relates to tribal nations. The President's budget provides for a total of $278 million for the BIA and $800 million for the IHS to fully fund the contract support costs incurred by government contacts. This is a good step in the right direction and provides a substantial increase of $87 million in total over the 2016 appropriations. This increase is critical to meet the demand for the full payment of contract support costs for all of the Nations who are owed a trust responsibility by the United States.

In general, all tribal programs including BIA and IHS line items should be exempt from any budget recessions and discretionary funding budget reductions. Further, the Nation is extremely concerned about the consequences of the 2013 sequestration and similar future reductions to tribal program funding. We strongly urge Congress to fully restore sequestration cuts from fiscal year 2013 since it threatens the trust responsibility and reduces portions of the budget that are not major contributors to the deficit.

TRIBAL SPECIFIC REQUESTS

I. NATIONAL REQUESTS—BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

1. *Authorize mandatory funding and fully fund Contract Support Costs (CSC).*—The President's budget request for contract support costs is $278.0 million, providing a dramatic increase from the fiscal year 2017 enacted level. This amount is similar to the $277 million recommended in fiscal year 2016 President's budget which was not fully enacted. The second piece of this ongoing budget proposal is to request that strong consideration and support be given to the long term proposal made by the President's budget which would, beginning in 2018, reclassify contract support costs as mandatory funding separated from the rest of the appropriations. This proposal was also included in the fiscal year 2016 proposal but has not yet been approved. We strongly urge you to consider that proposal and approve what has been presented by the President on this particular issue because Contract Support Costs has been a major

and ongoing issue for the better part of a decade. It is time to put the issue to rest by providing enough funding and creating the mandatory funding classification.

2. *Public Safety and Justice—Law and Order—Detention/Corrections: Fully fund all provisions of the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 and the Tribal Provisions in the Violence against Women Act Reauthorization.*—The Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 and the Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization of 2014 were substantial and effective pieces of legislations which changed the face of tribal courts, tribal justice and tribal jurisdiction. The Sac and Fox Nation is proud to have embraced these significant changes to provide a better quality of justice to our jurisdiction. Accordingly, we have enacted the expanded jurisdiction and penalty enhancement provisions into our own laws and started a campaign for awareness to help promote reporting of crimes that may have a serious effect on our Native Women and Children. However, the funding levels for these significant advances have consistently fallen short of the needs. Each year, we have an approximate incarceration budget of $12,000. This budget is eaten up time and again when a person is convicted because we do not have our own facilities or access to Bureau of Prison Facilities to house the inmates. Instead, we rely on our county facilities who charge us a rate of $33–$78 dollars per day to house a prisoner. At these costs, our annual budget is eaten up in a flash. With a lack of funding, we are in the same position we were before our abilities were expanded because we cannot house those persons we convict.

   Moreover, in putting the provisions of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization of 2014 in place, we now have serious burdens on the tribal justice programs which were not originally present. We must provide for bar licensed public defenders in any case where a non-indian has come under our jurisdiction. This is both costly and, on occasion, prohibitive to our process because we are not funded enough to have a full time public defender on call whenever there is a need. A serious increase in funding is required in this arena to help ensure that the intent expressed by Congress in enacting these provisions is met. Without an increase in funding, there is no hope of these programs succeeding and taking the burden of these prosecutions off the State or U.S. Attorneys.
3. *Restore 2013 Sequestered Cuts ($119 million) to Tribal Program Funding*
4. *Office of Self-Governance (OSG)—Provide increased funding to the OSG to fully staff the office for the increase in the number of tribes entering Self-Governance.*

II. NATIONAL REQUESTS—INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE

1. *Authorize mandatory funding and fully fund Contract Support Costs (CSC).*—The President's fiscal year 2017 budget proposal fully funds the estimated need for CSC at $800 million, a significant increase over the levels of funding from fiscal year 2016. The estimated increase includes funding for new and expanded contracts and compacts. The budget also requests that CSC be reclassified to a mandatory appropriation beginning in fiscal year 2018. We at the Sac and Fox Nation strongly urge you to consider allocating all the requested funds in this area and making these appropriations mandatory and separate in the future. Our health and the access of our Native People to healthcare is a serious and major concern all around Indian Country. It is always prominent for us because we have so many people in rural communities who need greater access to medical care. Fully funding contract support costs and making them mandatory serves to take pressure off tribal nations who have a lack of certainty in their medical services when they are not sure if the funding will be there or not. When there is certainty, it allows programs like ours to expand both services and locations to provide better care within reach of our people.
2. *Restore 2013 Sequestered Cuts ($220 Million) to Tribal Health Services;*
3. *+$377 million over the fiscal year 2016 President's proposal budget for IHS Mandatory Funding (maintain current services and improve access to healthcare).*—Mandatories are unavoidable and include medical and general inflation, pay costs, contract support costs, phasing in staff for recently constructed facilities, and population growth. Providing the increase in funding in this area is critical to the provision of preventive care and addressing the growing issues tribal nations are having with aging populations and diabetes. We also strongly encourage you to consider and approve this increase to provide tribal nations with a level of funding that is necessary to maintain care of the millions of members who come to our clinics. It is critical to remember that we care for the medical needs of these patients from start to finish. Their vision, dental and medical services are seen to with our funds. If they need a

specialist or surgery for a critical issues, we contract out those services and make sure that they are getting what they need and have a continuity of care that will give them certainty and improve their quality of life. Funding is critical to meet all the demands in this area;

4. *Restore $6 million to the Office of Tribal Self-Governance (OTSG) to fulfill legal requirements under Title V of Public Law 106–260 which increased the responsibilities of OTSG.*

III. NATIONAL REQUEST—ENVIRONMENT ISSUES

1. *Tribal General Assistance Program (GAP).*—The Presidents fiscal year 2017 budget provides for the much needed increase in the GAP Funding. It sets the level of funding for this program at $96.4 million from the EPA which is a dramatic increase of $31 million over the fiscal year 2016 funding levels. The EPA has decided to enforce a new interpretation of the General Assistance Program (GAP) which prohibits tribal nations from using any GAP money from being used for labor, handling, sorting, weighting and transportation of waste and recyclables. This means that the tribal nations recycling programs are in jeopardy because there will no longer be funds to carry out these functions. These programs benefit the tribal complexes but also provide for drop off points for members and the community along with special community outreach events dealing with e waste and other recyclables. Specifically, we would like to ask for a reversal of this interpretation or a line item dedicated to funding recycling departments work to allow these programs to continue. $10,000 would be sufficient.
2. *Funding for Tribal Capacity to Regulate by Building Sanitation Facilities.*—The President's fiscal year 2017 budget proposal provides that $103 million dollars be allocated, through the EPA, to assist tribal nations in building out their capacity and infrastructure for health and environmental regulation. This money is currently being proposed for the construction of sanitation facilities. I bring this up on behalf of the Sac and Fox Nation because we are one of the tribes that may be directly affected by this funding. It is desperately needed. Currently the SFN is not able to receive a large amount of funding because there are not houses located on or around our complex. The reason that homes have not been located here is the toxic water which was polluted by oil companies. Our land was used for years by oil companies, like Tenneco, in an unsafe manner. Their leakage of chemicals in the ground water made it highly toxic. A state that is unlikely to be naturally cleared up for another 100 years. Because of that, our entire complex has to run from water pumps on other pieces of property which get transmitted to a water tower. Should our pumps go down for any reason, our complex would be completely without water. Moreover, In order to build homes on our land, we need to have a waste water treatment plan that could service our community. However, the SFN is subject the "midnight rider" restrictions which force us to go through the State system and allows the State to monitor all of our environmental issues. We would like to ask for action on that midnight rider which is a direct attack on our sovereignty and for funding to make this treatment plants construction, operation and training possible.
3. *Allowing Tribal Nations to Compact with the EPA Under ISDEAA Title VI.*—Similar to the new legislation allowing tribal nations to compact and directly receive funds for transportation, we need to be able to compact for the EPA programs and funding with an appropriate compact that would allow us the flexibility to put the monies allocated on environmental issues to the best use in our areas without interference from the States or the Federal bureaucracies.

IV. TRIBAL SPECIFIC REQUEST—$4.95 Million to Fully Fund Operations of the Sac and Fox Nation Juvenile Detention Center (SFNJDC)—Bureau of Indian Affairs—Public Safety and Justice—Office of Justice Services—Detention/Corrections Account

In 1996, the Sac and Fox Nation Juvenile Detention Center (SFNJDC) opened its doors as the first regional juvenile facility specifically designed for American Indians/Alaska Natives, as well as the first juvenile facility developed under Public Law 100–472, the Self-Governance Demonstration Project Act.

At that time, the Bureau of Indian Affairs made a commitment to fully fund the SFNJDC operations; however this commitment was never fulfilled. Even though the Nation continues to receive and use Federal dollars to address the issue of juvenile delinquency and detention for tribes in the Southern Plains Region and Eastern Oklahoma Region, it has never received sufficient funds to operate the facility at its fullest potential.

Full funding would allow the Nation to provide full operations including (but not limited to):

—Juvenile detention services to the 46 tribes in Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas;
—Rescue more of our at-risk youth and unserved youth in need of a facility like the SFNJDC;
—Re-establish programs we have lost due to inadequate funding such as: On-site Mental Health Counseling; Transitional Living, Vocational Training, Horticulture, Life Skills, Arts and Crafts, Cultural Education and Activities, Spiritual Growth and Learning;
—Offer job opportunities in an area that is economically depressed; and,
—Fully staff and expand staff training to address high volume of staff turnover which will allow for continuity in operations and service delivery.

At the fiscal year 2016 Regional Budget Formulation Session, these tribes continue to support and endorse full funding for operation of the SFNJDC and included it as a priority in their "Top 10 Budget Increases" for the fiscal year 2016 BIA Budget.

The current funding level represents only approximately 10 percent of what is needed to fully fund the Juvenile Detention Center operations and maintenance. Additional funding in the amount of $4.95 million, over what Sac and Fox already receives in base funding ($508,000), would fully fund the facility at a level to address the need of juvenile delinquency in the tristate area and create opportunities for employment for more tribal members.

The SFNJDC is a 50,000+ square foot, full service, 24 hour, 60 bed (expandable to 120 beds) juvenile detention facility that provides basic detention services to all residents utilizing a classification system based on behavioral needs to include special management, medium and minimal security. Our facility was designed to provide programs including behavioral management, alcohol and substance abuse, spiritual and cultural growth and learning, self-esteem, arts and crafts, health and fitness, horticulture, nutrition, life skills, vocational technical training, counseling, educational programs and a Transitional Living Center.

Through a partnership with the local high school, students are afforded an education at the public school level, including a graduation ceremony and issuance of a certificate upon successfully achieving the State requirements. Additionally, the Sac and Fox Nation has an on-site Justice Center providing Law Enforcement and Tribal Court services and the Nation also operates an on-site health clinic which provides outstanding medical services that include contract service capabilities for optometry, dental and other health-related services.

The lack of adequate funding from the BIA and decreases in base funding have mushroomed into underutilization and erosion of the programs our facility was built to offer. Our current funding levels only allow us to provide an alcohol and substance abuse program, some health and fitness activities and a basic education program. We have lost our programs for vocational training, horticulture, life skills, arts and crafts, on-site counseling and transitional living. The passage of the 2010 Tribal Law and Order Act was applauded by the Sac and Fox Nation because we saw this as an opportunity for the Federal Government to finally step up to its pledge to fully fund the SFNJDC and honor its treaty and trust obligations to our people. However, the lack of funding is also impeding the implementation of TLOA!

In 1996, the SFNJDC was built as a model facility in Indian Country. And nearly 20 years later there is still a need for such a facility to help our youth return to their traditional healing and spiritual ways. As a Self-Governance Tribe we operate our tribal government on the premise that we are the best provider of the services and know which services are most needed in our communities. We saw the increasing need in the 1990's for a facility like the SFNJDC and we acted on our instincts to help our youth by giving them a place to turn their lives around and the access to programs, services and holistic care they needed to recover and heal. Sadly, the number of Native American youth, and juveniles overall requiring detention has not decreased. The Sac and Fox Nation Juvenile Detention Center was built with the same intentions as the Tribal Law and Order Act Long Term Plan to Build and Enhance Tribal Justice Systems today. The SFNJDC has the facility, staffing, ability, commitment and capacity to provide superior detention and rehabilitation services to Native American youth, as well as any youth in the tristate area in need of our services. We do not understand the Federal Government's desire to fund the construction of more detention facilities while our beds remain empty.

Thank you for allowing me to submit these requests on these fiscal year 2017 budgets.

[This statement was submitted by Hon. Chief Kay Rhoads, Principal Chief.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE SHOSHONE-PAIUTE TRIBES OF THE DUCK VALLEY RESERVATION

My name is Lindsey Manning. I am Chairman of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation. Thank you for inviting outside witness testimony concerning the fiscal year 2017 budget for the BIA, BLM and IHS. The Shoshone-Paiute Tribes are grateful for the Senate appropriations subcommittee's long standing support of Indian tribes and for sharing its understanding of Indian Country with your Senate colleagues.

The Duck Valley Reservation is a large, rural and very remote reservation that straddles the Idaho-Nevada border. It encompasses 450 square miles in Elko County, Nevada and Owyhee County, Idaho. The reservation is 140 miles from Boise, Idaho, and 100 miles from Elko, Nevada. Many of our 2,000 tribal members make their living as farmers and ranchers, though a number of them are employed by the tribes. We assume most duties of the BIA and IHS under self-governance compacts, although the BIA continues to provide law enforcement and detention services on our reservation.

In too many instances, however, our success in these areas is largely dependent on Federal appropriations which, in turn, determine whether economic and social conditions on the Duck Valley Indian Reservation improve or worsen. While we contribute tribal resources to these endeavors as best we can, we look to our Federal partner for support. If we fall short in available funding, our members suffer. For this reason, we support the President's fiscal year 2017 budget request for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Indian Health Service (IHS). Without sustained growth in these Federal programs, we cannot meet the needs of our reservation. We encourage this subcommittee to build on the proposed increases in the President's budget for these essential tribal programs.

Our priorities for fiscal year 2017 include:

1. *Increase BIA Road Maintenance Program funds (Eastern Nevada BIA Roads Program of the Western Regional Office).*—We respectfully ask for at least a $9 million increase in the BIA Road Maintenance Program from within planned increases to the Indian Affairs budget so that the BIA Eastern Nevada Agency Roads Department may purchase a road grader, backhoe and 10-wheel dump truck. The 1980's blade road grader has broken down again and needs replacing. Likewise, the 1980's backhoe is also outdated and parts are a challenge to find. The employees are embarrassed to haul the backhoe in for repairs when needed because it is so old and worn (40 years old—like the grader). They need a dump truck because they do not have one. A modern 10-wheel dump truck is needed. Our region has the largest percentage of BIA-owned roads at 21 percent. The program increase we request will help our region tremendously.

Even the administration acknowledges in its fiscal year 2017 Budget Justification that current Road Maintenance Program appropriations allow the BIA and tribes to maintain only 16 percent of BIA-owned roads in "acceptable" (fair or better) condition. That leaves no money to purchase equipment or improve the road condition of poor and failing public BIA-owned roads.

The BIA Eastern Nevada Agency covers the roads maintenance need for the 600 miles of public roads on the Duck Valley Reservation and the road maintenance needs on the Goshute Indian Reservation, the South Fork Reservation, Wells Colony, Battle Mountain Colony and the Elko Colony. All these Indian lands and public roads are hundreds of mile apart and cover all the area of north eastern Nevada. Increased Road Maintenance funding will improve road safety.

The BIA Eastern Nevada Agency is responsible for the roads of the colonies and reservations. The Colonies and South Fork Reservation receive funds from the Agency for tending to maintenance needs as best as possible (only approx. $70,000 total for all annually), which is woefully inadequate. The BIA Roads crew is called upon to maintain the roads through asphalt and gravel patch work in the summer and snow removal in the winter months. This year the blade broke down and is still in need of repairs—which are constant.

2. *Increase funding for the BIA Public Safety and Special Initiatives Program.*—The BIA struggles to provide adequate law enforcement on our remote reservation. For that reason, we don't understand the administration's proposal to cut Public Safety and Justice funding. We need more police and corrections officers, yet the administration proposes only a $9,000 increase for the Indian Police Academy budget of $4.8 million. Nor do we understand how a cut of $4 million to the Public Safety and Justice programs advances capacity building among tribes to improve law enforcement and tribal justice. We are one of three tribes in a pilot program funded under the BIA's "Law Enforcement Special Initiatives" program. Under this pro-

gram, we receive $250,000 in additional recurring funding to reduce recidivism on the Duck Valley Reservation. The Special Initiatives program is essentially funded at the same level for fiscal year 2017 as it was for fiscal year 2016. If we are to address public safety, we need more police, tribal courts and adequately staffed and operated detention centers.

We further urge the subcommittee to include statutory language to make clear that "Law Enforcement Special Initiatives" funds may be used for the purchase or lease of temporary trailers or modular units to house personnel associated with law enforcement, corrections, probation, tribal courts and other professionals serving tribal offenders. For rural communities like Duck Valley, housing is often the linchpin to program success. This request will give us the flexibility we need to use Special Initiatives funding for housing law enforcement personnel.

3. *Fund the Owyhee Initiative within the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).*—The Owyhee Initiative is a joint effort by ranchers, recreationalists, county and State officials, and the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes to protect, manage and appropriately use public lands in Owyhee County, Idaho. In 2009, Congress passed the Omnibus Public Land Management Act, Public Law 111–1. Since 2010, we have worked jointly with BLM to protect cultural resources and increase public understanding and appreciation of these resources. Increased recreational use and encroachment by Boise residents within the Owyhee River Wilderness Area and other Federal lands, however, place these resources under stress. Let us help understaffed BLM officials.

One-time BLM funding a number of years ago allowed us to purchase two Cessna planes and ATV equipment and hire one Chief Ranger and a Cultural Resources Director to patrol public lands and report violations of cultural and religious sites to BLM officials. We work closely with BLM and Owyhee County officials to coordinate compatible recreation use within BLM lands in Owyhee County, especially within the wilderness areas where we seek to protect cultural resource sites important to our tribes. The Ranger and Director also spot and report wildfires to BLM officials before the fires can do great damage to sensitive, remote public lands.

We seek recurring BLM funds to continue this important work to protect cultural sites and establish a Reserve Ranger Program to engage tribal youth in cultural and related activities during the summer. The Chief Ranger and Cultural Resources Director are near retirement and it is essential that we hire and train replacement staff, including a pilot, to continue their important work for our tribes. We need funds to hire an Assistant Director, one adult Tribal Ranger and two part-time Youth Rangers, train a qualified applicant as an additional pilot, purchase two more ATVs and two camp trailers to permit tribal personnel to remain in the field and overhaul the two Cessna planes per FAA regulations. We are currently constructing a hanger at the Owyhee Airport to centralize our operation and increase surveillance flights over Owyhee County. We contribute nearly 50 percent of the required budget but cannot sustain this important program without Federal support. Our plan requires $600,000 to fully fund the above activities.

We also support the administration's $1.0 million increase for BLM Cultural Resources Management and other BLM accounts used to manage and protect archaeological and historic properties on public lands. BLM lands contain the remnants of campsites, villages, hunting blinds and rock inscriptions that tell the story of the Shoshone-Paiute and other tribes. After speaking with Shoshone-Bannock Tribal officials, together with northern tier Nevada tribes (including the Te-Moak, Battle Mountain, South Fork and Goshute tribes), we seek BLM funds to form a tribal work group to spread best practices for cultural resources management and protection that we have learned over the last 20 years. We would be a good candidate for a BLM grant. It would be a wise investment to fund a multi-tribal task force to propose and design strategies for on the ground protection of Native American cultural resources for the Upper Great Basin and High Plateau of the tri-State area of Nevada, Oregon and Idaho.

4. *Telecommunications (fiber optics).*—The tribes continue to need fiber infrastructure over five miles for connectivity among Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Tribal Headquarters, Detention Center, Fire Station and the Owyhee Community Health Facility. The health center serves as the Wide Area Network (WAN) hub for the tribes' and health center's computer network. Connectivity among these facilities and programs would alleviate the long-term monthly recurring cost we pay to an Ethernet Circuit provider ($96,000 annually). We require $500,000 in Federal funding to construct new fiber networks and cover construction inspection fees. We do not have BIE-funded schools on Duck Valley so our children will not benefit from the administration's $16.7 million increase to extend broadband to BIE schools. We urge the subcommittee to increase appropriations within the BIA and IHS budgets so that

Duck Valley can improve our telecommunications networks. Education IT is not the only program in need of an upgrade.

5. *East Fork Owyhee Salmon Steelhead Recovery and Reintroduction Project.*—We seek to permanently return Chinook salmon and steelhead trout to Duck Valley through an innovative "trap-and-haul" program. Dam construction along the Columbia and Snake Rivers eliminated salmon from our reservation for 87 years. Duck Valley is unique in that it supports two major tributaries to the Snake River. In 2014, we financed a pilot study that found that habitat in the East Fork of the Owyhee River supports a summer rearing capacity of between 3,300 and 43,000 juvenile steelhead trout and from 3,600 to 41,000 Chinook salmon. This summer, we returned 200 Chinook salmon to Duck Valley and spear fished nearly all of them. It was a joyous event to have salmon return to the reservation. With $210,000 in funding for the next 3 years we can complete our habitat surveys of the East Fork Owyhee River, including obtaining data on non-summer river conditions, as well as an assessment of the Bruneau River habitat.

We propose to transport adult fish from Lower Granite Dam or Hells Canyon Dam and release the fish above China Dam into the East Fort Owyhee River to spawn. Emigrating juvenile fish would later be captured and released downstream from passage carriers on the Snake River to complete their migration to the Pacific Ocean. Adult salmon originating from the East Fork Owyhee River would later be captured in the lower Snake River and transported upstream.

We urge the Senate subcommittee to support the President's $24 million increase to the BIA's Trust-Natural Resources Management program budget, including the Tribal Management/Development Program and Fish, Wildlife & Parks program. Tribes contract a significant part of the Natural Resources Management funds. An increase to the BIA's budget can help us with this innovative project to return salmon and steelhead trout to the Duck Valley Reservation.

6. *Native Plant Program/Greenhouse.*—In cooperation with BLM, the tribes gather, propagate and make available seed and other native plant materials that are indigenous to the region. Through a series of assistance agreements with BLM, we built three greenhouses and are growing seedlings (including sagebrush and bitterbrush seedlings) for planting on adjacent public lands. This program assists BLM and other agencies in their efforts to restore lands damaged by wildfires and helps employ tribal members. For fiscal year 2017, we seek funding to build a facility to house equipment to dry, clean and store seed and hire part-time greenhouse staff to focus on marketing and finances. We plan to have 80,000 containerized grasses and shrub seedlings available for sale, together with willow and other riparian plant cuttings and local vegetables for sale and distribution through our "Honor Our Elders" program. We seek Interior Department appropriations of $205,000 over the next 5 years to expand our program and be a reliable supplier of native plants and seedlings on BLM-managed public lands.

7. *IHS.*—We fully support the President's fiscal year 2017 budget increase of $377 million to the Indian Health Service (IHS), especially in the area of clinical services, including Purchased/Referred Care, Contract Support Costs (CSC) and facilities construction. We also support the administration's request to shift CSCs to a "mandatory" appropriation but would want to ensure that the shift is permanent in nature.

We urge the Senate appropriations subcommittee to build on the President's fiscal year 2017 budget request to meet tribal health and safety needs that strengthen our community. Thank you for affording the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes the opportunity to submit written testimony.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE SKOKOMISH TRIBE OF WASHINGTON STATE

The Skokomish Tribe would like to thank the subcommittee for the opportunity to present written testimony on the fiscal year 2017 appropriations for the Interior Department, Indian Health Service and Environmental Protection Agency.

The Skokomish Indian Tribe is responsible for providing essential governmental services to the residents of the Skokomish Indian Reservation. We are a rural community located at the base of the Olympic Peninsula with a population of over 2,000 people, including approximately 700 tribal members. The tribe provides services through various departments including Tribal Administration, Community Development, Information Services, Early Childhood Education (including Head Start), Education, Health Clinic, Housing, Legal, Natural Resources, Public Safety, Public Works, and Tuwaduq Family Services. Adequate Federal funds are critical to the tribe's ability to address the extensive unmet needs of our community.

I. BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

Law Enforcement.—The Skokomish Department of Public Safety (SDPS) provides 24/7 law enforcement services for the tribe. SDPS is responsible for patrolling and enforcing justice both within the tribe's 5,300-acre reservation, and throughout the tribe's 2.2 million-acre treaty area where the tribe has treaty-protected hunting, fishing and gathering rights.

Today, 7 officers are available for day-to-day patrol duties. As a result, individual officers are spread far too thin over an 8-hour shift and often work alone. During the salmon harvest season, SDPS must post officers simultaneously at several on and off reservations sites. Some of these sites require multiple officers. This taxes staffing levels dramatically and exposes both community members in need of assistance and SDPS officers to increased risks of harm. Unfortunately, this is a daily reality for SDPS officers. To meet mandated responsibilities, we must increase staffing. Vacancies due to illness, training and other leave continue to force the Chief of Police to respond to calls for service and to fill patrol shifts. A very active Community Policing program suffers as budget limitations severely restrict overtime and officer availability. With the limited amount we receive as a self-governance tribe, we have to use tribal funds to hire the 6 officers we use for regular patrol and natural resource enforcement.

Thus, the tribe urges the subcommittee to appropriate additional funding for criminal investigations and police services. The BIA has requested essentially level funding in this program when the need throughout Indian Country is far greater.

Tribal Courts.—We are deeply concerned that the BIA has proposed an $8.2 million cut in tribal court funding for tribes in Public Law 280 States. For too long the BIA failed to provide funding to tribes in Public Law 280 States and we suffered from a lack judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys and probations officers. Last year, Congress recognized this deficiency and provided $10 million for the first time to address our need. We urge Congress to maintain this funding level in fiscal year 2017. With regard to the fiscal year 2016 funding, we are concerned that the BIA has yet to engage in consultation with tribes as to how this funding will be allocated. We have heard that one proposal the BIA is considering is to use this funding to build capacity within the BIA. We would urge the subcommittee to tell the BIA to develop a plan to allocate the fiscal year 2016 funds to a greater number of tribes and not keep it for itself.

The Skokomish Tribal Court handles several different kinds of cases. These include Civil, Criminal and Indian Child Welfare cases. The tribal court distinguishes four kinds of criminal cases: Juvenile, Fishing, Traffic and other criminal cases. As of January 1, 2015, there were 11 open Juvenile Criminal cases, 51 open Criminal Traffic cases, 65 open fishing cases, and 68 open General Criminal cases. Indian Child Welfare cases include Child in Need of Care cases and Guardianships (long-term). In February 2016, the tribe passed revisions to the ICW ordinance and passed a new School Attendance ordinance. The school attendance ordinance focuses on efforts to encourage school attendance and enforce mandatory attendance requirements. The new ordinance includes provisions to bring matters to tribal court for enforcement. This means more cases will be filed in tribal court. As of January 1, 2016, the tribal court has 31 active Child in Need of Care cases and 53 active Dependency cases.

Natural Resources.—We strongly support the President's proposal for funding Trust-Natural Resources Management programs. Increased funding to foster sustainable stewardship and development of natural resources and support fishing, hunting and gathering rights on and off-reservation is essential to our people who depend on natural resources for their livelihood.

Fish hatchery maintenance and fish hatchery operations funds are invaluable for supporting the Federal Government's investment in tribal hatcheries. Most tribal hatcheries are underfunded and each year brings more decay to the facilities. Adequate funding for hatchery maintenance is imperative to prevent these important pieces of the salmon restoration puzzle from crumbling away. Because of habitat destruction, the only reason we continue to have salmon for treaty-harvest activities is through the operation of salmon hatcheries. Congress cannot allow the main pillar of this all important treaty right to take a reduction in funding. We urge Congress to increase funding for this critical tribal program.

A few years ago the tribe was able to cobble together a wildlife program consisting of one biologist and one technician. The program is partially funded by Timber, Fish, and Wildlife funds of about $41,000, with the tribe scratching to find the remaining $82,000. Wildlife grants are few and far between because the focus is so much on salmon. We obviously cannot reduce salmon funding; rather, the United States must be less myopic and realize that tribes also need wildlife program funds

not only to support biologists, but additional funding is required to dedicated wildlife enforcement officers who will not only enforce the tribes' regulations, but ensure that poaching of the wildlife resources does not occur from outside entities who sometimes fail to recognize tribal treaty rights. We request additional funds for tribes in the Stevens Treaty Areas to have a base wildlife program funding in the amount of $240,000. Without a more robust program, the wildlife populations will continue to decline.

The tribe has been under attack by shellfish growers who blatantly steal the treaty-protected oyster and clam resources in Hood Canal. It is imperative that the Federal Government provide monetary support so the tribe may increase its enforcement presence and seek reparations though the courts. As with wildlife, shellfish issues are often overlooked because of the popularity of salmon, but the availability of this equally important resource to the tribe is dwindling and action must be taken now to prevent a further decline. We suggest an increase to allow for each "Bolt" tribe an additional $250,000 for shellfish management and rights protection in fiscal year 2017. This would allow for additional population surveyors, harvest monitors, and enforcement officers.

II. INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE

The Skokomish Tribe supports the President's fiscal year 2017 budget proposal for an overall funding increase of $402 million for the Indian Health Service. We support the increase of $82 million for contract support costs. This is a major victory for tribes and the support of the Congress and administration is greatly appreciated. The next step is to adopt a permanent funding policy that is not overly complex and burdensome for tribes.

We operate a small ambulatory health program with a staff of 28 people. As a tribally run clinic, we provide direct care services as well as purchased/referred care, formerly known as contract healthcare. Our health program integrates medical, dental, and behavioral health services (mental health and substance use disorder) and we are therefore very supportive of the $21.4 million request to support the integration of these services. We have identified a need to support the full implementation of Electronic Health Records (EHR) as part of this effort and hope these funds will support that endeavor. This year we will begin to provide some mental health services using the Indian Health Service's Tele-Behavioral Health Center of Excellence and are glad to see the continued funding for this program.

We fully support the budget's request of $48 million increase for Purchased and Referred Care. For the current fiscal year, Congress was not able to increase funding for the program and now we are forced to reduce referrals due to medical inflation costs.

We are pleased to see the funding increase ($15 million) under the Gen-I (Generation Indigenous) initiative with increased funding for youth substance abuse and suicide prevention. We continue to see the effects of heroin use and opioid abuse in all ages at an alarming rate. The Skokomish Tribe struggles to find the resources to adequately address the treatment and long term needs of those members struggling with addiction. We see the need for more long term treatment facilities to address the needs of individuals who can benefit from such treatment programs so that they may continue their journey of wellness far beyond the current 30 to 45 day in-patient treatment process. This short-term stay is often not adequate time to be healed from addiction and our tribal members often return to the community only to re-establish their old habits and slip back into addiction. If the tribe is to reduce recidivism and spare tribal youth from witnessing self-destructive behavior, Congress must provide greater resources to programs with a proven track record of success.

We support the small ambulatory facility increase of $10 million since this is the only IHS funding that Northwest Tribes have access to due to the current facilities priority system that favors larger health programs.

III. TRIBAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAMS

In 1995, Congress began encouraging tribes to assume historic preservation responsibilities as part of self-determination. These programs conserve fragile places, objects and traditions crucial to tribal culture, history and sovereignty. As was envisioned by Congress, more tribes qualify for funding every year. Paradoxically, the more successful the program becomes, the less each tribe receives to maintain professional services, ultimately crippling individual tribal programs. Interior anticipates there will be 155 tribes operating the program in fiscal year 2017 with each tribe receiving less than $55,000. This amount is barely enough to fund one position. We support the $2 million proposed increase for this important program.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

We concur with the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) and the request to permanently lift the funding cap on the Clean Water State Revolving Fund Tribal Set-Aside for wastewater facilities. The Skokomish Tribe needs approximately $12 million to fully build our core reservation wastewater plant which will service approximately 85 percent of the on-reservation housing. The tribe has had to put on hold design of the Core Reservation Wastewater Treatment plant until we can identify possible funding sources.

V. CONTRACT SUPPORT COSTS—BIA AND HIS

We fully support a permanent, indefinite appropriation for contract support costs that ensures full funding for contract support costs without the reduction of direct services to any tribe.

VI. GENERATION INDIGENOUS

We have placed a high emphasis on our youth and their education. Through collaborative efforts by our departments and with other tribes, we have been able to sponsor culture camps, sports and leadership camps, and other positive activities that allow our youth to experience various activities. We are proud that this year we have 13 tribal and community members who are working steadfastly to graduate from our local high schools while being active in extra-curricular activities. We support the White House initiative to improve the lives of Native Youth who are our future.

In 2008, the National Congress of American Indians, the National Indian Health Board, the National Indian Education Association, the National Indian Child Welfare Association, and the National Council of Urban Indian Health created a joint policy initiative. The initiative proposed specific recommendations to improve the social, emotional, mental, physical, and economic health of children and youth, allowing them to achieve their learning and developmental potential. Using the First Kids 1st strategies and recommendations, the tribe has put together a workgroup to identify areas where programs can assist tribal families. The workgroup provides data and ideas to the tribe's grants writers to research possible funding sources to implement new programs to help families and youth. Thank you for affording the Skokomish Tribe the opportunity to submit written testimony.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS

The Society of American Foresters (SAF), with 12,000 professionals representing all disciplines in the forestry profession, promotes science-based, sustainable management and stewardship of the Nation's public and private forests. SAF appreciates this opportunity to submit written public testimony on fiscal year 2017 appropriations because sufficient funding for the USDA Forest Service (USFS) and the Department of Interior (DOI) is vital to conserving and improving the health and productivity of our Nation's forests.

The American public relies on the 751 million acres of public and private forests in the United States to provide clean and abundant air and water, forest products, fish and wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, forage and range resources, energy, and scenic beauty. Managing these legacy resources for multiple uses and important ecosystem services is increasingly difficult with the unprecedented threats posed by wildfire, drought, insects, disease, and invasive species. Maintaining a balance demands that land managers and partner organizations work together to identify innovative ways to maximize values and improve the health of our forests.

SAF's priorities in the fiscal year 2017 budget process impact a range of programs within USFS and DOI. Recognizing fiscal constraints, these requests will assist forest managers in sustaining our Nation's forests and providing a multitude of benefits for generations to come.

SAF TOP PRIORITIES

1. Adopt a long-term solution to wildfire suppression funding that: (1) allows access to disaster funding; (2) minimizes budget transfers; and (3) addresses the compounding erosion of agency budgets over time, with the goal of reinvesting in key programs that would restore forests to healthier conditions.
2. Increase funding levels for USFS Forest and Rangeland Research to no less than $303 million, with no less than $83 million for the Forest Inventory and Analysis Program.

3. Support Bureau of Land Management Public Domain Forestry and Oregon & California Railroad Grant Lands funding levels at no less than $10 million and $113.7 million, respectively.

SAF is the premier national scientific and educational organization representing forestry and related natural resources professionals in the United States. Founded in 1900 by Gifford Pinchot, SAF is the largest professional society for foresters in the world. Our members include public and private sector natural resource professionals, researchers, CEOs, administrators, educators, and students. Just as forests are fundamental to our Nation, so too are the professionals who study, manage, and protect these precious resources. SAF is eager to work with Congress, Federal agencies, and partners to identify reasonable solutions to increase the pace and scale of management on Federal lands, find new ways to work with private landowners, keep forests as forests, incentivize active management, and deliver practical innovations to meet future challenges and market demands.

SAF is pleased with the administration's continued commitment to increasing the pace and scale of management on Federal lands with a USFS harvest target of 3.2 billion board feet for fiscal year 2017. However, with up to 82 million acres in the National Forest System (NFS) still in need of restoration, SAF urges this subcommittee to encourage the agency to use all available tools to implement more projects on Federal lands. USFS can work with rural communities, partners, and industry through collaboratives and other partnerships to meet management goals outlined in forest plans and possibly exceed expectations. New authorizations in the 2014 Farm Bill have the potential to facilitate quicker responses to areas devastated by insects and disease, expand the use of Stewardship Contracting, and take advantage of Good Neighbor Authority and other mechanisms that work across boundaries to achieve shared objectives. In addition, increased investments in NFS Forest Products, Capital Improvement and Maintenance, and the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program could also help to restore more watersheds and support thriving local communities.

Likewise, SAF encourages this subcommittee to recognize the importance of USFS State and Private Forestry (S&PF) programs. The Urban and Community Forestry, Forest Stewardship, Forest Health Management, and Landscape Scale Restoration programs provide important technical and financial assistance to private landowners and the resource managers responsible for managing more than 60 percent of America's forests. Investments in these programs are leveraged by landowners and local organizations, and help to build healthy and thriving forest resources that benefit all citizens and communities across the Nation.

SAF BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

While wildfires predominantly threaten western landscapes and communities, the financial impacts weigh heavily on our whole Nation. All agencies and programs funded through the Interior appropriations bill suffer as wildfire suppression costs continue to rise under the current funding model. The rolling 10-year average has not met annual suppression cost needs since before fiscal year 2002, and the resulting shortfalls—both anticipated and actual— significantly disrupt important forest management projects across the country. We are thankful to the subcommittee for full transfer repayment and increased suppression funding in fiscal year 2016. However, agencies and first responders need a long-term solution that results in stable and predictable budgets. *SAF respectfully requests a solution that: (1) allows access to disaster funding; (2) minimizes transfers; and (3) addresses the compounding erosion of agency budgets over time, with the goal of reinvesting in key programs that would restore forests to healthier conditions.*

A comprehensive approach to averting wildfire threats and improving forest resilience is imperative. The Hazardous Fuels and Fire Risk Management line items in the USFS and DOI budgets are integral to restoring forest health and reducing the costs of wildfire suppression. Through restoring and maintaining fire-resilient landscapes and communities, these programs support the goals of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. SAF appreciates this subcommittee's consistent support for wildfire management and encourages it to allocate funds to address wildfire risks inside and outside the wildland urban interface. While fuels treatments in and around communities and infrastructure are important for the protection of life and property, recent research suggests that backcountry treatments

are equally important to prevent large and destructive wildfires.[1] In addition to preventing and mitigating wildfire risks, these programs serve as an important source of jobs, especially in rural communities, and expand markets for the use of biomass residuals as renewable energy through efforts like the USFS Woody Innovations Grant Program. *SAF supports funding the USFS Hazardous Fuels Program at $479 million and DOI Hazardous Fuels and Resilient Landscapes at $178 million. We also ask that the subcommittee include report language encouraging Federal agencies to coordinate their fuels plans with other planning efforts such as State forestry and conservation plans to facilitate cross-boundary activities and increase the effectiveness of this program.*

Investments in forestry research are essential for the future health and sustainability of the Nation's forests. Although this testimony focuses on USFS Forest and Rangeland Research programs, SAF also recognizes and supports the full array of forestry research efforts led by the Bureau of Land Management, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Geologic Survey, and others including land-grant institutions and other universities. USFS Research and Development (USFS R&D) research conducted at the five USFS research stations, the International Institute of Tropical Forestry, and in the Forest Products Laboratory is undeniably important—functioning as an incubator for new products and ideas; exploring forest ecosystem disturbance response and forest resilience; responding to shifting social demands and demographic changes; quantifying the contributions of forests to air and water quality; and driving practical innovation. In many cases without USFS leadership, investigation of these critical research needs would be left unfulfilled. Having clear and relevant research can also help build consensus on management actions, which allows for more efficient allocation of resources to on-the-ground work if debates over scientific uncertainties and litigation of proposed actions can be avoided.

If forest research capacity in the U.S. continues to decline, SAF is concerned that forest managers will not be properly equipped to meet tomorrow's challenges with current science and technical information. Continuing the trend of reductions in the USFS R&D budget will result in significant gaps in knowledge and mismanagement of resources at a time of unprecedented threats posed by wildfire, drought, insects, disease, and invasive species. *SAF supports a funding level of $303 million for USFS R&D, with particular emphasis on prioritization of research projects uniquely suited to R&D expertise furthering agency and partner objectives.*

SAF strongly supports the funding increase suggested for the USFS R&D Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program. FIA is the backbone of U.S. forestry—providing the only national census of forests across all ownerships. Through FIA, USFS (partnering with State forestry agencies, universities, and the private sector) collects and analyzes forest data to assess trends on issues such as forest health and management, fragmentation and parcelization, and forest carbon sequestration. The data and information collected by FIA serves as the basis for: identifying trends in forest ownership; assessing fish and wildlife habitat; evaluating wildfire, insect, and disease risk; predicting the spread of invasive species; determining capital investment in existing forest products facilities and selecting locations for new forest product facilities; and identifying and responding to priorities identified in State Forest Action Plans. The critical need for current information about the condition of our forests, with greater emphasis on the role of forests in maintaining and improving air quality, underlies the need for FIA program capacity to be increased in fiscal year 2017 and beyond. *SAF requests additional investment in FIA with a funding level of at least $83 million and urges the subcommittee to ensure that this increase not come at the expense of other research programs, and provide direction for future increases to allow the program to keep pace with ever-growing and diverse information needs.*

SAF is concerned with the administration's restructuring of the Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP). As proposed, the JFSP would no longer receive $6.9 million in funding from the Wildland Fire Management budget line item, and would instead receive $3 million in support from the USFS R&D Inventory and Monitoring line item. This shift results in a significant decrease of 3.9 million in program funding. The proposed cuts would negatively impact the research done in collaboration with over 200 Federal agency, university, and nongovernmental partners. Diverting funds from the already constrained USFS R&D budget will reduce JFSP effectiveness, limit cross-deputy area interaction, and hinder exploration of fire research questions important to the USDA, DOI, and partner organizations. *SAF urges the*

[1] "The Efficacy of Fuels Treatments: A Rapid Assessment of the Economic and Ecological Consequences of Alternative Hazardous Fuel Treatments", Northern Arizona University Ecological Restoration Institute, May 2013.

subcommittee to restore the JFSP funding level to $6.9 million under Wildland Fire Management.

In closing, SAF is encouraged by the recognition of the important work of the BLM Public Domain Forestry (PD) program with a funding increase in the President's budget and extension of the Forest Ecosystem Health and Recovery Fund authorization through 2020 in the 2015 Omnibus Appropriations Bill. However, SAF is concerned with the proposed funding reduction for the Oregon & California Railroad Grant Lands (O&C). Though the resource-intensive management plans for the O&C will be released soon, SAF encourages this subcommittee to appropriate robust funding to support efficient and effective plan implementation and monitoring, and help the agency address the administrative and legal challenges that almost always accompany new management plans. *SAF supports the funding level of $10 million for the PD program and $113.7 million for the O&C program. We also urge this subcommittee to extend authorization of the Forest Ecosystem Health and Recovery Fund beyond 2020.*

Thank you for your consideration of these important requests. SAF and its extensive network of forestry and natural resources professionals stand ready to assist with further development and implementation of these efforts and ideas.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE SOUTHCENTRAL FOUNDATION

My name is Douglas Eby and I am the Vice President of Medical Services at Southcentral Foundation (SCF). SCF is a tribal organization that compacts with the Secretary of Health and Human Services under Title V of the Indian Self-Determination Act (ISDA) to provide primary care services to Alaska Native patients within the Anchorage area and throughout the region. SCF acts pursuant to tribal authority granted by Cook Inlet Region, Inc., an Alaska Native regional corporation designated by Congress as an Indian tribe for contracting purposes under the ISDA.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Southcentral Foundation and the 150,000 Native American people we serve. For more than 25 years SCF has carried out Indian Health Service (IHS) programs under ISDA agreements. SCF provides medical, dental, optometry, behavioral health, and substance abuse treatment services to over 52,000 Alaska Native and American Indian beneficiaries living within the Municipality of Anchorage, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough to the north, and nearby villages. SCF also provides services to an additional 13,000 residents of 55 Alaska villages covering an area exceeding 100,000 square miles. Finally, SCF provides statewide tertiary OB/GYN and pediatric services for approximately 150,000 Alaska Native people. To do all this, SCF employs 2,000 people.

SCF requests that in fiscal year 2017 Congress (1) focus on general IHS program increases especially related to Purchased and Referred Care; (2) support increases in behavioral health including funding for the Substance Use and Suicide Prevention Program (currently called the Methamphetamine and Suicide Prevention Initiative); (3) clarify these programs are entitled to contract support costs when operated by tribes; and (4) support existing language for fully funding contract support costs, while removing a disruptive "proviso" from the bill.

IHS has divided its budget request into two parts: (1) an additional $159 million for current services to fully fund medical inflation and pay raises, and to partially fund population growth, and (2) $89.7 million to fund specific program increases, including a $48 million increase in purchased and referred care. While we support all these increases, Purchased and Referred Care (PRC) is especially important in the continuum of services we currently offer. When one of our patients needs specialty care outside our capacity, we use PRC funding to contract with outside clinics and hospitals to provide the service. Although we strive to provide as many services as possible within SCF, we still rely on non-SCF providers. Unfortunately, PRC funding does not keep pace with the rising costs of healthcare in other systems. As a result, sometimes we are unable to provide the necessary care. We encourage the subcommittee to support the PRC increase.

SCF also strongly supports the proposed Substance Use and Suicide Prevention Program (combining the Methamphetamine and Suicide Prevention Initiative and the Domestic Violence Prevention Initiative.) These initiatives provide crucial support for our efforts to combat two blights that disproportionately afflict our community. At SCF we implemented the Family Wellness Warriors Initiative to provide a means for organizations and individuals to effectively address the spiritual, emotional, mental and physical effects of domestic violence, abuse and neglect. MSPI and DVPI funding has been critical to SCF's success in this area.

On a related note, SCF also strongly supports the President's requested increases for behavioral health, especially given our focus on youth. As the subcommittee

knows, SCF's Pathway Home is a voluntary, comprehensive, and individualized mental health program for adolescents from 13 to 18 years old. Its mission is to create a loving and supportive community environment where Alaska Native children can develop into independent, service-minded and productive leaders. Referrals come from a variety of sources, including clinicians, case managers, social workers, counselors, parents, teens or State agencies. The Pathway Home team of clinicians and employees helps youth improve their mental and behavioral health, physical and spiritual wellness, and academic and/or vocational skills. Through a combination of individual, group and educational settings, youth learn healthier methods of managing their behavior, handling conflict and anger, progressing in their recovery, and improving relationships with family members.

Another youth-focused program is our RAISE Program, which provides opportunities for on-the-job work experience in a setting focused on Alaska Native cultural values. RAISE is designed to develop leadership skills in Alaska Native and American Indian youth, and offers summer, winter and graduate sessions. Each session exposes participants to health-related careers and workplace expectations, while supporting youth in both personal and professional development. The President's proposed behavioral health increases will enable RAISE and Pathway to continue making progress with our Alaska Native youth.

One aspect of the MSPI/DVPI (or new Substance Use and Suicide Prevention Program) that warrants special discussion concerns how these funds are currently handled. Congress first appropriated MSPI funds in 2008, and first appropriated DVPI funds in 2009. Congress directed that both of these funds should go to the areas that needed them the most, and IHS distributed these funds to contracting and compacting tribes and tribal organizations through amendments to each tribe's ISDA contract or compact. These amendments always occurred late in the fiscal year, long after the CSC appropriations had already been spent, so the agency always recognized the tribe's CSC need associated with these programs but it could never actually pay that need. But 2 years ago, just when full CSC funding became a reality, IHS changed course and declared that these programs were "special initiatives" for which contract support costs were not available. This cost us hundreds of thousands of dollars. Almost as badly, IHS stopped adding these funds to our compact and started issuing a separate grant with its own reporting and accounting rules. So now the program is more even costly and complicated to run, and still we receive no contract support cost dollars. All this is deeply contrary to both the spirit and the letter of the Indian Self-Determination Act. We join many other tribes in asking the subcommittee to eliminate the "notwithstanding" clause and direct IHS to treat these funds just like other IHS program funds operated under the ISDA.

Finally, SCF wants to specially thank this subcommittee for all the good work you have done to make history on fully funding contract support costs. We applaud your success in creating a separate CSC account in the 2016 Omnibus, and in providing an indefinite appropriation so that CSC will always be fully funded without threatening other programs. These two steps ensure that the Nation will not be jeopardizing other important health services in order to fully pay for CSC, as mandated by statute and affirmed by the Supreme Court. Southcentral Foundation deeply appreciates the stance you have taken on CSC to fully honor the United States' contractual obligations to tribes and organizations like ours. SCF is committed to providing health services on behalf of IHS at a level that far exceeds the quality of what the agency provides directly, and we appreciate that the subcommittee is equally committed to honoring the Government's contractual obligations to SCF.

I do need to point out one accounting problem created by the Appropriations Act's inclusion of a new "proviso" addressing the tracking of unspent contract support cost funds. This proviso makes accounting for those funds far more complex than it was, without any countervailing benefit to the Federal Government. It is also unnecessary, because existing law already addresses unspent funds and requires that those funds must be spent in the following year to carry out the contract. Existing law is sufficient, and the proviso about unspent funds should therefore be removed in fiscal year 2017.

On a related note, we also respectfully request that the subcommittee direct the Secretary of the Health and Human Services to promptly file all late Contract Support Cost Shortfall Reports. The last report to Congress on this matter covered fiscal year 2011 and is more than 5 years old. This information is not only critical; it is congressionally mandated by section 106(c) of the Indian Self-Determination Act.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Southcentral Foundation and the 150,000 people we serve.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE SOUTHEAST ALASKA REGIONAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM

My name is Charles Clement and I serve as the President/CEO for the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC). I am honored for the opportunity to provide testimony about SEARHC's priorities for the fiscal year 2017 appropriations for the Indian Health Service, and I thank Chairwoman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall, and all members of the subcommittee for the opportunity to do so.

SEARHC is an inter-tribal consortium of 15 federally recognized tribes situated along the southeast panhandle of Alaska. Our service area stretches over 35,000 square miles, and with no roads connecting many of the rural communities we serve, we work hard to provide quality health services to our communities. These services include medical, dental, mental health, physical therapy, radiology, pharmacy, laboratory, nutritional, audiology, optometry and respiratory therapy services. We also provide supplemental social services, substance abuse treatment, health promotion services, emergency medical services, environmental health services and traditional Native healing. We provide these services through a network of community clinics and the Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital located in Sitka, Alaska.

The urgent healthcare needs across Indian Country are well known and the challenges in meeting those needs are heightened in areas like southeast Alaska where communities are isolated and transportation and facilities costs are high. SEARHC applauds the administration for recognizing these needs by increasing the IHS budget. It is vital that these increases be preserved. But even these increases will not be enough to allow SEARHC and other tribal organizations to meet the healthcare needs of the people we serve. We will meet these challenges, but to do so we will need your help.

FACILITIES FUNDING

Our greatest need is for increased facilities funding. We have repeatedly reported to this subcommittee on this topic, and another year of use has only increased those needs. At 67 years old, the Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital is the oldest facility in Alaska and one of the oldest in the Nation. It was constructed toward the end of World War II by the War Department and focused largely on tuberculosis treatment through the 1950s. The hospital is in poor condition and ill-suited to a 21st century model of healthcare dominated by primary and ambulatory care facilities. Replacing or repairing Mt. Edgecumbe should be a priority, together with developing a critical access hospital to serve the Prince of Wales Island communities (including Craig and Klawock).

According to IHS's Facilities Engineering Deficiency System, the cost to update SEARHC's facilities alone is $29,600,000. And we are not unique. Estimates place IHS facilities funding needs at $8.13 billion, a number that keeps rising because IHS lacks sufficient funding to maintain these facilities. We do our best to patch the problem, but the bottom line is that without adequate facilities, SEARHC cannot provide adequate services.

We request the Committee do four things.

Replace aging IHS facilities. We need a commitment from Congress to start replacing aging IHS facilities. This will require reordering the current facilities priority list, which was created on a first come, first served basis. All rankings should be based on true need.

Increase facilities funding in the current budget proposal. The President's budget contains modest funding increases for facilities needs, totaling $46.7 million. This proposed increase, while welcome, would address only a tiny fraction of the $8.13 billion needed. Similarly, the President's budget proposal for increasing Maintenance and Improvement funds by $3.4 million for a total of $77 million in M&I funding fails to address the overwhelming need. With the critical maintenance backlog of $467 million, this means that $390 million of critical maintenance is not going to be addressed. We strongly encourage the subcommittee to increase the facilities funding in the IHS budget.

The Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA) renovation program. We recommend the subcommittee provide funding for tribally renovated IHS buildings, pursuant to section 1634 of the IHCIA. The IHCIA allows tribes to renovate IHS facilities and authorizes IHS to provide staffing and equipment for the newly renovated structure. However, Congress has never funded this program. We strongly urge the subcommittee to realize the promise of this program by providing $10 million to fund it. We would be delighted to do an Alaska demonstration project for this new initiative.

Joint Venture Projects. The JV project provides IHS funds to staff facilities built with tribal funds. SEARHC submitted a proposal in the most recent Joint Venture

project funding round. Despite receiving a very high score, our proposal to build a facility on Prince of Wales Island was not selected. And in fact, of the 37 applications submitted, only 13 were put on a list to eventually receive funding. The fact that qualified projects were not selected is evidence that the need for such facilities far outstrips IHS's ability to enter into these agreements.

Our situation is a good example. Currently, our hospital in Sitka serves people living as far away as Klawock. Travel to Sitka requires a lengthy combination of automobile, ferry, and airplanes and takes at least a day and often is an overnight trip. If weather is bad, as it often is in southeast Alaska, it can take even longer. The only alternative are costly air ambulance flights. We proposed to construct a Critical Access Hospital in Klawock. This would have strengthened the primary care service in the area, while for the first time also offering complex diagnostic services and acute and emergency care to one of the remotest, most rural areas of the Nation. Despite this substantial need for these services, our project was rejected.

In order to provide funding for this project, as well as the other JV projects that were not selected in the last round, we urge this subcommittee to support IHS's effort to enter into more Joint Venture Agreements.

CONTRACT SUPPORT COSTS

In recent years, much progress has been made on the issue of contract support costs, thanks in large part to this subcommittee. Congress's decision to fully fund contract support costs since 2014 recast the issue from one of contention to one of cooperation. Further, last year's work to create a new account for CSC to ensure that other critical programs are not impacted by this mandatory obligation only strengthens the relationships between tribal organizations and the Federal Government. We know it is because of this subcommittee's work that this has happened and we thank you for it.

Last year's contract support cost language creating a new account was ground breaking, and we applaud the subcommittee for its foresight, leadership and creativity in finding a workable solution within a difficult budget environment. This year, we only ask that the subcommittee not repeat the proviso concerning carryover funds because it is counter to existing law. The proviso directs that CSC amounts that are not expended by a tribe in the current fiscal year be applied to contract support costs otherwise due in subsequent fiscal years. This language should be deleted because the Indian Self-Determination Act already addresses the use and disposition of unexpended contract and compact funds. The proviso conflicts with that language and also creates unnecessary and complicated accounting issues. For these reasons, the proviso is unnecessary and should be discontinued.

Finally, we once again urge the subcommittee to include language in the appropriations act making clear that IHS must pay contract support costs on MSPI and DVPI program funds. Despite years of acknowledging that CSC are due on these program funds, IHS recently reversed course and required tribes to cover CSC costs with program funds. This is contrary to Congress's clear directive in the Indian Self-Determination Act. There is no reason these programs should be treated any differently than any other program within the Indian Health Service.

Thank you for the opportunity to present to the Committee on SEARHC's priorities.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE SQUAXIN ISLAND TRIBE

On behalf of the Tribal Leadership and citizens of the Squaxin Island Tribe, it is an honor to provide our funding priorities and recommendations for the fiscal year 2017 budgets for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Indian Health Service (IHS). Squaxin Island Tribe requests that tribal program funding throughout the Federal Government be exempt from future sequestrations, rescissions and disproportionate cuts.

We applaud the subcommittee for its foresight, leadership and creativity in seeking a long-term resolution to fully fund Contract Support Cost (CSC). Although full funding in 2014 and 2015 was risky and did impact some other tribal funding, in the fiscal year 2016 enacted spending bill you included an estimated amount to fully fund the needs. We support the proposed fiscal year 2017 CSC full funding for both BIA and IHS and the inclusion of separate CSC accounts for both. Unfortunately, a proviso in the fiscal year 2017 proposed budget regarding the use and disposition of unexpended CSC contract and compact funds presents a problem and is contrary to current law. The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA) address this issue and we ask that you hear from tribes in advance of acting on this proposal. We have made great strides with CSC and it would defeat

your intentions to resolve this matter without fully realizing how complicated and misleading this provision can be to the progress you have made to date.

THE FISCAL YEAR 2016 SQUAXIN ISLAND TRIBAL SPECIFIC REQUESTS:

1. $500,000 Shellfish Management Program—BIA
2. $2 Million to Build and Operate an Oyster and Clam Nursery for Southern Puget Sound—BIA
3. $1.5 Million Increase for Northwest Indian Treatment Center (NWITC) Residential Program in IHS

THE FISCAL YEAR 2016 SQUAXIN ISLAND REGIONAL REQUESTS:

1. +$4.7 million increase for Rights Protection
2. Fully support the budget requests from the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Washington (ATNI) and the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board (NPAIHB) and the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission

NATIONAL REQUESTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS—BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

1. +$1 million increase over 2016 enacted level of $277 million to fully fund CSC
2. Authorize reclassification of BIA CSC to Mandatory [Permanent] Funding beginning in fiscal year 2018
3. +$5 million increase Sustainable Stewardship/Natural Resources
4. +$30.9 million increase for Tribal Priority Allocations to be provided via tribal base funding agreements
5. +$4 million for Native One-Stop to leverage Federal resources for tribes
6. Fully fund all the provisions of the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 and the Violence Against Women Act

NATIONAL REQUESTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS—INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE

1. +$82 million increase for CSC above fiscal year 2016 enacted level
2. Authorize reclassification of IHS CSC to Mandatory [Permanent] Funding beginning in fiscal year 2018
3. +$482.4 million IHS Mandatory Funding (maintaining current services)
4. +$42 million increase for Purchased and Referred Care (PRC)

Squaxin Island Tribes supports the Regional Budget Priorities of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians and the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board.

Squaxin Island Tribe supports the National Budget Priorities of the National Congress of American Indians and the National Indian Health Board.

SQUAXIN ISLAND TRIBE BACKGROUND

We are native people of South Puget Sound and descendants of the maritime people who lived and prospered along these shores for untold centuries. We are known as the People of the Water because of our strong cultural connection to the natural beauty and bounty of Puget Sound going back hundreds of years. The Squaxin Island Indian Reservation is located in southeastern Mason County, Washington and the tribe is a signatory to the 1854 Medicine Creek Treaty. We were one of the first 30 federally recognized tribes to enter into a Compact of Self-Governance with the United States.

Our treaty-designated reservation, Squaxin Island, is approximately 2.2 square miles of uninhabited forested land, surrounded by the bays and inlets of southern Puget Sound. Because the Island lacks fresh water, the tribe has built its community on roughly 26 acres at Kamilche, Washington purchased and placed into trust. The tribe also owns 6 acres across Pickering Passage from Squaxin Island and a plot of 36 acres on Harstine Island, across Peale Passage. The total land area including off-reservation trust lands is 1,715.46 acres. In addition, the tribe manages roughly 500 acres of Puget Sound tidelands.

The tribal government and our economic enterprises constitute the largest employer in Mason County with over 1,250 employees. The tribe has a current enrollment of 1,040 and an on-reservation population of 426 living in 141 homes. Squaxin has an estimated service area population of 2,747; a growth rate of about 10 percent, and an unemployment rate of about 30 percent (according to the BIA Labor Force Report).

TRIBAL SPECIFIC REQUESTS JUSTIFICATIONS:

1. $500,000—Shellfish Management

The Squaxin Island Tribes faces a budget deficit to maintain and operate the shellfish program at the current level. To effectively grow and develop the program, an annual minimum increase of $500,000 to address the shortfall and ensure the continuance of this program is requested.

Shellfish have been a mainstay for the Squaxin Island people for thousands of years and are important today for subsistence, economic and ceremonial purposes. The tribe's right to harvest shellfish is guaranteed by the 1854 Medicine Creek Treaty. It is important to remember that these rights were not granted by the Federal Government. They were retained by the tribe in exchange for thousands of acres of tribal lands. On December 20, 1994 U.S. District Court Judge Edward Rafeedie reaffirmed the tribe's treaty right to naturally occurring shellfish. Rafeedie ruled that the tribe(s) has the right to take up to 50 percent of the harvestable shellfish on Washington beaches.

The Squaxin Island Natural Resources Department (SINRD) is charged with protecting, managing and enhancing the land and water resources of the tribe, including fish and shellfish habitat and species. In so doing, the Department works cooperatively with State and Federal environmental, natural resources and health agencies. The shellfish management work of the SINRD includes working with private tideland owners and commercial growers; surveying beaches; monitoring harvests; enhancing supply (prepping, seeding, monitoring beds) and licensing and certifying harvesters and geoduck divers. We estimate that 20 percent of treaty-designated State lands and 80–90 percent of private tidelands are inaccessible to us due to insufficient funding.

In fiscal year 2011, the shellfish program represented only $250,000 of the $3.3 million budget. The result is we are unable to fully exercise our treaty rights due to lack of Federal support for shellfish.

2. $2 Million—Build and Operate an Oyster and Clam Nursery for Southern Puget Sound

In the past few years, problems with seed production have developed in the shellfish industry. These problems have been primarily caused by weather and or other environmental factors, and their effects on the industry have resulted in the lack of viable and large enough seed for growers. The Squaxin Island Tribe recognizes that it is uniquely positioned to develop a new nursery to serve the shellfish growers of the South Puget Sound region. A shellfish nursery is a capital project that is both proven and a cost effective technology that takes small oyster and clam seeds and provides a safe and controlled environment for the seeds to grow to a size that can survive integration onto a regular beach placement. We have an ideal location for a nursery because it will not be disturbed by residents or recreational boaters.

Our efforts will be an extension of another project that was created through a U.S. Department of Agriculture appropriation nearly two decades ago for the Lummi Tribe, which created an oyster and clam hatchery in Northern Puget Sound. The Lummi project over years has been very successful and they have supplied not only their own beaches but other tribes' in their region as well. The project would benefit not just Squaxin Island Tribe. It would further improve the quality and quantity of seed and make the seed process more effective for tribal and non-tribal growers. The users of the facility would be the Squaxin Island Tribe, other tribes, and non-tribal clam and oyster businesses that have been largely unable to find sites for this type of operation.

The tribe's project will be a joint venture with the Lummi Nation, in that Lummi would be a primary larvae supplier. The project, with the expected grow-out and expansion of the industry attributable to the improved supply of seed, would offer jobs in a depressed employment area. Once established, the venture would be fully self-sustaining through sales of the product grown and at the nursery.

This project would be a capital cost of approximately $2 million. The tribal in-kind contribution to the efforts would include land and shoreline and operating costs. Comparable land and shoreline, if privately owned, would be easily valued in the millions.

3. $1.5 Million Increase for Northwest Indian Treatment Center (NWITC) Residential Program in IHS

"D3WXbi Palil" meaning "Returning from the Dark, Deep Waters to the Light"—NWITC has not received an adequate increase in its base Indian Health Service budget since the original congressional set-aside in 1993.

The Squaxin Island Tribe has been operating the Northwest Indian Treatment Center (NWITC) since 1994. Ingenious in creativity, the center offers a wide variety of cultural activities and traditional/religious ceremonies, making it a natural place to heal—body, mind and soul. Fittingly, the center was given the spiritual name "D3WXbi Palil" meaning "Returning from the Dark, Deep Waters to the Light." Since the original congressional set-aside in 1993, NWITC has not received an adequate increase in the base Indian Health Service budget. It is critical to increase the NWITC's annual base in order to sustain the current services to the tribes of the Northwest. An increase of $1.5 million would restore lost purchasing power and meet the need to add mental health and psychiatric components to the treatment program through other funding agents. This increase would allow NWITC to continue its effective treatment of Native Americans.

NWITC is a residential chemical dependency treatment facility designed to serve American Indians from tribes located in Oregon, Washington and Idaho who have chronic relapse patterns related to unresolved grief and trauma. NWITC is unique in its integration of tribal cultural values into a therapeutic environment for co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders. It is a 28 bed, 30–60 day residential facility.

Welcomed and hailed by tribal leaders who felt the urgent need for such a facility, NWITC is centrally located in Grays Harbor County between Olympia and Aberdeen, on 2.5 acres in the small rural town of Elma, Washington. NWITC accepts patients that are referred through outpatient treatment programs, parole and probation services, hospitals, assessment centers and child and family service centers. Medical care is provided through local Indian Health Service clinics and other medical service providers. NWITC has responded with an overwhelming success rate of nearly 65 percent.

In 2011, the NWITC served 225 patients from 28 tribes and added intensive case management and crisis support to alumni in order to continue to promote positive outcomes for clients. Despite funding challenges, NWITC has continued to develop and deliver innovative, culturally appropriate services to meet increasingly complex demands.

The Treatment Center's traditional foods and medicines program is supported through a partnership with the Northwest Indian College and is funded through grants from the Washington Health Foundation, the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, The Potlatch Fund and several tribes. Weekly hands-on classes focus on traditional foods and medicines, including methods for growing, harvesting, processing, and preparation. Twice a month, tribal elders, storytellers, and cultural specialists speak as part of the program. A monthly family class allows patients to share what they are learning with their loved ones. Patients gain hands-on experience by working in three on-site teaching gardens. This program serves as a model for other tribal communities.

It is ironic that we were forced into a lifestyle and to give up our land, and that which we retained or have since regained is threatened by the promises you made and have since recanted!

Thank you for inviting us to present this Testimony.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE STANDING ROCK SIOUX TRIBE

On behalf of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, I submit this testimony concerning the President's fiscal year 2017 budget for the Indian programs within the Department of the Interior and the Indian Health Service. I would like to express our appreciation to this subcommittee for its support of Indian tribes. I will focus my remarks on public safety, education, housing, healthcare, and infrastructure.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has a government to government relationship with the United States of America, reflected in our treaties which were signed in 1851 and 1868. These treaties underscore the ongoing promises and obligations of the United States to the tribe, and our testimony today is submitted with those promises and obligations in mind.

The Standing Rock Sioux Reservation encompasses 2.3 million acres in North and South Dakota. The reservation's population—approximately 8,500 tribal members and 2,000 non-members—reside in eight districts, and in smaller communities. The tribe's primary industries are cattle ranching and farming. The tribe struggles to provide essential governmental services to our members. The tribe's desire is to provide jobs and improve the economic standard of living on our reservation. We operate two modest tribal casinos, and a small number of additional tribal businesses, including Standing Rock Propane and Standing Rock Telecommunications, which provide needed services on the reservation. Casino revenue is used to help the tribe

supplement services and programs for our members, but those revenues are modest and our challenges and needs are far greater than our resources. Despite the tribe's best efforts, our unemployment rate remains above 50 percent. In fact, over 40 percent of Indian families on our reservation live in poverty—more than triple the average U.S. poverty rate. The disparity is worse for children, as 52 percent of the reservation population under age 18 lives below poverty, compared to 16 percent and 19 percent in North and South Dakota, respectively. The Federal programs established and promised by treaty to aid tribes and their members are essential. We ask the Government to honor its commitments by adequately funding these Federal programs enacted for our benefit, so that our members may enjoy a standard of living comparable to that enjoyed by the rest of the Nation. Our specific requests are as follows:

BIA—Public Safety and Justice.—Public safety is a priority for the tribe. We strongly disagree with the President's proposal to decrease funding for Public Safety and Justice by $4 million below the 2016 enacted level, and urge the subcommittee instead to support an increase by at least that amount. A decrease in funding contradicts Interior's promises to make our homelands safer. Funding is also essential for law enforcement equipment and facilities maintenance.

Youth Corrections.—In December 2010, the tribe successfully completed construction of a secure 18-bed juvenile detention facility so that tribal youth offenders may remain on the reservation and receive culturally appropriate services if they must be incarcerated. For reasons beyond the tribe's control, the facility has not been used for the past 5 years. This endeavor by the tribe is named the Youth Services Center, however, only the secure portion of the plan was completed due to inadequate funds to truly provide for all youth services as the name suggests. The tribe contributed $2 million of tribal funds to supplement $5 million in Justice Department funds to build this facility. Over time this tribally owned facility will save the BIA a great deal of money that now pays other contract facilities to house our youth offenders. Unfortunately, while the BIA, in January 2011 and many times thereafter, advised the tribe that the facility would become operational, it is still not open despite the BIA receiving staff funding as well as operations and maintenance funding. BIA was unable to provide staffing to open the facility in a timely manner when it was completed in 2010 and as a result, problems within the idle building have surfaced and have already cost the tribe additional dollars in repairs. Although the tribe is currently working with the BIA to address those matters remaining in the facility, the building remains unoccupied and our youth are still being taken hundreds of miles off reservation. Additional construction dollars, and greater discretion concerning the allowable use of public safety services funds, are critical to providing detention and associated services to all troubled youth, especially when tribes are seeking alternatives to incarceration, such as probation with mandatory counseling and substance abuse counseling and treatment.

Adult Corrections.—BIA OJS operates an antiquated 48 bed adult detention center for male and female inmates in Fort Yates on our reservation. The detention center is a linear style facility which, because of its design, is very staff intensive. The jail was built in the 1960's and has long outlived its utility. Renovated in the 1980's and again in the 1990's, the jail fails to comply with most contemporary detention standards. The jail population is frequently two to three times over the rated bed capacity. To alleviate jail crowding, BIA OJS contracts bed space for long term adult inmates in a facility that is a 772 mile round trip from the reservation. Our tribal court is forced to release prisoners early to alleviate jail crowding just to make room for more prisoners. This sends the wrong message to criminals.

Law Enforcement.—The tribe has seen firsthand that adequate law enforcement funding was key to reducing crime. A number of years ago, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe was selected to participate in the High Priority Program Goals initiative, which dramatically increased law enforcement positions on our reservation. This had a significant positive impact in reducing crime. Increased numbers of police officers allowed pro active policing rather than reactive policing. This initiative enabled officers to be assigned within each reservation community, which meant quicker response time to calls and more positive relationships between law enforcement officers and the communities they served. The increased law enforcement presence and patrols has deterred crime and resulted in our members feeling safer. The data confirms this. When compared to the number of violent crimes (homicide, rape, robbery, assault) that occurred between 2007 and 2009, the additional staffing reduced such crimes by approximately: 7 percent in 2010, 11 percent in 2011, and 15–19 percent in 2012. These initiatives demonstrated the critical importance that adequate law enforcement staffing can have in our community. But HPPG ended after fiscal year 2013 and the tribe's law enforcement personnel were reduced from the numbers that served us so well. We strongly support an increase in funding for law enforcement

personnel. It makes no sense that these programs would not be funded in perpetuity since they have been demonstrated to work to reduce crime in Indian Country.

Tribal Courts.—We support an increase to the modest funding appropriated for the Tribal Courts Program. The Standing Rock Tribal Court is an independent branch of government consisting of a supreme court, civil court, criminal court, and children's court. Key positions in the tribal court require licensed attorneys—the chief judge; associate chief judge; chief prosecutor; and public defender. The supreme court consists of three Justices, two of whom must be a licensed attorney. Our tribe cannot effectively support these courts with our small BIA allocation, even when heavily subsidized by the tribe. And yet in order to use our tribe's authorities provided under the Violence Against Women Act of 2013, Sex Offender Registration and Offender Act, and the Tribal Law and Order Act, we must continue to meet appropriate standards. Our tribal courts are also crowded, even when spread across three separate buildings. The main courthouse outgrew its ability to meet our needs years ago and the lack of space severely limits our ability to adequately handle the tribal court case load of 2,000 to 3,000 cases per year. Funding is critical to providing a safe and secure center to house justice programs.

Bureau of Indian Education (BIE).—We support an increase to fiscal year 2017 funding for BIE programs. Standing Rock relies on BIE funding for three tribal grant schools—the Standing Rock Community School (K–12), Sitting Bull School (K–8), and Rock Creek School (K–8). The Standing Rock Community School is operated through a Joint Powers Agreement between the Standing Rock Tribal Grant School and the Fort Yates Public School District. The Fort Yates Public School District, like other public schools on the reservation (Cannonball, Selfridge, McLaughlin, McIntosh, and Wakpala), depends on Federal impact aid to cover the costs of the public school's share of the school operations. The children in the schools on the reservation are among the most at-risk students in the Nation. At seven out of eight public and tribal grant schools on our reservation, 100 percent of the students are eligible for the Free or Reduced Lunch Program. At the remaining school, 90 percent of students are eligible for the Free or Reduced Lunch Program. The high rate of our student eligibility for the Free or Reduced Lunch Program documents that the majority of our families live at or below poverty level.

A critical source of funds for the operation of our tribal grant schools are the Indian School Equalization Program (ISEP) Formula funds. The funds cover the costs of the schools' instructional programs, including salaries for teachers, teacher aides, school administrative staff and other operational costs. ISEP has not seen any meaningful increase in years, and as a result, there has been a significant negative impact on the effectiveness of the schools' instructional programs. Academic programs are marginal at best and provide limited services to the students. It has become more difficult to attract and retain qualified staff. Despite the clear need, the administration proposes to cut ISEP funding by $16.4 million, apparently to offset the cost of a new pilot program. We do not object to a new pilot program, but it should not be created at the expense of existing needs. If the schools serving Indian children are to be effective and if our students are to succeed and be college and career ready, ISEP funding must be increased.

The administration's near flat line funding for virtually all aspects of BIE programs does not account for population growth, increased costs, or inflation. Student Transportation funding, intended to cover the costs of buses, fuel, maintenance, vehicle replacements, and drivers, has stayed at the same level for years. The substantial increases in fuel costs alone make it impossible to cover these costs. For Standing Rock, funds are further strained because we are a rural community, where bus runs for many of our students may take 1½ to 2 hours each way and can include travel on unimproved roads. These factors result in higher maintenance costs and shorter vehicle life. A substantial increase in funds for Student Transportation is long overdue.

The same is true for School Facility Operations and Maintenance which is drastically under-funded. In fact, O&M budgets are currently constrained at 40 percent of need. This also holds true for School Improvement and Repair. We urge this subcommittee to strongly support an increase, not only for Facility Operations and Maintenance and School Improvement and Repair, but for School Construction as well. Indeed, one of our tribal grant schools, the Rock Creek School, is more than 100 years old and badly needs to be replaced. Federal funds to replace ancient schools—like Rock Creek—are essential. Funding for School Facility Operations and Maintenance and School Improvement and Repair, as well as School Construction should be substantially increased. We are also very concerned about the list of new schools which have been slated to be constructed. Not a single school from the Great Plains made that list. It is clear that the Bureau of Indian Education has discretion to select these schools, and they have used that discretion to effectively shut out

schools in our region for the next decade. We would like the subcommittee to better understand how these schools are selected.

We also urge the subcommittee to support an increase in funding for scholarships. Because of the unmet need, the tribe spends $1 million in tribal funds annually to supplement this program and gives grants of $3,000–$3,500 to aid our students attending colleges and vocational schools. But even with this, the majority of our scholarship recipients have unmet financial need varying from $100 to $17,000.

Indian Health Service.—We support the administration's fiscal year 2017 requested increase in IHS funding. We depend on IHS to care for our 16,000 enrolled tribal members, many of whom suffer from diabetes, heart disease and hypertension. We are especially concerned about our region. Although we are not at risk of losing certification under the Center for Medicaid Services, we hope the Indian Health Service can continue to provide quality support and timely processing of the basics such as human resources, budget responses, and procurement. We also fully support the IHS' efforts to increase funding for behavioral health by $46 million, especially the youth focused programming.

We recommend that Congress prioritize the IHS preventive healthcare service programs, such as the diabetes grant program, and increase funding for these programs above the administration's $150 million, while supporting and protecting the administration's other IHS funding priorities, especially funding for healthcare personnel. In many instances, if additional funding for clinical services and preventive health programs can be made available, illnesses and injuries could be treated at their initial stages, or prevented altogether. This is especially important at Standing Rock, where many of our members' health problems could be addressed if timely preventive care were available. We also support the administration's request for increases in Dental Health and Purchased/Referred Care (previously known as Contract Health Services), which has been historically underfunded.

Road Maintenance.—Proper road maintenance on the reservation is essential for the safety and health of our community, and for promoting economic opportunities. BIA Road Maintenance is responsible for 29,700 miles of BIA owned roads. The administration request of $27 million only funds 16 percent of the level of need for BIA road maintenance. Thus, 84 percent of the roads in the BIA systems will continue to be at poor or failing condition. These are roads used by school buses and first responders. In any other community this would be unacceptable. We urge the subcommittee to increase funding for the maintenance program by at least $9 million. This level of funding would allow a greater percentage of the roads to be properly maintained.

Tribal Historic Preservation Offices.—We strongly support the $2 million increase for Tribal Historic Preservation Offices out of the National Park Service. This modest increase will help us to protect historic and culturally significant resources throughout the region.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAWN STOCKWELL

Dear Senators:

As an American citizen and taxpayer, I strongly oppose the BLM's proposal to conduct dangerous sterilization experiments on wild mares at the Wild Horse Corral Facility in Hines. According to the Environmental Assessment (EA), the BLM is deciding whether or not to proceed with one or more of the proposed sterilization procedures. The weight of scientific evidence and public opinion clearly supports a BLM decision NOT to proceed with any of these sterilization procedures.

The sterilization procedures that BLM is proposing to conduct on federally protected wild mares are dangerous, costly and impractical for use in the field, due to the serious health risks they pose to the horses and their unborn foals, and also due to the great expense of purchasing the equipment and training the number of veterinarians necessary to implement these procedures on the range.

It makes no sense to spend millions of taxpayer dollars on these risky invasive experiments when proven, humane, and relatively inexpensive fertility control technology in the form of the PZP vaccine is readily available but vastly underutilized by the BLM.

The EA is completely inadequate in analyzing the impacts of these experimental procedures on mares. In addition, the BLM has deliberately avoided public opposition to this controversial and grotesque research proposal by skipping the scoping stage of the environmental analysis process. As a result, the public has been deprived of the opportunity to provide input into the impacts of and alternatives to these procedures that must be analyzed under the rules of the National Environmental Policy Act.

1. Ovariectomy via Colposcopy

This is an outdated and archaic procedure that has been supplanted by more modern laparoscopic surgery. The EA fails to analyze the impacts of and alternatives to this procedure to mares and never once mentions the availability of more modern techniques! This proposed sterilization experiment is an intra-vaginal complex surgical procedure, which is hardly ever performed in domestic horses (never mind in wild ones), due to its inherently dangerous risks.

—The blind nature of this surgery increases the risk of intra-abdominal hemorrhage, but the EA never even addresses this issue or the availability of more modern laparoscopic techniques that allow the surgeon to visualize the abdominal structures.

—The lack of a sterile environment subjects the mares to a high risk of infection, something that is ignored by the EA.

—The procedure carries with it a significant risk of hemorrhage and evisceration (protrusion of the intestines through the surgical incision), which is why it requires strict follow-up care when used in domestic horses, including pain relief and 4–7 days of stall rest, the first 48 hours of which is spent in crossties to prevent the mare from lying down. It is not possible to provide this required post-operative care to wild mares, yet the EA minimizes the impacts of this fact, citing the opinion of an un-named veterinarian, instead of the published science and National Research Council review, which clearly indicate the risks and impacts of this outdated procedure on wild mares.

—The procedure will cause mares in early stages of pregnancy to abort their fetuses and may cause loss of pregnancy for mares in the mid-stage of pregnancy as well. This is unacceptable.

This pursuit of ovariectomy research is directly counter to the recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences National Research Council (NRC) in its 2013 report, "Using Science to Improve the BLM Wild Horse and Burro Program: A Way Forward." That NRC report concluded that: "The possibility that ovariectomy may be followed by prolonged bleeding or peritoneal infection makes it inadvisable for field application."

2. Minimally Invasive Sterilization Techniques

The other sterilization procedures that BLM proposes to research, while less invasive than ovariectomy, should also be abandoned due to the inability to provide post-operative care and the impracticality of implementing these procedures—which have never before been done in wild or domestic horses—on a broad scale in a field setting. The EA fails to analyze the impacts of precedent-setting procedures that have never before been performed in horses, and as well as the inability to provide required post-operative care. The EA also omits analysis of the economic impacts and practicalities of implementing these procedures on the range.

In proceeding with these experiments, the BLM has ignored the NRC recommendation that these techniques should first be perfected in domestic mares, who can be easily handled and will be accessible for close monitoring and post-operative care, before attempting them in wild horses.

It is unconscionable that the BLM is proceeding with these draconian experiments that endanger the lives of the un-consenting equine subjects and their unborn foals, particularly when a proven non-invasive and safe fertility control method exists in the readily available PZP birth control vaccine. Instead of wasting millions of tax dollars to fund experiments on inhumane and impractical sterilization experiments, the agency should instead focus resources on vaccinating sufficient numbers of mares with the PZP fertility control vaccine, which is documented through 30 years of experience and published science, to be safe, effective, cost-effective and successful in managing wild horse populations.

Again, as a taxpayer and wild horse lover, I am outraged that the BLM is even considering pursuing such inhumane, barbaric and wasteful experimentation on wild horses and I find the BLM's Environmental Analysis of its impacts to be woefully inadequate. As a result, I strongly urge the BLM to abandon these proposed experiments in favor of using proven, more cost-effective and humane fertility control methods.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF UNITED STATES SENATOR SUSAN M. COLLINS

MARCH 18, 2016.

Hon. THAD COCHRAN
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. BARBARA MIKULSKI
Vice Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. LISA MURKOWSKI
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington , DC 20510

Hon. TOM UDALL
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairwoman Mikulski, Chairman Murkowski, and Ranking Member Udall:

I respectfully submit the following requests for funding and language to be included in the fiscal year 2017 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill and report:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM)

BOEM, Renewable Energy

I request that you provide level funding, $24.3 million, for the Renewable Energy program. The United States has nearly 4,000 GW of offshore wind capacity within 50 miles of the coastline, enough to power the United States four times over. Approximately two-thirds of this capacity is in deepwater. In order to foster the development of ocean energy resources, other countries, such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, and Portugal, have established test sites for ocean energy. These countries have funded environmental permitting studies and provided electrical infrastructure, including undersea cabling and grid interconnection, for these test sites. Working with research institutions, private industry has used these "ready" sites to build and test advanced offshore wind turbines and other ocean energy harvesting devices, spurring further commercial developments. The President's budget request includes $23.9 million.

To ensure that the United States does not lose momentum in advancing this promising technology, I request that you include the following language in your report:

> *Renewable Energy.*—The Committee provides $24.3 million for renewable energy leasing activities, including program development, environmental analysis, and consultation with Federal, State, and local stakeholders. The Bureau should continue to work with the Department of Energy to identify and permit a national offshore wind test site that incorporates new technology related to the structural material of transitional depth and floating wind turbines. The Bureau should also make funding available for installation of electrical infrastructure for such a test site. The Committee expects the Bureau to continue working with coastal States and other stakeholders to study new wind energy areas, including those in shallow, transitional, and deep (over 200 feet) waters. The Secretary should work with the Secretary of Energy and States to exchange information about the development of new technology related to the structural material, environmental, and design safety criteria, as well as design and performance standards of transitional depth and floating wind turbines.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Land and Water Conservation Fund, State Grants

I request continued support for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), including the LWCF State grant program and the Forest Legacy Program. Within the funding provided for LWCF, I request level funding for the State grant program. The LWCF is one of the most important Federal programs for assisting in the preservation of recreational resources. According to the National Park Service, 92 per-

cent of States reported an annual unmet funding need of 90 percent or greater, which funding for the State grant program would help address. State grants received $106.8 million in fiscal year 2016. The President's fiscal year 2017 budget request includes $106 million in discretionary funding.

Facility Operations and Maintenance

I request continued support for the facility operations and maintenance of our National Park System, including for the base budget of Acadia National Park. The facility operations and maintenance activities at our national parks play key roles in ensuring continued protection and use of park facilities. Funding will help address the deferred maintenance backlog, which at the end of fiscal year 2015 totaled more than $11.9 billion. The President's fiscal year 2017 budget request includes $842.5 million for facility operations and maintenance, and $738.5 million was allocated in fiscal year 2016.

Roosevelt Campobello International Park

I urge the subcommittee to provide $1.66 million for the Roosevelt Campobello International Park Commission, the level requested by the Commission in its budget request. The President's budget request includes $1.5 million. I appreciate the subcommittee's willingness to work with me on language to help ensure the unique arrangement between the United States and Canada in operating the Roosevelt-Campobello International Park (RCIP) is maintained. I request that report language from the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (Public Law 114–113), which would clarify congressional intent that the RCIP budget request be transmitted by the Office of Management and Budget to Congress without changes by the National Park Service, be retained in the fiscal year 2017 subcommittee report. To address what had become a perennial issue for NPS to reduce the budget request for RCIP, including the following language from fiscal year 2016 remains very important:

> *Roosevelt-Campobello International Park Commission.*—Funding for Roosevelt-Campobello International Park Commission (the Commission) on the Maine-Canada border is jointly and equally supported by the U.S. and Canadian governments pursuant to the 1964 Agreement between the two nations, which was recognized and codified by Congress in 1964 (Public Law 88–363). While the Administration has a responsibility to consider priorities within overall budget constraints and submit an annual budget request to Congress, the Committee is concerned with recent requests for the Park from the Service. Congress observed in 1986 the following: "The managers agree that hereafter the Service should use its internal reprogramming authority so that there will be no diminution of the amount provided for the Roosevelt Campobello International Park Commission, unless reduced by the House or Senate in a report accompanying the appropriations bill." (CR–H10497, October 15, 1986). Therefore, the Committee directs that the budget request prepared by the Roosevelt Campobello International Park Commission shall be submitted by the Administration directly to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations without any changes. The Administration, in its National Park Service budget justification, may comment on the Commission's budget request and make such additions and subtractions that it may propose. However, the amounts requested by the National Park Service shall be consistent with its obligations under international agreements. The Committee will consider the proposal from the Commission and the Administration will allocate the overall appropriation as specified in the report accompanying the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

State and Tribal Wildlife Grants

I request that you provide at least level funding, $60.6 million, for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program and maintain the ratio of formula and competitive grants. This program provides Federal funding to develop and implement conservation programs that protect wildlife and habitats, prioritizing the species most in need of conservation and helping to avoid listings under the Endangered Species Act. The President's budget request includes $67 million.

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Water Resources Research Institute

I request that you provide at least $6.5 million—level funding—for the Water Resources Research Institute, which provides vital research, public information, and educational opportunities on water availability, pollution, and use issues nation-

wide. The President's budget request for fiscal year 2017 includes $6.5 million for this program.

Groundwater and Streamflow Information Program

I support continued funding for the Groundwater and Streamflow Information Program (GWSIP), which collects, manages, and disseminates consistently high-quality and reliable hydrologic information in real-time and over the long-term. The purpose of this important program is to minimize loss of life and property from water hazards and to protect, manage, and sustain water that is safe and available for drinking. The GWSIP is one of the primary sources of data needed for timely water decisions, as the streamgage data collected provide critical flood warning information to local, State, tribal, and national stakeholders. Groundwater data also help landowners monitor their irrigation activities and aquatic habitats. In fiscal year 2016, the program received $71.5 million. The President's fiscal year 2017 budget request includes $72.957 million for GWSIP.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

General Provision—Carbon Neutrality of Biomass

I request that the fiscal year 2017 bill include the language below to address EPA's treatment of carbon emissions related to forest biomass. The carbon benefits of forest biomass are clearly established, yet current policy uncertainty is jeopardizing existing investments in biomass and discouraging new investment to build or upgrade facilities. Legislative clarity is required to secure the carbon benefits of—and remove uncertainty surrounding—this renewable energy resource. I look forward to working with you to achieve this necessary clarity and suggest the following bill language:

CARBON NEUTRALITY OF FOREST BIOMASS

SEC. ____. (a) CARBON EMISSIONS FROM FOREST BIOMASS—

"(1) IN GENERAL. The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall provide in agency policies, regulations, and actions regarding carbon dioxide emissions that forest biomass carbon dioxide emissions including, but not limited to, biogenic carbon dioxide emissions from facilities that combust forest biomass for energy, do not require regulation, controls or actions, if—

"(A) the Chief of the Forest Service determines, based on the most recent assessment of forest and timberland carbon stocks derived from the Forest Inventory and Analysis data of the Department of Agriculture, that timberland carbon stocks in the relevant region, described in paragraph (2), are stable or increasing relative to carbon stocks assessment for the region for 2005; or

"(B) the forest biomass is derived from forest products manufacturing residuals, harvest residues, bio-wastes, including used wood products, or forest management activities conducted—

"(i) for stand improvement;

"(ii) to increase yield; or

"(iii) to maintain or enhance forest health.

"(2) For purposes of this section, the Chief of the Forest Service shall identify regions as follows:

(i) The North Region: CT, DE, IL, IN, IA, KS, MA, ME, MD, MI, MN, MO, NE, 27 NH, NJ, NY, ND, OH, PA, RI, SD, VT, WV, WI;

(ii) The South Region: AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, NC, OK, SC, MS, TN, TX, VA;

(iii) The Southwest Region: AZ, NM, CO, UT, NV, and WY;

(iv) The Pacific Coast/Northwest Region: CA, OR, WA, ID, and MT; and

(v) States not identified in the above regions shall be considered individually.

"(3) ANNUAL DETERMINATION OF APPLICABILITY.—Not less frequently than annually, the Administrator shall review the most recent assessment of the Chief of the Forest Service described in paragraph (l)(A) to determine the applicability of paragraph (1).

(b) FOREST CARBON STOCKS.—Subject to appropriations, the Chief of the Forest Service shall update the measurement of forest and timberland carbon stocks not less frequently than once every 5 years.

Additionally, I request that the following language be included in the report to accompany the fiscal year 2017 bill:

Carbon Neutrality of Forest Biomass.—"Forest management activities" in this section include activities to improve the composition, structure, condition, health, and growth of stands; increase yield after stand establishment; and maintain or enhance forest health including fuel, pest infestation, and disease treatments. Forest management activities maintain or increase forest carbon stocks over time.

National Estuary Program

I support at least level funding, $26.7 million, for the National Estuary Program (NEP), which works with communities to craft stakeholder driven restoration solutions at the watershed level. Congress created the NEP in 1987 to restore designated estuaries of national significance, and today there are 28 estuaries in the program. The President's fiscal year 2017 budget request includes $27.2 million.

Rural Water Technical Assistance Grant Program

I request that you provide $15 million for the Environmental Protection Agency's Rural Water Systems Training and Technical Assistance Grant Program and the continuation of report language to ensure that this funding is awarded on a competitive basis. Rural water systems have an enormous responsibility to provide safe drinking water. Authorized under the Safe Drinking Water Act, these grants assist water system operators in understanding and achieving compliance with increasingly complex Federal regulations. The program received $12.7 million for fiscal year 2016. The President's fiscal year 2017 budget request does not include funding for this program.

Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (SRF)

I request that you provide at least level funding for the Clean Water SRF and the Drinking Water SRF. These programs provide critical infrastructure funding to water quality protection projects for wastewater treatment, nonpoint source pollution control, watershed and estuary management, and to protect our ground and drinking water. In fiscal year 2016, the CWSRF received $1.393 billion and the DWSRF received $863 million. The President's fiscal year 2017 budget requests $979 million for the CWSRF and $1.02 billion for the DWSRF, representing a total combined cut of $257 million. It is estimated that between 13,000 and 24,000 jobs result from every billion dollars in SRF funding.

National Priorities Research Grant Program

I request that you provide at least level funding—$4.1 million—for the National Priorities Research Grant Program. This grant program funds drinking water and wastewater-related research through the Environmental Protection Agency, managed by water non-profit foundations, and conducted in partnership with local wastewater and drinking water utilities. The President's fiscal year 2017 budget request does not include funding for this program.

FOREST SERVICE

Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program—$2 million

I request that you provide at least $2 million for the Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program. This program provides grants to eligible local governments, tribal governments, and qualified non-profit organizations to create community forests. The program received $2 million in fiscal year 2016—the same level that the President's budget request proposes for fiscal year 2017.

State and Private Forestry—Forest Resource Pilot Program

I request that the subcommittee report include language to support a pilot program that would leverage existing and ongoing research on forest carbon. Maine's economy depends in large part on the condition of its forest, as the forest products industry accounts for more than 6 percent of the State's total gross domestic product and has an estimated total economic impact of $8 billion. Further coordinated research is needed. With this in mind, I request that you include the following language in the subcommittee report:

Forest Resource Pilot Program.—Within the funding provided for State and Private Forestry, the Committee directs the Department to fund a pilot program on forest carbon research. Such a pilot should be carried out in natural forested regions of the United States and link research on forest carbon to forest landowners and managers by establishing the methods and developing tools needed to quantify forest carbon as a resource that can be managed for economic and ecological benefits.

OFFICES OF INSPECTORS GENERAL

Offices of Inspectors General (OIGs) are an indispensable tool in the fight against waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement. Through its partnership with OIGs across the Government, Congress has been able to identify and reduce inefficient, ineffective and improperly functioning Federal programs. Given their importance, I support adequately funding all the OIGs contained in your bill , including the OIGs for the Department of the Interior and the Environmental Protection Agency, to ensure proper oversight is conducted over every taxpayer dollar spent by the Federal Government.

Recognizing the significant budget challenges facing the country, I appreciate your consideration of these requests and look forward to working with you as you develop the fiscal year 2017 Interior and Environment funding bill.

Sincerely,

SUSAN M. COLLINS
United States Senator

[NOTE: See table on next page for priorities, agencies, accounts, programs, President's budget, Member requests, and request descriptions.]

Priority	State	Member	Agency	Account	Program (if applicable)	President's Budget ($)	Member Request ($)	Request Description
1	ME	Collins	EPA	Carbon Neutrality of Biomass		n/a	n/a	Request bill language to recognize that forest biomass emissions are carbon neutral and to be treated as such by the EPA, and to require the Chief of the Forest Service to update measurements of forest and timberland carbon stocks at least once every five years. Request accompanying report language.
2	ME	Collins	EPA	State Revolving Funds	Clean Water SRF	$979,000,000	$1,393,000,000	Request at least fiscal year 2016 level of $1.393 billion
	ME	Collins	EPA	State Revolving Funds	Drinking Water SRF	$1,020,000,000	$863,000,000	Request at least fiscal year 2016 level of 863 million
3	ME	Collins	NPS	Land and Water Conservation Fund	State Grants	$106,000,000	$106,800,000	Request continued support for LWCF, Forest Legacy Program, and fiscal year 2016 level of 106.8 million for the state grant program
4	ME	Collins	EPA	Environmental Programs and Management.	Rural Water Technical Assistance Grant Program.	$0	$15,000,000	Request an increase of 2.3 million over fiscal year 2016 level
5	ME	Collins	USFS	State and Private Forestry	Forest Carbon Pilot Program	n/a	n/a	Request report language. *Forest Carbon Pilot Program.*—Within the funding provided for State and Private Forestry, the Committee directs the Department to fund a pilot program on forest carbon research. Such a pilot should be carried out in natural forested regions of the United States and link research on forest carbon to forest landowners and managers by establishing the methods and developing tools needed to quantify forest carbon as a resource that can be managed for economic and ecological benefits.
6	ME	Collins	DOI	BOEM	Renewable Energy	$23,900,000	$24,300,000	Request fiscal year 2016 level of $24.3 million and report language. *Renewable Energy.*—The Committee provides $24.3 million for renewable energy leasing activities, including program development, environmental analysis, and consultation with Federal, State, and local stakeholders. The Bureau should continue to work with the Department of Energy to identify and permit a national offshore wind test site that incorporates new technology related to the structural material of transitional depth and floating wind turbines. The Bureau should also make funding available for installation of electrical infrastructure for such a test site.The Committee expects the Bureau to continue working with coastal States and other stakeholders to study new wind energy areas, including those in shallow, transitional, and deep (over 200 feet) waters. The Secretary should work with the Secretary of Energy and States to exchange information about the development of new technology related to the structural material, environmental, and design safety criteria, as well as design and performance standards of transitional depth and floating wind turbines.

Priority	State	Member	Agency	Account	Program (if applicable)	President's Budget ($)	Member Request ($)	Request Description
7	ME	Collins	NPS	Facility Operations and Maintenance		$842,500,000	n/a	Request continued support for the facility operations and maintenance of our NPS.
8	ME	Collins	USFS	Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program.		$2,000,000	$2,000,000	Request at least fiscal year 2016 level of 2 million
9	ME	Collins	NPS	Roosevelt Campobello International Park.		$1,492,000	$1,657,897	Request retaining report language included in fiscal year 2016 Omnibus. *Roosevelt-Campobello International Park Commission.*—Funding for Roosevelt-Campobello International Park Commission (the Commission) on the Maine-Canada border is jointly and equally supported by the U.S. and Canadian governments pursuant to the 1964 Agreement between the two nations, which was recognized and codified by Congress in 1964 (Public Law 88–363). While the Administration has a responsibility to consider priorities within overall budget constraints and submit an annual budget request to Congress, the Committee is concerned with recent requests for the Park from the Service. Congress observed in 1986 the following: ''The managers agree that hereafter the Service should use its internal reprogramming authority so that there will be no diminution of the amount provided for the Roosevelt Campobello International Park Commission, unless reduced by the House or Senate in a report accompanying the appropriations bill.'' (CR–H10497, October 15, 1986). Therefore, the Committee directs that the budget request prepared by the Roosevelt Campobello International Park Commission shall be submitted by the Administration directly to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations without any changes. The Administration, in its National Park Service budget justification, may comment on the Commission's budget request and make such additions and subtractions that it may propose. However, the amounts requested by the National Park Service shall be consistent with its obligations under international agreements. The Committee will consider the proposal from the Commission and the Administration will allocate the overall appropriation as specified in the report accompanying the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.
10	ME	Collins	EPA	National Estuary Program		$27,200,000	$26,700,000	Request at least fiscal year 2016 level of $26.7 million
11	ME	Collins	USGS	Water Resources Research Institute		$6,500,000	$6,500,000	Request at least fiscal year 2016 level of $6.5 million
12	ME	Collins	USGS	Groundwater and Streamflow Information Program.		$72,957,000	n/a	Request continued funding for the Groundwater and Streamflow Information Program
13	ME	Collins	USFWS	State and Tribal Wildlife Grants		$67,000,000	$60,600,000	Request fiscal year 2016 level funding of $60.6 million

14	ME	Collins	EPA	National Priorities Research Grant Program.	.....	0	$4,100,000	Request at least fiscal year 2016 level of $4.1 million
15	ME	Collins	OIG	Offices of Inspectors General	.....	.....	adequate funding	Include adequate funding for all OIGs contained in the bill

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE SUSTAINABLE URBAN FOREST COALITION

Dear Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall, and honorable subcommittee members:

The Sustainable Urban Forests Coalition (SUFC) represents more than 30 national organizations and corporations who care and advocate for sustainable trees and green infrastructure where people live. Collectively, we are asking for your support for several programs under the Interior Subcommittee's jurisdiction that support urban forests and green infrastructure.

Our Nation's 138 million acres of urban forests are vital to creating and maintaining healthy, livable communities of all sizes by providing scientifically proven social, economic, and environmental benefits to people living in populated areas. The National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council unveiled its Ten-Year Action Plan to advance urban forests nationwide. A key goal of the plan is to improve urban forest management, maintenance and stewardship. Caring for trees and landscapes in cities and towns creates a substantial demand for greencollar jobs in a sector poised for rapid growth. With a projected 90 percent of Americans living in urbanized areas by 2050, investing in livable communities needs to happen now.

SUFC is conscious and respectful of the Federal budget challenges. It is critical that decision makers are aware that the relatively small investment in our funding requests result in a leveraged positive return through matching funds, preventive measures, and community health and welfare benefits.

USDA FOREST SERVICE: STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY

Urban and Community Forestry Program (U&CF)

U&CF plays an integral part in promoting sound stewardship of our Nation's urban and community forests and trees. By providing important technical and financial support, U&CF helps cities, suburbs, and towns across the Nation enhance tree and forest cover, prepare for storms and other disturbance events, contain threats from native and invasive pests, and maximize the economic, social, and ecological benefits of their tree resources. In fiscal year 2015, U&CF again increased its impact—reaching over 200 million people in over 7,700 communities across all 50 States, the District of Columbia, U.S. Territories, and affiliated Pacific Island Nations. U&CF is a high-impact program and a smart investment as Federal support is often leveraged 2:1 (or in many cases significantly more) by States and partner organizations. As a model Federal program, U&CF consistently increases communities served, brings together diverse partners and resources, and shows that Federal investment can have huge and lasting impacts on communities of all sizes.

SUFC is very concerned with the significant decrease (16 percent) in the U&CF program in the President's fiscal year 2017 budget. In testimony before the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, U.S. Forest Service Chief Tidwell attributed the U&CF decrease to the increase in funding for the Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) program. While U&CF projects have the opportunity to compete for grant funding under LSR, the SUFC does not support shifting funds from U&CF to LSR. LSR is a complement to the U&CF program, not a replacement. The proposed 16 percent reduction in U&CF will have negative impacts in States and Territories across the country, affecting many local public and private partners and collaborative projects in which Federal assistance has been essential. The decrease will erode the capacity that has been developed in cities and towns of all sizes through the technical and financial assistance delivered by State forestry agencies in partnership with the U&CF program. SUFC recommends the Urban and Community Forestry Program be funded at $31.3 million in fiscal year 2017.

Community Forests and Open Space Conservation Program (CFP)

CFP has made substantial progress in preserving forests by increasing opportunities for Americans to connect with forests in their own communities and fostering new public-private partnerships. CFP has supported 27 community forest projects in cities and towns across 15 States and Territories. In the latest round of CFP grants, project partners leveraged $8.7 million in Federal funds to secure $31.8 million in non-Federal funding. As a result of these partnerships, more than 14,000 acres of private forestlands have been or soon will be acquired to create new or expand existing community forests. SUFC recommends an increase in funds to $5 million.

Forest Health Management

Forests across the country are threatened by insects and disease pathogens introduced from abroad as an unwanted side effect of international trade. The damage

usually starts in urban forests because most imported goods go to cities. As a result, municipal governments across the country are spending an estimated $3 billion each year to remove trees on city property killed by non-native pests. Homeowners are spending an additional $1 billion to remove and replace trees on their properties and are absorbing an additional $1.5 billion in reduced property values. The pests do not stay in the cities, however. They spread to the rural and wildland forests and threaten their many values. Examples include the emerald ash borer—now killing forest trees from New England to the Great Plains; and the polyphagous and Kuroshio shot hole borers now killing trees in southern California riparian areas. While preventing introductions is the desired approach, it is essential that the Forest Service initiate programs countering these pests as soon as they are detected. Forest Health Management program provides essential expertise and assistance to State and municipal agencies and private landowners working to prevent these pests' spread and to develop effective strategies to minimize the damage they cause. SUFC recommends $48 million for cooperative lands programs under the Forest Health Management program.

USDA FOREST SERVICE: FOREST AND RANGELAND RESEARCH

SUFC urges the subcommittee to provide funding of $303 million for the overall R&D program.

Urban Forestry Research

The Forest Service Research and Development (R&D) program provides critical financial support for urban forestry research activities to develop information and tools for understanding conditions and trends in our Nation's urban and community forests. Forest Service researchers have made huge strides in recent years through collaborative efforts to develop new tools, such as i-Tree, for mapping current tree cover, assessing trends, developing local strategies, and building greater understanding of the environmental, economic, and social services that trees and forests provide to communities. We urge the subcommittee to continue including language in Interior Appropriations reports encouraging the Forest Service to maintain a strong and vibrant urban forest research program.

Non-native Insects and Diseases Research

Among the major research challenges facing R&D, SUFC believes, is the destruction of our Nation's urban forests caused by non-native insects and diseases. People who value urban forests join supporters of rural and wildland forests in depending on Forest Service R&D to develop better tools for pest detection and protective strategies including chemical and biological controls and breeding of trees resistant to pests. Currently, however, R&D provides only about $5 million for research on non-native insects and diseases—less than 2 percent of its total budget. In the absence of a budget line item for invasive species research, we urge the subcommittee to include language in its Interior Appropriations report encouraging the Forest Service to increase funding for research targeting non-native insects and pathogens.

Urban Forest in Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA)

The SUFC also wishes to call the subcommittee's attention to our collaborative efforts with the Forest Service to bring urban forest data into the mainstream of the agency's national data-collection program. FIA has long provided the Nation's forest census, but it has not historically included urban areas because of its definition of forests. We ask the subcommittee to encourage the Forest Service to continue and strengthen its efforts to integrate urban forest data into FIA so that its critical data-collection efforts address all of our Nation's forests, including our current and expanding 138 million acres of urban forest.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Clean Water State Revolving Funds (CWSRF)

Green infrastructure, of which urban forests play a significant part, is a cost-effective and resilient approach to stormwater infrastructure needs that provides many community co-benefits: improving water and air quality; reducing a community's infrastructure cost and promoting economic growth. SUFC supports the EPA's goal of strengthening green infrastructure activities by incorporating green infrastructure and enhancing stormwater management. In fiscal year 2016, funding was reduced in the President's budget but restored by Congress to $1.39 billion, resulting in only a small reduction for the current fiscal year. In fiscal year 2017, the President's budget proposes an unprecedented cut to the CWSRF to just $979.5 million. SUFC asks the subcommittee to restore the CWSRF to the enacted fiscal year 2015 level

of $1.45 billion. SUFC also supports efforts to expand the use of green infrastructure to 20 percent to meet Clean Water Act goals through the CWSRF.

Urban Waters Federal Partnership

The Partnership is a unique 13 agency coordinated effort that helps stimulate local economies, create jobs, improve quality of life, and protect health by revitalizing urban waterways and the communities around them, focusing on underserved urban communities of all sizes. Partnership projects serve as a laboratory for developing and implementing innovative approaches to using Federal resources more efficiently and effectively—targeting investments and leveraging local leaders and community partners. SUFC supports the Urban Waters Federal Partnership, coordinated by the Environmental Protection Agency Office of Water.

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLPP)

SUFC supports robust funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) as reflected in the President's fiscal year 2017 budget. The State and Local Assistance Program provides matching grants to States and localities for protection and development of parks and recreation resources and is the primary Federal investment tool to ensure that families have easy access to urban forests in parks and open space, and neighborhood recreation resources. This nationally competitive program complements the existing State and local assistance program by creating opportunities for outdoor play as well as developing or enhancing outdoor recreation partnerships in cities. SUFC supports the President's fiscal year 2017 request of $110 million for the State and local assistance program, which includes $12 million for ORLPP.

Urban Parks Recreation Recovery Program (UPARR)

The reestablishment of UPARR within the National Parks Service, proposed to be funded through LWCF, is essential to bring nature to the urban communities. These competitive grants focus on engaging and connecting communities, especially young people, to their neighborhood parks through projects that would revitalize and rehabilitate park and recreation opportunities. SUFC supports the President's fiscal year 2017 request of $25 million for the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program (UPARR).

THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Urban Wildlife Refuges

With 101 refuges within 25 miles of 250,000 or more people, the Refuge System is a vital component of our urban forests. FWS also engages with 17 urban communities not directly connected to FWS refuges. SUFC agrees that the more engagement of individuals with their surrounding urban forests, the more they will come to understand and appreciate nature in and around their communities. SUFC supports the Refuge Visitor Service at $80.38 million with the additional $5.5 million above fiscal year 2016 enacted level to support the Urban Wildlife Refuges.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Community Trees
American Forests
American Planning Association
American Public Works Association
American Rivers
American Society of Consulting Arborists
American Society of Landscape Architects
Arbor Day Foundation
Bartlett Tree Foundation
California ReLeaf
Center for Chesapeake Communities
Center for Invasive Species Prevention
International Society of Arboriculture
National Association of Clean Water Agencies
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Association of Landscape Professionals
National Association of State Foresters
National Recreation and Parks Association
Outdoor Power Equipment Industry
Society of American Foresters
Society of Municipal Arborists
Student Conservation Association
The Davey Foundation
The Nature Conservancy
Tree Care Industry Association
Trust for Public Lands
Utility Arborist Association
Water Environment Federation

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE

The Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) would like to thank Chairwoman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall, and all the members of the subcommittee for the opportunity to provide testimony about TCC's priorities.

TCC is a non-profit intertribal consortium of 37 federally recognized Tribes and 41 communities located across Alaska's vast interior. TCC serves approximately 13,000 Alaska Natives in Fairbanks and the surrounding rural villages. Our traditional territory and current service area occupy a mostly roadless region that is nearly the size of Texas. It stretches from Fairbanks clear up to the Brooks Range and over to the Canadian border.

Remoteness poses many challenges, but I can assure you TCC meets those challenges every day. TCC's priorities over the coming years include substantially expanding public safety and court services, improving healthcare quality with a renewed focus on wellness and prevention, growing tribal influence in fish and game management, ensuring responsible economic development, and increasing employment in the villages. The fiscal year 2017 appropriations process provides this subcommittee with the opportunity to provide vital resources to help us achieve these goals. Today, I would like to highlight a few key areas, including the need for additional funds for the Indian Health Service, the importance of funding for tribal courts and hunting and fishing management, and the critical role of the Federal Government in funding responses to climate change in in-river—not just coastal—Alaska.

IHS BUDGET

TCC was very pleased to see that the President's budget contains a 6.5 percent increase over 2016 enacted levels. These additional funds are vital to addressing the critical need for health services for Alaska Natives and we hope the subcommittee is able to find the funds to meet these targets.

Similarly, TCC supports the $48 million increase targeted to Purchased and Referred Care (PRC). These funds are used to buy healthcare when a tribal organization or IHS cannot provide the services. As we reported to you over the last several years, the demand on PRC funding has increased as healthcare costs, especially provider fees, have increased. These dollars will provide much needed relief to PRC programs across the country and especially for TCC-one of the only tribal health entities in Alaska that does not have a regional hospital and relies heavily on PRC.

TCC supports the President's budget request for IHS which includes $10 million in small health clinic funding for the Small Ambulatory Program. In remote Alaska, where hub clinics are sometimes hundreds of miles from a patient—the village clinics play an integral role in providing not only the everyday healthcare, but the emergency care needed to support the healthcare impacts from an area that contains the highest rates of accidents and violence in the Nation. The funding would be used for grants to 8–10 tribes to construct new small ambulatory health clinics, and we are optimistic that some of these funds will be used to create additional healthcare facilities in the villages we serve.

And finally, TCC is relieved to see that, unlike last year, the President's budget contains an increase of $4 million for the Domestic Violence and Prevention Initiative (DVPI). These funds support efforts to reduce the incidence of domestic violence, which affects Alaska Native women at a much higher rate than other populations. The statistics are not new. The Indian Law and Order Commission's report made clear just how bad the situation was: Women in Alaska's rural villages report rates of domestic violence up to 10 times higher than in the rest of the United States. Physical assault victimizations rates are 12 times higher. We request that you meet the President's request for expansion of this very successful and urgently needed program.

TRIBAL COURTS FUNDING

One of TCC's strongest priorities is to see that our villages receive adequate public safety services. As the Indian Law and Order Commission's report made clear, there is a lot of work to be done to ensure public safety in Alaska's rural communities. Alaska is one of six States, called Public Law 280 States, in which jurisdiction over crimes in Native American communities rests mainly with the States. The BIA doesn't have enough funding to go around and so it prioritizes its public safety efforts in non Public Law 280 States on the assumption that Public Law 280 States are investing sufficiently in public safety and law enforcement in Native and rural communities. But this is simply not so. The Alaska Department of Public Safety, which has primary responsibility for providing law enforcement in rural Alaska, pro-

vides only 1.0 to 1.4 field officers for every one million acres. This means that at least 75 communities in Alaska lack any law enforcement presence at all. In most Alaska villages, the tribal courts are the only meaningful judicial voice for anything other than the most serious and violent of crimes.

Tribal courts allow our villages to address public safety concerns in a way that is more responsive, more culturally appropriate, more attuned to local concerns than the State system, and most importantly seeks to heal and end criminal actively through a holistic community approach rather than incarceration which perpetuates criminal activity and creates more victims. Therefore, TCC was very disappointed to see that the President's budget requests an $8 million reduction in funding for tribal courts in Public Law 280 States. The BIA estimated that it would need around $17 million in funding to maintain parity in Federal funding—which is itself only a fraction of actual need—for tribal courts in Public Law 280 and non-Public Law 280 States. Reducing this funding further will only exacerbate this disparity and is a terrible step in the wrong direction. We ask that the subcommittee find the funds necessary to maintain and expand this important initiative.

CLIMATE CHANGE

As this subcommittee has long heard from TCC and other tribes and tribal organizations, Indian and Alaska Native communities are bearing the brunt of the existing—and accelerating—effects of climate change. For us, this is not about future effects. We are being impacted now. Therefore, we are pleased to see that the President's budget includes $3.1 million in additional funds for Tribal Climate Resilience.

However, the budget justification for this request places a strong emphasis on combating the effects of climate change on coastal Arctic villages, such as coastal erosion, and notes that the proposed increase "will be set aside to support Alaska Native Villages in the Arctic and other critically vulnerable communities to improve the long-term resilience of their communities." Although we understand the serious difficulties faced by our fellow Alaska Native communities on the coast, it is important to understand that our communities are currently facing a massive increase in wildfires, riverbank erosions, spring flooding, substantial changes to flora and fauna distributions, and other major threats to physical and food security in our communities, all due to climate change.

It can be stated with certainty that in the spring and summer months, with flooding threats and millions of acres on fire at a given time, Interior Alaska experiences the most impacts of climate change of any place in the Nation. Senator Murkowski and I visited the hub village of McGrath this past October and saw first-hand how the already vulnerable Kuskokwim River bank is threatened by erosion and the community's response. This past summer, wildfires came literally within feet of destroying the villages of Nulato and Tanana and today there is a lot of work to be done towards rehabilitation of specific burned sites which impact these two villages. Therefore we ask the subcommittee to direct the BIA to make sure that this much-needed increase is also used to combat the effects of climate change on in-river villages as well.

SUBSISTENCE MANAGEMENT

The number one priority for not only Athabascans of Interior, but for all Alaska Natives is to continue traditional hunting and fishing practices which promote the social, cultural and spiritual well-being of our people. TCC and the Tribes along with Doyon and Fairbanks Native Association have partnered to ensure Alaska Natives and tribes have an increased role in hunting and fishing management. King Salmon have been a staple food source for many rural Alaskans across the State, yet failed management has recently prevented adequate subsistence harvests to meet our well-being needs. Tribal ability to manage hunting and fishing resources has been crippled by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, but because of our dedicated unity towards this issue, tribes are increasingly proving to fill a necessary role in order for the State and Federal managers to achieve success.

TCC has endeavored to take a stronger role in oversight and management of subsistence resources, including taking an active part in the establishment of intertribal fish commissions for the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers respectively. The sole reason, the State of Alaska achieved for the first time in years, its Yukon River salmon treaty obligations to Canada is because the Yukon River Intertribal Fish Commission called for a river-wide moratorium on King Salmon fishing.

The tribes are the most dedicated stakeholders in the efforts to save the King Salmon and should be given the proper funding and authority to carry out those stewardship duties that we will never turn our backs to. Therefore, TCC supports proposed increase of $5 million for the Tribal Management/Development Program,

with $2 million of this increase to address subsistence management in Alaska. We ask that you meet this important request and ensure the funding will go towards tribal projects rather than State, Federal or other projects that have continued to disenfranchise those most dependent on the resources—the rural Alaska Native people.

CONTRACT SUPPORT COSTS

Finally, let me address the contract support cost issue. It has long been recognized that TCC provides far better services to our communities than the BIA or IHS ever did, and this is why supporting and honoring our TCC contracts with the BIA and IHS is so important. Our ability to maximize the results of our self-governance and to run robust programs depends on our receiving full contract support cost (CSC) reimbursements.

In the past few years, significant strides have been made in this area. Thanks in large part to this subcommittee, we are now in an era of full CSC funding. We were delighted that the President's budget estimate for CSC again provides for full funding. However, we ask that the Committee discontinue a proviso that was included in last year's bill and in the President's request because it is counter to existing law. Specifically, the proviso would direct that CSC amounts that were obligated but not expended by a tribe for the current fiscal year be applied to CSCs otherwise due in subsequent fiscal years. The Indian Self-Determination Act already addresses the use and disposition of unexpended contract and compact funds. Therefore, the proviso is unnecessary. Further, the proviso will cause unnecessary accounting difficulties.

On a related note, we ask the subcommittee to include language in the appropriations act making clear that IHS must pay contract support costs on MSPI and DVPI program funds. Despite years of acknowledging that CSCs are due on these program funds, IHS in 2013 reversed course and started requiring tribes to cover these CSC costs with program funds. This position is in clear conflict the Indian Self-Determination Act, and nothing separates these programs from any other program within the Indian Health Service. Further, these program funds should be transferred to us through our existing self-governance compact, and it shouldn't be necessary for us to execute separate grant agreements with IHS. The whole idea of the 1988 and 1994 amendments to the Indian Self-Determination Act was to get away from having multiple different contracts and grants, and to consolidate and streamline our relationship with IHS.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on behalf of TCC. We believe that the proposed increases will have a deep, meaningful, impact for the tribal members of Interior Alaska, and for the betterment of all Alaskans.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE THEATRE COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the subcommittee, Theatre Communications Group—the national service organization for the American theatre—is grateful for this opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of our 523 not-for-profit member theatres across the country and the nearly 33 million audience members that the theatre community serves. We urge you to support funding at $155 million for the National Endowment for the Arts for fiscal year 2017.

The entire not-for-profit arts industry stimulates the economy, creates jobs, and attracts tourism dollars. The not-for-profit arts generate $135.2 billion annually in economic activity, support 4.13 million jobs, and return $22.3 billion in government revenue. Art museums, exhibits, and festivals combine with performances of theatre, dance, opera, and music to draw tourists and their consumer dollars to communities nationwide. Federal funding for the arts creates a significant return, generating many more dollars in matching funds for each Federal dollar awarded, and is clearly an investment in the economic health of America. In an economy where corporate donations and foundation grants to the arts are diminished and increased ticket prices would undermine efforts to broaden and diversify audiences, these Federal funds simply cannot be replaced. Maintaining the strength of the not-for-profit sector, along with the commercial sector, is vital to supporting the economic health of our Nation.

Our country's not-for-profit theatres develop innovative educational activities and outreach programs, providing millions of young people, including "at-risk" youth, with important skills for the future by expanding their creativity and developing problem-solving, reasoning, and communication abilities—preparing today's students to become tomorrow's citizens. Our theatres present new works and serve as catalysts for economic growth in their local communities. These theatres also nur-

ture and provide artistic homes for the development of the current generation of acclaimed writers, actors, directors, and designers working in regional theatre, on Broadway, and in the film and television industries. At the same time, theatres have become increasingly responsive to their communities, serving as healing forces in difficult times and producing work that reflects and celebrates the strength of our Nation's diversity.

Here are some recent examples of NEA grants and their impact:

Actors Theatre Of Louisville in Louisville, Kentucky, received $50,000 to support the Humana Festival of New American Plays. The festival is a showcase of new theatrical work featuring American playwrights. The company will produce several full-length plays, multiple 10-minute plays, and a commissioned work to be performed by its Acting Apprentice Company. Outreach activities will include panels and community forums. The event always attracts national theatre industry professionals from the United States and abroad.

The Coterie Theatre in Kansas City, Missouri, was awarded $10,000 to support the development and production of Imaginary Friends by Laurie Brooks. The theater commissioned Brooks to write a play for teens and families that is adapted from a short story by her brother and award-winning fantasy author, Terry Brooks. The story centers on a young teen with a serious illness who must face a demon alone. Playwright Brooks will further develop the play and add a new work of fantasy to the canon of dramatic literature available for young audiences. Residencies in schools and interactive post-show forums will prepare students for its challenging themes and topic. The Coterie may partner with Children's Mercy Hospital to benefit youth and families who are or have been recent patients.

Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, Oregon, received $70,000 to support productions of Vietgone by Qui Nguyen, directed by May Adrales, and The Winter's Tale by William Shakespeare, directed by Desdemona Chiang. The productions, which will play opposite each other in repertory, will be directed by Asian-American women and feature primarily Asian-American actors. Vietgone recounts the story of Vietnamese refugees who escaped the fall of Saigon and made it to the United States. The Winter's Tale will be set at the turn of the 20th century in dynastic mainland China. The productions will be accompanied by educational activities as part of the annual conference of the National Association of Asian-American Theatre Artists.

Trinity Repertory Company in Providence, Rhode Island, was awarded $20,000 to support a production of To Kill a Mockingbird, based on the novel by Harper Lee and adapted for the stage by Christopher Sergel. Directed by Brian McEleney and using color-blind casting, the production will be designed to reflect not only the Civil Rights Era in which the novel was written, but also the contemporary post-Ferguson world in which we live. The production will be supported by a wide range of in-school and community engagement activities such as artist-led classroom workshops, panel discussions, and post-show discussions with actors and artists.

These are only a few examples of the kinds of extraordinary programs supported by the National Endowment for the Arts. Indeed, the Endowment's Theatre Program is able to fund only 50 percent of the applications it receives, so 50 percent of applying theatres are turned away because available funds are insufficient. Theatre Communications Group urges you to support a funding level of $155 million for fiscal year 2017 for the NEA; to maintain citizen access to the cultural, educational, and economic benefits of the arts; and to advance creativity and innovation in communities across the United States.

The arts infrastructure of the United States is critical to the Nation's well-being and economic vitality. It is supported by a remarkable combination of government, business, foundation, and individual donors and represents a striking example of Federal/State/private partnership. Federal support for the arts provides a measure of stability for arts programs nationwide and is critical at a time when other sources of funding are diminished. Further, the American public favors spending Federal tax dollars in support of the arts. The NEA was funded at $148 million in the fiscal year 2016 budget; however, it has never recovered from a 40 percent budget cut in fiscal year 1996, and its programs are still under-funded. We urge the subcommittee to fund the NEA at a level of $155 million to preserve the important cultural programs reaching Americans across the country.

Thank you for considering this request.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE TOHONO O'ODHAM NATION OF ARIZONA

SUMMARY OF BUDGET REQUESTS

1. Funding for Interior's implementation of SAWRSA/AWSA water rights settlement.

2. Increased funding for BIA Law Enforcement programs.

3. Increased funding for BIA Roads Maintenance.

4. Increased funding for Indian Health Service Facilities Construction.

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Good afternoon, Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall and distinguished members of the subcommittee. My name is Edward Manuel and I am the Chairman of the Tohono O'odham Nation, a federally recognized tribe with more than 32,000 members. The Tohono O'odham Reservation consists of more than 2.8 million acres in the Sonoran Desert, shares a 75-mile border with Mexico, and is one of the largest Indian reservations in the United States.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify about the Nation's Federal funding priorities. Let me begin by saying that the Nation appreciates the subcommittee's dedication to providing Indian Country with much-needed resources in a very challenging fiscal climate. My testimony will focus on the following priorities: funding to implement our 1982 water rights settlement, law enforcement, roads, and healthcare.

I. FUNDING TO IMPLEMENT THE NATION'S 1982 WATER RIGHTS SETTLEMENT

The President's fiscal year 2017 budget request contains no request for funding to implement the Nation's historic water settlement, the Southern Arizona Water Rights Settlement Act of 1982, Public Law 97–293 ("SAWRSA"), as amended in 2004 by the Arizona Water Settlements Act, Public Law 108–451 ("AWSA"). The Nation is facing a serious water crisis because of the United States' continued failure to fund this water settlement, despite statutory authorization and clear direction to Interior to do so. Under SAWRSA, as amended through the AWSA, the Nation gave up significant superior claims to ground water and surface water in the Upper Santa Cruz Basin. In exchange for releasing these claims, the United States promised that the Nation would receive reliable, affordable and long-term access to Central Arizona Project (CAP) water.

In SAWRSA, Congress created the Cooperative Fund to pay for water deliveries: The parties to the settlement recognized there would be costs associated with the delivery of the Nation's CAP water. To address these ongoing delivery charges in 1982 Congress created the Cooperative Fund and authorized $16 million in Federal contributions toward the Fund. But in fact, the United States has never made this contribution to the Fund. In 2004, Congress doubled the United States' promised contribution to $32 million, and explicitly identified the Lower Colorado River Basin Development Fund as an additional source for this funding. SAWRSA as amended provides that Interior must provide notice to Congress of the funding amounts necessary to carry out the United States' obligations under the Act. However, despite repeated efforts to spur the Department into action, Interior has never requested any of the $32 million authorized under SAWRSA.

Failure to make Federal contributions leaves the Cooperative Fund severely undercapitalized: The settlement provided that the Federal Government can only use the interest (and not the principal) for the Nation's water delivery costs. Had the two $16 million Federal contributions been deposited as intended, the principal and accrued interest on these deposits would total more than $90 million today. Instead, as of March 4, 2016, there is only $34,393,003 in the Fund, less than $14 million of which is expendable interest. Again, despite repeated efforts to urge the Department to act, Interior has never officially notified Congress of the Fund shortfall.

Federal projections show that the Cooperative Fund will run out of interest within 3 years: Because these key Federal contributions were never made, the Cooperative Fund is in jeopardy—Interior modeling shows that the Fund will run out of expendable interest within 3 years if the Nation uses the CAP water entitlement guaranteed by its settlements. At present, the delivery costs chargeable to the Cooperative Fund are approximately $4.5 million per year. These delivery costs continue to rise with the increase in the cost of energy needed to deliver the CAP water. In the absence of swift action to rectify the implementation problems under SAWRSA and AWSA, the Nation will not be able to receive the benefits of the substitute water supply promised to the Nation in the settlements.

If the Cooperative Fund runs out of interest, the Nation will be unable to take delivery of its CAP replacement water, and the consequences will be severe: Unless

SAWRSA is funded as Congress has authorized and directed, the Nation will not receive the benefit of its bargain and may lose access to its water entitlements—resulting in the closure of long-operating farms in which the Nation has invested tens of millions of tribal dollars, layoffs for dozens of employees, default on crop loans, and the breach of related water settlement agreements.

Interior must act to begin to adequately capitalize the Cooperative Fund: The Nation respectfully requests that this subcommittee direct Interior to provide formal notice of the Cooperative Fund shortfall and that funding be included in the fiscal year 2017 budget for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Without water, water settlements are meaningless, and we ask the Congress to ensure the agreement the United States made with the Nation is fully implemented.

II. LAW ENFORCEMENT

The President's fiscal year 2017 budget requests $341 million for Bureau of Indian Affairs Law Enforcement, which is a decrease of over $6 million from the fiscal year 2016 enacted level. The Nation requests that Congress increase funding for BIA law enforcement, not decrease it.

The Nation faces significant and unique law enforcement challenges: The location and size of the Nation's reservation presents unique and difficult law enforcement challenges. The Tohono O'odham Police Department (TOPD) must cover a huge geographic area, including many remote and isolated areas that are difficult to access. Communication among law enforcement agencies is also a challenge. In addition, our reservation includes a 75-mile southern border with Mexico, which is the longest shared international border of any Indian tribe in the United States. In addition, there are fourteen O'odham communities with a population of 1,800 members located across the border. These tribal members living in Mexico present unique border issues and challenges for the Nation. Because of the Nation's location at the border, drug trafficking, illegal immigration and border security divert tribal police force resources. The Nation spends millions of dollars annually from tribal revenues to help meet the United States' border security responsibilities.

Current funding is utterly inadequate to meet the needs of tribal law enforcement: As NCAI has noted, "The Bureau of Indian Affairs recently conducted an analysis of law enforcement needs pursuant to the Tribal Law and Order Act, and found that current funding meets only 42 percent of the need for law enforcement, and an additional $337 million is needed to bring staffing up to median county government law enforcement levels based on population." (NCAI Budget Request fiscal year 2017). The Nation's unique law enforcement needs require even greater resources. In 2015 TOPD officers handled 92,887 calls for service—a 5.26 percent increase in calls over 2014 figures. During the same year, TOPD and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) seized over 368,000 pounds of marijuana on the Nation. These increased law enforcement needs have led to significant capacity challenges at the Nation's Corrections Center, where a facility with a rated capacity of 107 beds serves an average daily population of 140 inmates. Millions of dollars in additional funding is desperately needed to address improvements at the Corrections Center ($2.1 million) and to hire and train officers, purchase vehicles, and to improve the security of the police station ($5.9 million).

The Nation strongly supports NCAI's funding recommendations: The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) recommends an increase in funding for BIA law enforcement by at least $200 million over the fiscal year 2015 funding level of $328 million (the fiscal year 2016 enacted level was $347.9 million), including an increase in funds for officer recruitment and training and for tribal detention facilities operations and maintenance. The Tohono O'odham Nation strongly supports and concurs in that request.

III. ROADS FUNDING

For fiscal year 2017 the President has requested $26.8 million for BIA Road Maintenance, an increase of only $90,000 from the fiscal year 2016 enacted level. NCAI has advocated for a significantly greater funding level, at $40 million.

The BIA Road Maintenance Program is responsible for maintaining approximately 29,400 miles of roads in Indian Country, and the funding for that program has been woefully inadequate for years. According to NCAI, the current deferred maintenance for BIA roads is in the neighborhood of $300 million.

The Nation has hundreds of miles of poorly maintained roads: The Tohono O'odham Nation's reservation encompasses over 4,500 square miles. There are hundreds of miles of roads on the Nation, including approximately 500 miles of arterial and collector roads (roads with significant traffic and higher speed limits), plus many more local and dirt and gravel roads used by the Nation's members. Maintain-

ing the reservation's vast road system is a major challenge. Our roads are in very bad condition, due in large part due to inadequate BIA funding for repair and maintenance. The poor condition of the roads is further exacerbated by heavy monsoon rains and flooding. The roads are marred by sink holes, pot holes, broken and cracked pavement, and weakened and washed out bridges. During monsoon season, the flooding often completely inundates the roads and makes them impassable; it also washes out bridges, isolating communities, stranding children on school buses and preventing access for emergency vehicles. A number of our people have been killed by flooding while traveling on these roads.

Bureaucratic red tape further exacerbates road damage: The Nation's already deteriorated roads suffer further damage from heavy usage by CBP vehicles, which have increased dramatically in number on the Nation's reservation in response to border security issues. The poor conditions of these roads negatively affects CBP's and TOPD's ability to respond to emergencies and support mission critical operations, and tribal members' ability to undertake simple day-to-day activities like driving to the grocery store or doctor's office. Both the Nation and CBP need roads that are accessible and safe to travel, and that ensure the safety and security of tribal citizens, TOPD law enforcement, and CBP patrol officers.

The Nation has attempted to work with CBP to repair these damaged roads, but BIA objects to these repairs because of liability concerns while at the same time acknowledging that the BIA does not have the funding to repair them. Despite years of discussion, BIA and CBP have not been able to reach agreement on how they can use their existing appropriations and authorities to fund the repair of the roads damaged by CBP vehicles—effectively endangering the safety of both CBP and the Nation's citizens using those roads.

We ask that the subcommittee work with the HSGAC Subcommittee to make clear in both appropriations bills that both agencies have authority and responsibility to use their funding to repair and maintain the Nation's roads that have been damaged by CBP vehicles.

The Nation strongly supports NCAI's funding recommendations: In sum, the Nation strongly supports NCAI's recommendation that Congress provide $40 million for the BIA Road Maintenance Program—as NCAI has made clear, this is the minimum amount needed "to begin to address the most critical maintenance needs of BIA roads in Indian Country." (NCAI Budget Request 2017).

IV. HEALTH CARE

The President's fiscal year 2017 budget request includes $132 million for Health Care Facilities Construction, an increase of $27 million from the fiscal year 2016 enacted level. The increase will provide an additional $11.4 million for construction projects from the Health Care Facilities Construction Priority List. This will provide funding for the six Health Care Facilities Construction projects in fiscal year 2017, none of which are on the Nation.

The Indian Health Service Unit that serves the Nation in Sells, Arizona is over 50 years old and one of the oldest facilities within IHS: The Sells IHS Unit can handle only minor medical issues, and is completely inadequate to serve the Nation's needs. The Sells replacement hospital has been on the IHS facilities construction list for more than 20 years. There are several projects ahead of the Nation's Sells IHS Unit on the priority list, totaling hundreds of millions of dollars. Even with the requested budget increase, the Sells Unit still will not be funded, although it will be closer to being funded. This illustrates the need for additional funding for Health Care Facilities Construction. Additional funding is needed for IHS to work its way down the "priority list" and eventually begin work on a replacement facility for the Nation.

We ask that the Committee provide substantial increases to the IHS Facilities budget.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND

Chairwoman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall, and distinguished members of the Interior subcommittee:

Thank you very much for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of The Trust for Public Land in support of programs under your jurisdiction for the fiscal year 2017 appropriations process. The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a national nonprofit land conservation organization working to protect land for people in communities across the Nation. We are extremely grateful for the support members of this subcommittee and other conservation leaders in Congress have shown for Federal conservation programs during these challenging fiscal times. We recognize that

the subcommittee will again face enormous challenges in meeting the broad range of priority needs in the Interior and Environment bill this year. Our work in many of your States and elsewhere around the country shows that there is tremendous support for conservation and access to recreation at the local, State and Federal level, and the programs under your jurisdiction play a critical role in bringing those community visions to reality. Thank you for your support.

Federal funding is an absolutely critical part of the conservation toolbox and provides manifold benefits to the American people. Given the limited public conservation funding at all levels of government, TPL works to leverage Federal conservation dollars, bringing to bear private philanthropic support as well as State and local funding to forge solutions to sometimes complex conservation funding challenges. The major programs under your jurisdiction that we count on year in and year out are the entire suite of Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) programs—including BLM, FWS, NPS and USFS acquisitions, NPS State and local grants, the Forest Legacy Program, the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund and the American Battlefield Protection Program—as well as the USFWS North American Wetlands Conservation Act and the USFS Community Forest Program.

Land and Water Conservation Fund.—The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2014. In the fiscal year 2016 omnibus appropriations bill, Congress took an important step by reauthorizing the program for three additional years until 2018 and appropriating $450 million, an increase from $306 million. These two actions were a major achievement. We are extremely grateful to the members of the subcommittee for their critical role in this successful effort, which will result in important conservation and outdoor recreation investments at the local, State and Federal levels. Investments in conservation and outdoor recreation make sound economic sense. The Outdoor Industry Association estimates that active outdoor recreation contributes $646 billion annually to the U.S. economy, supports nearly 6.1 million jobs across the country, and generates $39.9 billion in annual national tax revenue.

We strongly support the fiscal year 2017 President's budget proposal to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund at $900 million, with $475 million from discretionary sources and $425 million in mandatory funds, for the various component programs funded under LWCF. In the fiscal year 2017 bill, we respectfully request that you allocate at least the $475 million in discretionary funding to support essential community-based conservation and outdoor recreation needs. We recognize that the mandatory funding request requires additional legislative action, and we appreciate the support of the subcommittee as that process moves forward. Continued annual investment in the entire suite of LWCF programs as proposed in the budget is essential and we are ready to work with the subcommittee to ensure that dollars invested are well spent on our Nation's most urgent needs. We greatly appreciate the key role your subcommittee plays in ensuring that program dollars are used for high-priority strategic investments and appreciate that in challenging budgetary times you have maintained a commitment to this bipartisan program.

LWCF's programs bring specific and complementary conservation benefits to the American public. These key programs are:

BLM/FWS/NPS/USFS Land Acquisitions.—Every year tens of millions of Americans, as well as visitors to our country, enjoy our Federal public lands—national parks, forests, wildlife refuges and BLM conservation lands. Recent data shows that National Park Service units were visited by larger numbers than in the past 20 years. Strategic inholding and other acquisitions in these Federal areas through LWCF ensure recreation access and nature education; foster vital economic growth; protect clean water and other community resources; enhance the incomparable natural and scenic treasures that belong to all Americans; and frequently resolve complex land-use conflicts and produce management savings. Without adequate funding, the unfortunate alternative often is an irretrievable loss of public use and enjoyment of these areas and irreversible damage to the resources we all care about.

This is precisely the choice for numerous outdoor recreation and natural resource protection projects budgeted in fiscal year 2017, including lands in the Tahoe and Eldorado national forests in California, Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, and the Appalachian Trail near Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. The Trust for Public Land is working in these and other areas identified in the President's budget and looks forward to working with the subcommittee as you consider these critical needs.

We applaud the inclusion of recreational access line items in the fiscal year 2016 omnibus appropriations bill for each of the four land management agencies—with particular emphasis on BLM and USFS—and support similarly focused funding in the fiscal year 2017 bill to address opening up and improving public access to the outdoors.

We urge the subcommittee to allocate at least the discretionary funding levels for each land management agency as proposed in the fiscal year 2017 President's budget: BLM—$32.301 million; FWS: $35.884 million; NPS: $37.314 million; USFS: $49.703 million.

USFS: Forest Legacy Program.—For 25 years, the Forest Legacy Program has been an extraordinarily effective program, providing assistance to States and localities seeking to preserve important working forests. It has protected over 2.5 million acres of forestland and has leveraged more than the required 25 percent match. For fiscal year 2017, the President's budget recommends projects that provide multiple public benefits through forest protection—clean water, wildlife protection, climate change adaptation and mitigation, public access to recreation, economic development and sustainable forestry. We urge your continued support for sustained investment in this strategic and successful program. Included in the fiscal year 2017 budget proposal are numerous projects where TPL is working with States, landowners and other partners to protect recreation access for snowmobilers and hikers, ensure jobs in the woods, buffer important Federal and State conservation areas and provide strategic land conservation that fits a larger goal. Among these are the Whitefish Lake Project which will protect the recreational access, a municipal water supply and critical wildlife habitat near Whitefish and Columbia Falls in Montana; a 3,714-acre tract in the Rio Brazos watershed in New Mexico; and a 1,533-acre property at Wallowa Lake in northeastern Oregon. We support a minimum of $62.347 million in discretionary funding for the Forest Legacy Program in fiscal year 2017.

USFWS: Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund.—We are grateful for the subcommittee's historic support for USFWS grant programs, including the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (CESCF), which leverages State and private funds and has protected threatened and endangered species habitat across the Nation. Two components of this program are funded via LWCF: the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Land Acquisition program and the Recovery Land Acquisition (RLA) program. The CESCF has been critical to communities in Montana, California, and Hawaii where landowners and public wildlife managers are working together through integrated HCP's to foster species recover and appropriate economic development. We support at least the enacted level of $30.8 million for the HCP and RLA programs.

NPS: State and Local Assistance grants.—Since 1965, the State and local assistance grant program has provided over $4 billion in Federal funds for more than 42,000 projects in States and local communities for park protection and development of recreation facilities. This program reaches deep into communities across our Nation, supporting citizen-led efforts to conserve places of local importance and opportunities for close-to-home recreation. Through our Parks for People Program, The Trust for Public Land works with local communities to create, build, design, fund and care for parks, trails and playgrounds. As we continue our work with many of these communities to meet these needs, we hope the subcommittee will fully fund the administration's discretionary request for stateside grants and that a mandatory full-funding LWCF solution will provide much-needed additional funding for this important program. We also strongly support the allocation of a portion of LWCF State and local assistance funds to the nationwide competitive program, the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Program, which has now been included in three consecutive appropriations bills. Last year Congress demonstrated a deeper commitment to this program by bringing its funding level up to $12 million, for which we are extremely grateful. We greatly appreciate the subcommittee's leadership in setting aside these funds and support an allocation of no less than $12 million for ORLP in fiscal year 2017.

NPS: American Battlefield Protection Program.—We applaud the subcommittee for its longstanding commitment to this important program, which complements acquisitions of threatened Civil War, Revolutionary War, and War of 1812 properties in national park units with non-Federal land protection of key battlefield sites. We hope that Congress can fully fund the program again at the enacted $10 million level.

Beyond LWCF, we urge the subcommittee to provide adequate funding to other conservation programs including:

USFWS: North American Wetlands Conservation Act.—We respectfully request your support for program funding at the enacted and proposed level of $34.1 million in fiscal year 2017. The North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) provides much-needed matching grants to carry out wetlands conservation, restoration and enhancement projects. A recent NAWCA grant will help ensure protection of a 215-acre property in the growing suburbs of Portland, Maine, including a 46 acre pond that provides habitat for waterfowl and migratory birds. NAWCA is a highly

leveraged program with a substantial record of success and is another important Federal conservation tool to support critical wetland habitat.

USFS: Community Forest Program.—We urge your continued support for the Community Forest Program (CFP), which complements existing conservation programs by helping communities and tribes identify, purchase, and manage locally important forestlands that are threatened with development. These community forests can be tailored to local needs, from timber revenue for municipal or county budgets to recreation access and outdoor education. Every Federal dollar from CFP is evenly matched by funding from State, local, and private sources. The Forest Service has now approved 27 grants in 15 States for innovative local and tribal projects, and the program has generated significant interest from local entities concerned about the future of their close-to-home forests. Given the strong interest in community forests from coast to coast, we urge you to include $5 million in the fiscal year 2017 bill for this innovative conservation tool.

Wildfire Disaster Funding Act.—We also support efforts to improve budgeting for forest fire management that will provide Federal agencies the means to fight fires without raiding other important Federal programs, like LWCF. America's forests and forest-dependent communities are at risk from outbreaks of pests and pathogens, persistent drought, and the buildup of hazardous fuels. Urbanization and development patterns are placing more homes and communities near fire-prone landscapes, leading to more destructive and costly wildfires. Unfortunately and again in fiscal year 2015, the 10-year average was not enough to meet the USFS suppression needs, forcing the agency to transfer $700 million from non-suppression accounts to make up for the shortfall. The current wildfire suppression funding model and cycle of transfers and repayments has negatively impacted the ability to implement forest management, among many other activities. Additionally, the increasing 10-year average to has not met annual suppression needs since before fiscal year 2002, which is why we are thankful to the subcommittee for the full transfer repayment and increased suppression funding in fiscal year 2016. However, we understand this is not expected to occur every year. DOI and USFS need a long-term fire funding solution that would result in stable and predictable budgets.

We appreciate the subommittee's support of the bipartisan Wildfire Disaster Funding Act, which addresses Federal fire funding challenges as well as other bipartisan congressional efforts in this regard. We respectfully request a bipartisan fire funding solution that would (1) access disaster funding, (2) minimize transfers, and (3) address the continued erosion of agency budgets over time, with the goal of reinvesting in key programs that would restore forests to healthier conditions.

The programs highlighted here are critical to the future of conservation at the local, State and Federal levels; reflect the continued demand on the part of the American people for access to outdoor recreation; and help sustain our economy and reflect the true partnership that exists in Federal conservation efforts. As ever, we are deeply thankful for the subcommittee's recognition of the importance of these programs and urge you to maintain robust funding for them in the fiscal year 2017 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies bill. Thank you for your help and support, and for your consideration of our requests.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE USGS COALITION

The USGS Coalition appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony about the fiscal year 2017 budget for the United States Geological Survey (USGS). The USGS Coalition supports the administration's budget request of $1.2 billion for the USGS. The requested funding would allow the agency, by advancing scientific discovery and innovation, to sustain current efforts and make strategic investments that will produce the impartial knowledge and decision support tools needed by decision-makers across the country.

Few modern problems can be addressed by a single scientific discipline. The USGS is uniquely positioned to provide information and inform responses to many of the Nation's greatest challenges. The USGS is an agency that has a unique capacity to deploy truly interdisciplinary teams of experts to gather data, conduct research, and develop integrated decision support tools that improve ecosystem management, ensure accurate assessments of our water quality and quantity, reduce risks from natural and human-induced hazards, deliver timely assessments of mineral and energy resources, and provide emergency responders with accurate geospatial data and maps.

The USGS Coalition is an alliance of over 70 organizations united by a commitment to the continued vitality of the United States Geological Survey to provide critical data and services. The Coalition supports increased Federal investment in

USGS programs that underpin responsible natural resource stewardship, improve resilience to natural and human-induced hazards, and contribute to the long-term health, security, and prosperity of the Nation.

ESSENTIAL SERVICES FOR THE NATION

Established by Congress as a branch of the Department of the Interior in 1879, the United States Geological Survey has a national mission that extends beyond the boundaries of the Nation's public lands to positively impact the lives of all Americans. The agency plays a crucial role in protecting the public from natural hazards, assessing water quality and quantity, providing geospatial data, and conducting the science necessary to manage our Nation's biological, mineral, and energy resources. Through its offices across the country, the USGS works with partners to provide high-quality research and data to policymakers, emergency responders, natural resource managers, civil and environmental engineers, educators, and the public. A few examples of the USGS' valuable work are provided below.

The USGS plays an important role in reducing risks from natural hazards that jeopardize human lives and result in billions of dollars in damages annually. Seismic networks and hazard analysis are used to formulate earthquake probabilities and to establish building codes. The continued efforts on an earthquake early warning system, ShakeAlert, can provide advance notice of ground shaking from an earthquake to allow for the protection of life and property. USGS volcano monitoring provides warnings to avian officials about impending eruptions. Data from the USGS network of streamgages enable the National Weather Service to issue flood and drought warnings. The bureau and its Federal partners map seasonal wildfires and assess the potential spread of fires.

The Survey collects scientific information on water availability and quality to inform the public and decision-makers about the status of freshwater resources and how they are changing over time. During the past 130 years, the USGS has collected streamflow data at over 21,000 sites, water-level data at over 1,000,000 wells, and chemical data at over 338,000 surface-water and groundwater sites. This information is needed to effectively manage freshwaters—both above and below the land surface—for domestic, public, agricultural, commercial, industrial, recreational, and ecological purposes.

USGS assessments of mineral and energy resources—including rare earth elements, coal, oil, unconventional natural gas, and geothermal—are essential for making decisions about the Nation's future. The Survey identifies the location and quantity of domestic mineral and energy resources, and assesses the economic and environmental effects of resource extraction and use. The agency is mapping domestic supplies of rare earth elements necessary for widespread deployment of new energy technologies, which can reduce dependence on foreign oil. The USGS is the sole Federal source of information on mineral potential, production, and consumption.

USGS science plays a critical role in informing sound management of natural resources on Federal and State lands. The USGS conducts research and monitoring of fish, wildlife, and vegetation—data that informs management decisions by other Interior bureaus regarding protected species and land use. Ecosystems science is also used to control invasive species and wildlife diseases that can cause billions of dollars in economic losses. The Survey provides information for resource managers as they develop adaptive management strategies for restoration and long-term use of the Nation's natural resources in the face of environmental change.

Research conducted by the USGS is vital to predicting the impacts of land use and climate change on water resources, wildfires, and ecosystems. The Landsat satellites have collected the largest archive of remotely sensed land data in the world, allowing for access to current and historical images that are used to assess the impact of natural disasters and monitor global agriculture production. The USGS also assesses the Nation's potential for carbon sequestration. Other Interior bureaus use USGS research on how climate variability affects fish, wildlife, and ecological processes to inform natural resource management decisions.

FUNDING

Over the years, Congress has worked in a bipartisan fashion to provide essential funding to the USGS. These efforts have paid dividends and helped the USGS provide answers to the challenging questions facing decision-makers across the country.

The funding level proposed for fiscal year 2017 for the USGS would allow the agency to invest in mission critical areas, including:

—Support for development of the Landsat 9 ground system;
—Development of methods to assess regional and national water use trends during drought;

—New research on native pollinators, which are essential to our Nation's agricultural and natural systems;
—Establishment of a real-time water quality monitoring capabilities along the Northeast Coast to further a prototype contaminant detection network;
—Improvement of earthquake monitoring in the Central and Eastern United States;
—Development of new tools to detect and control new and emerging invasive species;
—Establishment of a new Great Lakes Climate Science Center to improve research in this distinctive region;
—Accelerate assessments of domestic unconventional oil and gas resources;
—Expand use of rapid deployable streamgages to improve data collection during floods;
—Enhanced research in the Artic on sea-level rise, severe storms, and/or melting permafrost; and
—Provide support for 3DEP to provide lidar coverage for the country and increased support for topographical mapping for the United States.

We are also pleased to see the proposed increases for Core Science Systems, Science Support, and facilities. These parts of the USGS budget are essential to the success of scientific research and monitoring conducted by other programs in the bureau. All three budget lines were lower in fiscal year 2016 than they were in fiscal year 2011. Currently, the USGS is faced with approximately $400 million in deferred maintenance to facilities and research centers. Continued deferment is creating situations in which one-of-a-kind and mission critical samples and data are being lost.

Through careful management and deferring staff travel and training, the USGS has survived the recent budget cuts resulting from sequestration. Staff training and participation in scientific meetings, however, are necessary investments that help USGS maintain its technical capacity. It is through exchanges at scientific meetings and workshops that new ideas emerge and scientific analyses are shared, challenged by colleagues, and honed prior to submitting research for publication in peer-reviewed journals. We encourage Congress to work with the USGS to ensure that scientists are able to fully participate in scientific meetings.

As a science agency, much of the USGS budget is dedicated to salaries and equipment that must be maintained and updated to ensure the continuity of data acquisition and that the data gathered are reliable and available for future scientific investigations. We believe that the leadership of the USGS is doing all it can, and has been for a number of years, to contain costs while continuing to deliver high quality science.

CONCLUSION

We recognize the financial challenges facing the Nation, but losing irreplaceable data can increase costs to society today and in the future. Data not collected and analyzed today is data lost forever. This is particularly significant for environmental monitoring systems, where the loss of a year's data can limit the scope and reliability of long-term dataset analysis. The USGS Coalition requests that Congress work to provide $1.2 billion for fiscal year 2017.

The USGS Coalition appreciates the subcommittee's past leadership in strengthening the United States Geological Survey. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE UNITED STATES SECTION OF THE PACIFIC SALMON COMMISSION

Mr. Chairman, and honorable members of the subcommittee, I am Ron Allen, the Alternate Tribal Commissioner and Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee for the U.S. Section of the Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC). The U.S. Section prepares an annual budget for implementation of the Pacific Salmon Treaty. The integrated budget details program needs and costs for tribal, Federal, and State agencies involved in the treaty. Tribal participation in the treaty process is funded in the Bureau of Indian Affairs budget.

In order meet the increased obligations under the 2009–2018 Pacific Salmon Treaty Agreement the 25 affected tribes identified costs at $4,800,000 for tribal research projects and participation in the U.S.-Canada Pacific Salmon Treaty process, an increase of $520,000 over fiscal year 2015 enacted level. The funding

for tribal participation in the Pacific Salmon Treaty is a line item in the BIA's budget under Rights Protection Implementation.

Under U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service programs, the U.S. Section identified needs as follows:

> USFWS participation in the treaty process is funded at $372,362 for fiscal year 2015. The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission's Regional Mark Center (PSMFC) receives support from the USFWS to provide data services to the PSC process at a level of $236,189 for fiscal year 2015. The total for the two programs is $608,551. This represents a decrease from fiscal year 2010 levels, which were $417,673 for USFWS and $315,000 for PSMFC, for a grand total of $732,673. The U.S. Section recommends increasing the fiscal year 2017 funding for these programs by $50,000, which partially restores both programs to previous funding levels.

This base funding for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service supports critically important on-going work. The funding for Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission's Regional Mark Center is utilized to meet treaty requirements concerning data exchange with Canada. These program recommendations are integrated with those of the State and Federal agencies to avoid duplication of effort and provide for the most efficient expenditure of scarce funds.

Funding to support activities under the Pacific Salmon Commission comes from the Departments of Interior, State, and Commerce. The U.S. Section can provide a cross-9cut budget summary to the Committee. Adequate funding from all three Departments is necessary for the U.S. to meet its treaty obligations. All of the funds are needed for critical data collection and research activities directly related to the implementation and are used in cooperative programs involving Federal, State, and tribal fishery agencies and the Department of Fisheries in Canada. The commitment of the United States is matched by the commitment of the Government of Canada.

The U.S. Section of the PSC is recommending an adjustment to support the work carried out by the 24 treaty tribes' participating in implementation of the treaty. Programs carried out by the tribes are closely coordinated with those of the States and Federal agencies. Tribal programs are essential for the United States to meet its international obligations. Tribal programs have taken on additional management responsibilities due to funding issues with State agencies. All participating agencies need to be adequately supported to achieve a comprehensive U.S. effort to implement the treaty.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service activities are necessary so the United States can maintain the critical database to implement the treaty. The work of the Regional Mark Processing Center includes maintaining and updating a coastwide computerized information management system for salmon harvest data as required by the treaty. This work has become even more important to monitor the success of management actions at reducing impacts on ESA-listed salmon populations. Canada has a counterpart database. The U.S. database will continue to be housed at the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission.

Mr. Chairman, the United States and Canada established the Pacific Salmon Commission, under the Pacific Salmon Treaty of 1985, to conserve salmon stocks, provide for optimum production of salmon, and to control salmon interceptions. After 30 years, the work of the Pacific Salmon Commission continues to be essential for the wise management of salmon in the Northwest, British Columbia, and Alaska. For example, upriver bright fall Chinook salmon from the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River are caught in large numbers in Alaskan and Canadian waters. Tribal and non-tribal fishermen harvest sockeye salmon from Canada's Fraser River in the Strait of Juan de Fuca and in Puget Sound. Canadian trollers off of the west coast of Vancouver Island catch Washington coastal Coho salmon and Puget Sound Chinook salmon. In the Northern Boundary area between Canada and Alaska, fish from both countries are intercepted by the other country in large numbers. The Commission provides a forum to ensure cooperative management of salmon populations. The agreements in the current Annex Chapters for management of chinook, coho, chum, and transboundary populations expire at the end of 2018. The Annex Chapter for management of Fraser River sockeye and pink chapter expires at the end of 2019. The United States and Canada are negotiating revisions to the current agreements. Based on past experience, the negotiation process will require additional meetings to reach a successful conclusion. It is important to have adequate resources for U.S. participants to negotiate the best outcome.

Before the treaty, fish wars often erupted with one or both countries overharvesting fish that were returning to the other country, to the detriment of the resource. At the time the treaty was signed, Chinook salmon were in a severely de-

pressed state as a result of overharvest in the ocean as well as environmental degradation in the spawning rivers. Under the treaty, both countries committed to rebuild the depressed runs of Chinook stocks, and they recommitted to that goal in 1999 when adopting a coastwide abundance based approach to harvest management. Under this approach, harvest management will complement habitat conservation and restoration activities being undertaken by the States, tribes, and other stakeholders in the Pacific Northwest to address the needs of salmon listed for protection under the Endangered Species Act. The 2008 Chinook agreement continued these commitments. The combination of these efforts is integral to achieving success in rebuilding and restoring healthy, sustainable salmon populations.

Finally, you should take into account the fact that the value of the commercial harvest of salmon subject to the treaty, managed at productive levels under the treaty, supports the infrastructure of many coastal and inland communities. The value of the recreational fisheries, and the economic diversity they provide for local economies throughout the Pacific Northwest and Alaska, is also immense. The value of these fish to the 24 treaty tribes in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho goes far beyond their monetary value, to the cultural and religious lives of Indian people. A significant monetary investment is focused on salmon as a result of listings of Pacific Northwest salmon populations under the Endangered Species Act. Given the resources, we can continue to use the Pacific Salmon Commission to develop recommendations that help to ensure solutions that minimize impacts on listed stocks, especially if we are allowed to work towards the true intent of the treaty: mutually beneficial enhancement of the shared resource.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my written testimony submitted for consideration by your subcommittee. I want to thank the subcommittee for the support that it has given the U.S. Section in the past. Please feel free to contact me, or other members of the U.S. Section to answer any questions you or subcommittee members may have regarding the U.S. Section of the Pacific Salmon Commission budget.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE UNITED TRIBES TECHNICAL COLLEGE

United Tribes Technical College (UTTC) has for 47 years, and with the most basic of funding, provided postsecondary career and technical education and family services to some of the most impoverished high risk Indian students from throughout the Nation. Despite such challenges we have consistently had excellent retention and placement rates and are a fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). We are proud to be preparing our students to participate in the energy economy in North Dakota and to be part of building a strong middle class in Indian Country by training the next generation of law enforcement officers, educators, medical providers, and administrators. We are governed by the five tribes located wholly or in part in North Dakota. We are not part of the North Dakota University System and do not have a tax base or State-appropriated funds on which to rely. The funding requests of the UTTC Board for fiscal year 2017 Bureau of Indian Education (BIE)/Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) are:

—$11 million for the line item, Tribal Technical Colleges, which is $3.6 million over the administration's request. Of this amount, $6.8 million is BIE funding for our Indian Self-Determination Act contract.
—Place Contract Supports Costs on a permanent, full, mandatory-funded basis.
—Provide full funding for Tribal Grant Support Costs for tribally operated elementary/secondary schools.
—Establishment of a tribally administered Northern Plains law enforcement training center at UTTC.

First of all, we thank you for placing the Tribal Technical Colleges account that provides core operational funds to our institution and Navajo Technical University (NTU) on a forward funded basis as of fiscal year 2016. We also support your interest in providing forward funding for the three remaining colleges who not yet forward funded: Haskell Indian Nations University, Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, and the Institute of American Indian Arts.

The extended length of time to achieve forward funding for UTTC and NTU and the fact that three Indian higher education institutions are still not forward funded highlights the carefulness with which tribal college references need to be made. We are authorized under differing titles of the Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities Act and then there are other statutory authorities for the three institutions administered through the Bureau of Indian Education.

Base Funding.—UTTC administers our BIE funding under an Indian Self–Determination and Education Assistance Act agreement, and has done so for 39 years.

We appreciate that the administration is requesting a $500,000 increase for Tribal Technical Colleges, but our need far exceeds that amount. The UTTC portion of the Tribal Technical Colleges line item should be $6.8 million based on an $11 million appropriation.

Acquisition of additional base funding is critical. We struggle to maintain course offerings and services to adequately provide educational services at the same level as our State counterparts. Our BIE funding provides a base level of support while allowing us to compete for desperately needed discretionary contracts and grants. Very little of our other funds can be used for core career and technical educational programs; they are competitive, often one-time funds that help us provide support services but cannot replace core operational funding.

We highlight several relatively recent updates of our curricula to meet job market needs. Indeed, the ramifications of the North Dakota Bakken oil boom are apparent as we have seen faculty and students leave education in pursuit of jobs in the Bakken region. At the certificate level, we saw the need for more certified welders in relation to the oil boom and expanded our certified welding program in response to the workforce need. We are now able to train students for good paying in-demand welding employment with a focus on career rather than just a job. And we recently received HLC approval to offer a Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Science that will provide experiential research opportunities for our students.

Funding for United Tribes Technical College is a good investment. We have:

—Renewed unrestricted accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission for July 2011 through 2021, with authority to offer all of our full programs on-line. We offer 16 Associate degrees, 5 Certificates, and 3 Bachelor degree programs of study (Criminal Justice; Elementary Education; Business Administration). Six of the programs are offered online.

—Services including a Child Development Center, family literacy program, wellness center, area transportation, K–6 elementary school, tutoring, counseling, family and single student housing, and campus security.

—A projected return on Federal investment of 20–1 (2005 study).

—A semester retention rate of 58 percent and a graduate placement rate of 82 percent.

—Students from 37 tribes represented; 67 percent of our undergraduate students receive Pell Grants.

—An unduplicated count of 536 undergraduate degree-seeking students: 828 continuing education students; and 24 dual credit enrollment students for a total of 1,283 students for 2014–2015.

—A dual-enrollment program targeting junior and senior high school students, providing them an introduction to college life and offering high school and college credits.

—A critical role in the regional economy. Our presence brings at least $34 million annually to the economy of the Bismarck region. A North Dakota State University study reports that the five tribal colleges in North Dakota made a direct and secondary economic contribution to the state of $181,933,000 in 2012.

Contract Support Costs.—As mentioned above, we administer our BIE funding through an Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act contract, and thus Contract Support Costs (CSC) are vital to us. We thank this subcommittee and the administration for the recognition of the legal obligation the Federal Government has to pay tribal contractors their full CSC. This has been an enormously important development for Indian tribes. We appreciate that the fiscal year 2016 appropriations act places Contract Support Costs for both the BIA and the Indian Health Service (IHS) in their own accounts and is funded at an indefinite amount, thus assuring full funding. That circumstance applies only to the fiscal year 2016 appropriations and we join with others in Indian Country in supporting a long-term legislative solution that will provide full and permanent funding for Contact Support Costs. Placing CSC funding on a mandatory basis is the logical resolution to a long-term solution for CSC that will also protect the programs funded on a discretionary basis in the BIA and IHS budgets.

Tribal Grant Support Costs for K–12 Tribally-Operated Schools.—We have a BIE-funded elementary school on our campus, the Theodore Jamerson Elementary School, and thus many of our college students and their children attend school on the same campus. For these elementary schools, Tribal Grant Support Costs are the equivalent of Contract Support Costs for tribes although authorized under different statutory authorities. We thank you for providing what is estimated to be full funding for Tribal Grant Support Costs in fiscal year 2016 ($73.3 million), and we support the administration's fiscal year 2017 request of $75.3 million, estimated to be full funding.

A Northern Plains Indian Law Enforcement Academy.—We again ask Congress to seriously look at the problem of addressing crime in Indian Country with an eye toward the establishment of a campus-based academy for training of law enforcement officers at UTTC. We ask that you direct the Secretary of Interior and the Bureau of Indian Affairs to work with the Northern Plains tribes and others on the timely development of a plan for the establishment of an academy to better serve the tribes residing in the Northern tier of the United States.

Establishment of such an academy at UTTC continues to be strongly supported by the Great Plains Tribal Chairman's Association (GPTCA) via Resolution 5–1–20–16. The Resolution requests that the Secretary of Interior and the BIA consult with the tribes on the details of a plan for establishment of the Academy. Cultural and legal differences further support why such training should be tribally directed in order to be appropriate for the realities of tribal communities within different parts of the Indian Country. The need is critical and continues to grow with the methamphetamine, opioid and heroin crises and the resulting social ills from these epidemics. North Dakota and other northern border regions have special problems relating to drug and human trafficking. Additionally, the expanded tribal authorities under the Tribal Law and Order Act and the Violence Against Women Act only further the importance of trained law enforcement officers within our tribal communities. State and national training resources would have an important role in this new endeavor.

The UTTC Criminal Justice program currently offers 2- and 4-year degrees, and prepares graduates for employment as Federal, State or tribal law enforcement, correction, parole and probation, and transportation safety officers; victim advocates; U.S. Customs, Homeland Security, and Military Investigative services; and private security agents. A pre-law program is currently in development to address the shortage of law trained personnel within tribal judicial systems. We want to expand our endeavors to help meet law enforcement needs in Indian Country. Given our Criminal Justice program, our location and our campus resources, we propose the establishment of a Northern Plains Indian Law Enforcement Academy.

Basic law enforcement training is currently provided through the BIA's Indian Police Academy in Artesia, New Mexico, which often has waiting lists. The BIA is depending on the basic training provided by State academies to supplement what is provided at Artesia. UTTC is well positioned with regard to providing both basic and supplemental law enforcement training. An academy at UTTC would allow tribal people in the Great Plains and other nearby regions a more affordable choice for training locations while minimizing the distance and long separation of trainees from their families.

The fiscal year 2017 Indian Affairs budget (p. IA–PSJ–12) notes that training initiatives for the Indian Police Academy include developing a pre-Academy training program for candidates; developing a mid-level manager training program; and establishing an on-line distance learning program for recertification, among other things. These are things that we could do as part of an academy at UTTC or in partnership with the Indian Police Academy.

In short, the BIA should be utilizing and enhancing the resources of UTTC to make a real difference in the law enforcement capability in Indian Country. We can offer college credit to trainees, and our facilities include the use of a state-of-the-art crime scene simulator. Maintaining safe communities is a critical component of economic development for our Tribal Nations, and local control of law enforcement training resources is a key part of that effort.

The Duplication or Overlapping Issue.—As you know in March 2011, the Government Accountability Office issued two reports regarding Federal programs which may have similar or overlapping services or objectives (GAO–11–474R and GAO–11–318SP). Funding from the BIE and the DOEd's Carl Perkins Act for Tribally Controlled Postsecondary Career and Technical Education were among the programs listed in the reports. The full GAO report did not recommend defunding these programs; rather, it posed the possibility of consolidation of these programs to save administrative costs. We are not in disagreement about possible consolidation of our funding sources, as long as program funds are not cut.

BIE funds represent over half of our core operating budget. The Perkins funds supplement, but do not duplicate, the BIE funds. Both sources of funding are necessary to the frugal maintenance of our institution. We actively seek alternative funding to assist with academic programming, deferred maintenance, and scholarship assistance, among other things. The need for career and technical education in Indian Country is so great and the funding so small that there is little chance for duplicative funding. There are only two institutions targeting American Indian/Alaska Native career and technical education and training at the postsecondary level—UTTC and NTU. Combined, these institutions received only $15.1 million in fiscal

year 2016 Federal operational funds ($8.2 million from Perkins; $6.9 million from the BIE). That is not an excessive amount for two campus-based institutions who offer a broad array of programs geared toward the educational and cultural needs of their students and who teach job-producing skills.

We know members of this subcommittee have made a point to visit places in Indian Country and we would love to be able to arrange for you to visit United Tribes Technical College. Thank you for your consideration of our requests. *Mitakuye Owasin* (All my relatives)

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, the Western Governors' Association (WGA) appreciates the opportunity to provide written testimony on the appropriations and activities of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). My name is James D. Ogsbury and I am the Association's Executive Director. WGA is an independent, non-partisan organization representing the Governors of 19 Western States and 3 U.S.-flag islands.

The agencies within the subcommittee's jurisdiction wield significant influence over vast areas of the American West, as 94 percent of all Federal lands are situated in the western States and the Federal Government owns over 46 percent of the land within active WGA States. The work of this subcommittee is of vital importance to Western Governors, as it helps establish how these lands are managed and how Federal agencies interact with other levels of government and the public.

Western Governors recognize that there is a certain tension between State and Federal governments, one that is embedded in the very fabric of our Constitution. It is equally clear that these different layers of government must have a close and productive working relationship if our citizens are to prosper and thrive. Western Governors believe that such cooperation is only possible when States are regarded as full and equal partners with the Federal Government.

The promotion of greater partnership between States and the Federal Government is central to the mission of WGA and represents a key theme of the WGA Species Conservation and Endangered Species Act Initiative, a signature project of the Association's Chairman, Governor Matt Mead of Wyoming. The goal of wildlife conservation is essential to preserving the heritage of the West. This is possible only through the cooperative efforts of State and Federal officials across multiple disciplines, including data sharing and species management.

For the past 3 years, the subcommittee has adopted report language directing Federal land managers to use State fish and wildlife data and analyses as principal sources to inform land use, land planning and related natural resource decisions. Western Governors are deeply appreciative of your assistance in encouraging a positive relationship between the States and the Federal Government in the use of wildlife data. Federal managers need data-driven science, mapping and analyses to effectively manage wildlife species and habitat, and in many cases States generate the best available wildlife science.

This direction from the subcommittee is having a positive effect with Federal agencies. For example, in their recent rulemaking on Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Revisions to the Regulations for Petitions [80 FR 29286, May 21, 2015], FWS and the National Marine Fisheries Service recognized the important role of State data and proposed common-sense process reforms. Western Governors view this progress as a direct result of the subcommittee's efforts to urge Federal agencies to use State data, and are grateful for your steadfast commitment to this principle. With this encouraging progress, WGA urges you to maintain this position and reiterate it in your fiscal year 2017 report.

Remaining on the topic of species conservation, Western States routinely invest enormous amounts of time, money and manpower in the management of wildlife and habitat conservation. It is appropriate for Federal agencies to provide sufficient resources for species protection, particularly on Federal lands. When Federal lands are inadequately managed, State and local efforts to protect habitat and species will not be sufficient to assure the success of species. Federal agencies must demonstrate their commitment to species preservation and recovery by committing sufficient funding for conservation efforts on Federal lands, and Western Governors encourage you to adequately fund these habitat management activities.

Western Governors believe that States should be full and equal partners in the implementation of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and should have the opportunity to participate in pre-listing and post-listing ESA decisions. The Act is pre-

mised on a strong State-Federal partnership. Section 6(a) of the ESA states that, "In carrying out the program authorized by the Act, the Secretary shall cooperate to the maximum extent practicable with the States." WGA submits that such cooperation should include partnership with States in the establishment of quantifiable species recovery goals, as well as in the design and implementation of recovery plans.

ESA listing decisions can have dramatic impacts on vital State interests, influencing a State's ability to conduct almost any activity—from road siting to new home construction to environmental projects. Consequently, States should have the right to intervene in proceedings regarding the ESA. Western Governors urge the subcommittee to support the legal standing of States to participate in administrative and judicial actions involving ESA that, by their nature, implicate State authority and resources. This is not a new concept: several Federal statutes—including the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act—already vest the States with the role of co-regulator with the EPA.

With respect to funding levels of appropriated programs, WGA recommends the enactment and full funding of a permanent and stable funding mechanism for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program administered by the Department of the Interior (DOI). PILT funding does not represent a gift to local jurisdictions; rather it represents important compensation for the disproportionate acreage of non-taxable Federal lands in the West. Similarly, payments under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS) are critical to compensating communities whose timber industries have been negatively impacted by actions and acquisitions of the Federal Government. Western Governors hope that you will consider full funding for both PILT and SRS payments in fiscal year 2017.

The subcommittee knows very well the pressing problem of "fire borrowing," by which funding for routine Forest Service management activities is transferred to emergency firefighting activities. By diverting funding from management activities that reduce wildfire threats, this practice increases the overall fire risk and all but ensures that future wildfires will be more damaging and costly. WGA strongly supports efforts to solve the issue of fire borrowing, and would like to see the Federal Government use a funding structure similar to that used by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in its response to natural disasters.

The 2014 Farm Bill accorded Governors the opportunity to request that National Forest System lands within their States be considered for insect and disease (I&D) designation, and the Forest Service responded by designating 46.7 million acres of land for expedited treatment. The Farm Bill authorized the appropriation of $200 million to accomplish the work required under the statute. This work will reduce the threat of wildfires in areas of high risk, and WGA requests that funding be appropriated at a reasonable and sustainable level for I&D designation projects.

Data for water management and drought response planning is critical to western States. Western Governors request adequate funding levels for the Cooperative Water Program and National Streamflow Information Program, both administered by the DOI's U.S. Geological Survey. This data is integral to the water supply management decisions of States, utilities, reservoir operators and farmers. They are also used for flood forecasts, making them essential to risk assessment as well as water management. These two programs are important elements of a robust water data management framework in the western States, and provide needed support for drought mitigation efforts throughout the West.

Infrastructure management is another crucial element of drought response. EPA's Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (SRFs) provide necessary support for communities to maintain and enhance their water infrastructure. The Western Governors' Policy Resolution 2014–04, *Water Quality in the West,* encourages adequate funding for SRFs.

The following recommendations are intended to help ensure that taxpayers realize a healthy return on the investment of limited discretionary resources. This goal will be more readily achieved to the extent that Federal agencies better leverage State authority, resources and expertise.

Western Governors continue to be concerned about the number of wild horses and burros on BLM lands, which is presently estimated to be almost double the current Appropriate Management Level (AML). Overpopulation can degrade rangeland, causing harmful effects on wildlife and domestic livestock and threatened and endangered species habitat. WGA supports a process to establish, monitor and adjust AMLs for wild horses and burros that is transparent to stakeholders, supported by scientific information (including State data), and amenable to adaptation with new information and environmental and social change.

While the EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' proposed rule expanding the definition of "waters of the United States" is currently being resolved in Federal

court, WGA continues to view the development of this proposal as an example of process failure. Congress intended for the States and EPA to implement the CWA in partnership and delegated authority to the States to administer the law as co-regulators with EPA. States should be fully consulted and engaged in any process that may affect the management of State waters. While Western Governors appreciate the outreach from EPA and the Corps since the release of the proposed rule, we note that the agencies did not engage the States in substantive consultation prior to the release. Western Governors encourage congressional direction to EPA to engage the States in the creation of rulemaking, guidance or studies that threaten to redefine the roles and jurisdiction of the States.

States have exclusive authority over the allocation and administration of rights to groundwater located within their borders and are primarily responsible for protecting, managing, and otherwise controlling the resource. The regulatory reach of the Federal Government was not intended to, and should not, be applied to the management and protection of groundwater resources. WGA encourages the subcommittee not to permit the use of appropriated funds for any activity that would implement a directive on groundwater management or otherwise subvert States' primacy over water management. Federal agencies should work through existing State authorities to address their groundwater-related needs and concerns. Such collaborative efforts will help ensure that Federal efforts involving groundwater recognize and respect State primacy and comply with Federal and State statutory authorities.

States also have delegated authority from EPA to manage air quality within their borders. Last year the EPA tightened the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for ozone to .070 parts-per-million, a level equal to background ozone levels in much of the West. Attaining the revised ozone standard will present significant challenges for many western States—challenges exacerbated by factors such as wildfire, transported ozone, and background ozone. For decades eastern States have enjoyed the benefit of financial and technical support from EPA for ozone research and mitigation. Given the attainment challenges presented, and the unique character of the West, funding should be appropriated for EPA to assist western States in discharging their ozone responsibilities.

Western Governors and Federal land management agencies deal with a complex web of interrelated natural resource issues. It is an enormous challenge to judiciously balance competing needs in this environment, and Western Governors appreciate the difficulty of the decisions this subcommittee must make. The foregoing recommendations are offered in a spirit of cooperation and respect, and WGA is prepared to assist you as you discharge these critical and challenging responsibilities.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony. Please feel free to contact WGA if you have any questions about the content of these remarks.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE WHITE EARTH RESERVATION TRIBAL COUNCIL

Dear Chair Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

The White Earth Tribal Council supports President Obama's fiscal year 2017 budget. These funding increases for Indian Country will move our people forward in many positive steps.

We know the subcommittee is aware of the challenges we face in Indian Country. However, the White Earth Band of Ojibwe has unique issues as its largest band of the Ojibwe in Minnesota. On aggregate American Indians in Minnesota suffer the following economic disparities:

—38 percent of the Ojibwe live at or below poverty
—50 percent of Ojibwe children live in poverty
—48 percent of Ojibwe 16–64 are unemployed or not in labor force
—20 percent of Ojibwe households exist with no wage earner

The President's proposal directly affects these economic disparities and we strongly support his budget.

The White Earth Tribal Council recognizes that the subcommittee has asked Tribal Nations to highlight several areas of the President's fiscal year 2017 budget that would be critically important to them. While we consider his overall proposal extremely important, the following budget areas best represent our interests at this time:

1. $109 million increase for the Department of Justice and Bureau of Indian Affairs public safety and justice programs for Indian Country. The DOJ funding provides additional grants to address criminal justice issues. The BIA funding continues investments to reduce violent crime and repeat incarcerations.

2. $204 million increase for social services in Indian Country, $164 million increase for HHS Administration of Children and Families, $231 million for Head Start, $194 million for Tribal TANF, $55 million for Tribal Child Support, $212 million for Child Care programs, $106 million for child welfare and other programs. In addition, $55 million in SAMHSA to reduce the incidence of suicide among Native youth.
3. $60 million increase for BIE to support enhanced Native language and cultural curricular programming.
4. $55 million in HHS Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services to expand for Native youth.
5. The Department of Energy's Office of Indian Energy with $18 million for financial and technical assistance for renewable energy projects and energy efficiency projects.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on these issues. The White Earth Tribal Council invites you and members of your subcommittee to visit our reservation to see the positive work being performed in Indian Country.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE WILDERNESS LAND TRUST

Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall and members of the subcommittee, my name is Reid Haughey and I am the President of the Wilderness Land Trust. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. My testimony focuses on a very small portion of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)—funding for the Inholding Acquisition Accounts for the four land management agencies. Continued modest funding—between $3 and $5 million—of the Inholding Accounts is vital to the success of securing and preserving wilderness already designated by Congress, while treating private landowners within these areas fairly.

The Trust is a small not-for-profit organization focused on protecting designated wilderness. To do this, we work in partnership with landowners who own private property within designated and proposed wilderness areas and the agencies that manage these areas. We acquire properties from willing sellers with the intent to transfer ownership to the United States.

We recently marked the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act of 1964 that established our National Wilderness Preservation System. As part of our celebration of the 50th anniversary, the Trust commissioned a national inventory of private lands within wilderness. The results are startling. The report determined that within the lower 48 States, 175,863 acres of private lands still remain in 2,883 parcels. There are also 440,000 acres of State owned lands. Alaska is home to 47 percent of the total nonFederal lands—predominantly Native corporation lands stemming from ANCSA—comprising 693,641 acres in 686 parcels.

When the Trust started work 24 years ago, we estimated there were 400,000 acres of private land within designated wilderness in the lower 48 States. It has taken steady work to reduce that by more than half. Large appropriations for the Inholding Accounts did not accomplish this success—just reliable, modest funding so that lands can be purchased when landowners want to sell. This is the level of funding we are hoping to continue.

Thank you for funding the Inholdings Accounts in fiscal year 2016 and I ask for that support once again. An appropriation of between $3 and 5 million to each of the land management agencies, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service, is sufficient to enable the agencies to acquire high priority inholdings from willing sellers.

Our work, along with that of many other organizations and facilitated by funding of the Inholding Accounts, aims to give the Federal Government less work. Eliminating private inholdings within designated wilderness:

—Saves Federal dollars
—Solves management and resource problems
—Helps private landowners, and
—Increases recreational access and economic development

Saving Federal dollars

The management of human development activities in wilderness is expensive for the agencies. The potential resource damage to the protected lands and waters is enormous. While steady progress has been made reducing private inholdings in wilderness areas in the lower 48 States, our wilderness areas remain riddled with private inholdings that greatly threaten the wilderness that surrounds them and creates a "Swiss cheese" effect. While The Wilderness Act defines Wilderness as places where "where man himself is a visitor who does not remain," private landowners

retain their rights to build roads, homes and other buildings, extend utilities, extract minerals and timber, and block public access. There are numerous cases where such inholdings have been developed in ways that seriously degrade wilderness values on the adjacent public lands. All of these activities pose challenges for Federal managers of the lands surrounding private inholdings and create significant and costly management inefficiencies. By contrast, the cost of acquiring these properties when they are offered for sale is relatively small. That is why continued modest appropriations for the inholding acquisition program are important.

For example, the Trust acquired a property in the Hells Canyon Wilderness in Arizona several years ago that ended 38 years of on and off litigation over access. This saved the agency a lot of ongoing costs. It made the landowner happy and completed the wilderness that surrounded it.

Further, as you are well aware, the costs associated with firefighting on public lands are enormous. The Wilderness Land Trust may be the only landowner within designated wilderness that can say it has experienced both sides of reducing firefighting costs. A property we owned in the heart of California's Yolla Bolly Wilderness burned while we owned it. Significant resources were spent to protect the structures on it, risking life and limb, as well as money.

On the other hand, the Trust's Hells Canyon Wilderness property in Idaho burned 1 week after it was transferred to Federal ownership. No one cared; no one came out to protect it. It burned as part of the natural process of wilderness and firefighting efforts rightly concentrated at the edges of the wildland-urban interface.

Specific data on firefighting expenses are difficult to get. The Western Forestry Leadership Coalition, a State and Federal Government partnership whose members include 23 State and Pacific Island Foresters, 7 Western Regional Foresters, 3 Western Research Station Directors, The Forest Products Lab Director of the USDA Forest Service, published a report: *The True Cost of Wildfire in the Western U.S.* in April 2009. Among the case studies reviewed, the lowest total cost per acre firefighting expense was the Canyon Fire Complex in Montana (2000). The total cost was $411 per acre. There were only six structures involved. The highest cost per acre was the 2000 Cerro Grande fire in New Mexico. It cost $22,634 per acre. There were 260 residences involved. This is strong evidence that the presence of private lands and structures within public landscapes exponentially increases the cost of firefighting.

Not all the costs of managing these isolated parcels fall on the Federal Government. As the manager of Pitkin County, Colorado I learned firsthand that the expenses of providing services to these isolated and far-flung properties far exceed the tax revenues received and do not come close to offsetting the cost of providing fire protection, emergency services, road, school buses and general government services. It costs more to serve these isolated single properties than the tax revenue they generate.

Solves management and resource problems

The Inholding Accounts have been used to acquire mines from private owners, private retreats, and various properties that include the spectrum of non—wilderness uses. We are currently readying for transfer to Federal ownership a former mine in the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. We've closed the former unreclaimed mine on the banks of the Wild and Scenic Salmon River. The transfer will remove a private home and no trespassing signs on one of the few flat spots on that stretch of river. It will be returned to the public, who can enjoy being able to stop and learn about past mining days, camp or fish from land on which the abandoned and open mine is now reclaimed and closed—no longer a threat to the public, or to the Wild and Scenic River from its open shafts deep into the alluvium of the river.

Recent purchases funded from the Inholding Accounts have secured access to the east side of the Ventana Wilderness in California, secured trails through the Wabayuma Peak Wilderness in Arizona and the Glacier Peak Wilderness in Washington and created access to a recently designated wilderness in Idaho. More are on the way.

Helps private landowners

Landowners who are ready to sell deserve to have their properties purchased. Their isolated properties are primarily the result of 19th century Congressional policy when homesteads, mining operations and timber production were encouraged without the balance of conservation. As a result, wilderness areas now dedicated by Congress are pockmarked with islands of private ownership that compromise the wilderness resource, become expensive management issues for the agencies and

often befuddle landowners who wish to sell these properties for the benefit of their companies or families.

If the opportunity to acquire these when offered is lost, the management issues and inefficiencies that result from private lands remaining within designated wilderness continue. This is why consistent funding for the Inholding Accounts is vital. We have learned that these lands become available about once a generation. It has been our experience that these critical inholdings come on the market at a steady rate as owners make decisions based on their family or business needs. About 3 to 5 percent come on the market every year—once a generation. If the opportunity to meet the seller's need is missed, it averages another 20 years before the opportunity comes again. Without consistent funding, numerous opportunities to acquire these private parcels will be lost. Not for a year, but often for at least another generation.

Increases recreational access and economic development

On the east side of the Castle Crags Wilderness in California is a wall of private land that blocks access from Interstate 5. The nearby communities of Dunsmuir and Mt. Shasta are wholly supportive of transferring these lands to Federal ownership and opening up the Crags to visitation. The towns anticipate visitors that will come to the community and its climbing, biking and skiing shops it is hoped will grow to replace the loss of logging jobs. Dunsmuir has been suffering under an unemployment rate of 18 percent and looks forward to having the recreational asset of the Crags' world class climbing only one mile off Interstate 5 and just outside their community—rather than a 7-mile hike around the private lands that now block access.

Finally, it is also important to recognize that wilderness inholdings come in many shapes, sizes and prices depending on the real estate market in a particular area. A number of projects that fall in the agency project lists are inholdings. Thus, we ask that you give the highest level of support possible for Federal LWCF acquisitions.

In summary, continued consistent funding of the Inholding Accounts is vital. Without such funding, significant opportunities to acquire private parcels within our designated wilderness areas will be lost for at least another generation. We urge your support of continued funding for these accounts and as much support for Federal LWCF acquisitions as possible. Support for these accounts:

—Saves money by eliminating management inefficiencies that frequently exceed the cost of acquisition;
—Helps private landowners within federally designated wilderness and other conservation areas;
—Allows the agencies to act when opportunities occur to acquire inholdings, often only once a generation; and
—Completes designated wilderness areas, removing threats from incompatible and harmful development within their boundaries.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We greatly appreciate your time and consideration and the support of the subcommittee in securing these appropriations.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY

The Wilderness Society (TWS) represents more than 700,000 members and supporters who share our mission to protect wilderness and inspire Americans to care for our wild places. When deciding on funding that affects hundreds of millions of Americans, we urge you to take into account the full economic, social, environmental and cultural value of the many programs overseen by our land management agencies.

Additionally, we urge that in crafting the Interior and Environment Appropriation bill you avoid harmful policy riders that damage our land, air, water and wildlife. Must-pass appropriations legislation is not the appropriate venue for unpopular policy provisions which undermine bedrock environmental laws like the Wilderness Act, Antiquities Act and Land and Water Conservation Fund Act. In particular, we strongly oppose riders which would authorize a road through the Izembek Wilderness Area or prevent the Bureau of Land Management from implementing the collaboratively developed sage-grouse conservation strategy. The laudable goal of returning to regular order on appropriations must not continue to be undermined by the attempted inclusion of harmful policy riders which would damage the environmental protections all Americans value. Their inclusion only serves to further compromise an already challenging appropriations process.

Prudent investments in critical conservation programs will provide jobs and protect the health and economic wellbeing of local communities. We urge bold action

in support of conservation funding for fiscal year 2017. Specifically, TWS recommends:

WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT

America's National Wilderness Preservation System, now over 50 years old, is suffering from a serious lack of funding. Trail maintenance, law enforcement, monitoring, and user education have been significantly underfunded, leading to an erosion of wilderness values and a diminution of the experience for visitors. We recommend that funding for agency wilderness management accounts be restored to support much needed trails maintenance, update signage, fight invasive species, restore watersheds, and monitor effects of climate change, among other critical needs. Specifically, we recommend:

—*Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Wilderness*
TWS supports restoring BLM Wilderness funding to the fiscal year 2011 level of $19.663 million. The fiscal year 2017 budget proposal of $18.392 million for BLM wilderness management is strong, but still 6 percent lower than the fiscal year 2011 enacted level. To just keep the fiscal year 2011 level on pace with inflation the fiscal year 2017 request would need to be $20.830 million.

—*Forest Service Recreation, Wilderness and Heritage*
We urge Congress to support wilderness and recreation by restoring funding to the fiscal year 2010 level of $285.1 million for the Recreation, Heritage and Wilderness Program. Recreation is the most ubiquitous use of our forest lands, and accounts for more than half of all job and income effects attributable to Forest Service programs (over 190,000 jobs and $11 billion in spending effects by visitors).

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

Having recently celebrated its 50th Anniversary year and been reauthorized until 2018, LWCF remains the premier Federal program to conserve our Nation's land, water, historic, and recreation heritage. It is a critical tool to protect national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, BLM lands, and other Federal areas. The companion LWCF State grants program provides crucial support for State and local parks, recreational facilities, and trail corridors. LWCF also funds two other important State grant programs—the Forest Legacy Program and Cooperative Endangered Species programs—that ensure permanent conservation of important forest lands and threatened and endangered species' habitat, as well as important wildlife and recreational habitat and ensures that public lands stay public for hunters, anglers, and other outdoor recreationists for generations to come.

—TWS strongly supports fully funding LWCF at the proposed $900 million, with a discretionary funding level of $475 million. Full funding for LWCF will allow land management agencies to manage our public lands more efficiently and cost–effectively. This is in part achieved through strategic inholdings acquisition which reduces internal boundary line surveying, right–of–way conflicts and special use permits.

SAGE GROUSE INITIATIVE

If successful, implementation of the sage-grouse conservation strategy will lead to recovery of this important western game species without the necessity of a listing under the Endangered Species Act.

—The Wilderness Society supports the administration's $89.7 million request to conserve and restore sage steppe habitat.

BLM ONSHORE OIL AND GAS POLICY

The BLM is implementing important management reforms of its oil and gas program that is leading toward a better balance between oil and gas development on public lands and the protection of the numerous natural resource values that were put at risk by previous policies. It will also lead to Federal lands that are fully and fairly valued for the American people. TWS supports the following administration-proposed reforms of the BLM's oil and gas program:

—A fee on onshore Federal operators to provide for a $48 million per year inspection and enforcement program to implement recommendations made by the GAO.

—An increase of $5.8 million in BLM to accelerate development and completion of Master Leasing Plans to ensure proper planning and conservation during siting and development of oil and gas wells.

—An increase of $13.1 million to enact and implement important revenue and environmental regulations including:
  —Royalty reforms and improve revenue collection process to ensure that resources on Federal lands are fully and fairly valued and delivering fair taxpayer returns.
  —Regulations to reduce natural gas waste from wells on Federal and tribal lands.
  —Implementation of regulations concerning hydraulic fracturing on Federal and tribal lands.
—An increase of $2.1 million in BLM to strengthen and increase efficiency for oversight of oil and gas permitting through the Automated Fluid Minerals Support System (AFMSS).
—An increase of $2.6 million to retain and staff positions in the oil and gas program to ensure safe and responsible development in the right places.

TWS is also urging more funding for implementation and planning regarding ongoing and new Master Leasing Plans to ensure that any time development occurs, conservation is considered as part of the larger planning efforts.

BLM'S NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION SYSTEM

The National Landscape Conservation System (Conservation Lands) comprises over 30 million acres of congressionally and presidentially designated lands and waters, including National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, Wilderness Areas and other designations. Stewardship of the Conservation Lands provides jobs for thousands of Americans while supporting vibrant and sustainable economies in surrounding communities. The Conservation Lands provide immeasurable public values from modest investments: outstanding recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat, clean water, wilderness, and open space near cities.

—TWS strongly supports the administration's fiscal year 2017 recommendation of $83.122 million. This is a strong funding proposal for the Conservation Lands, and will help promote the natural, cultural, and historical resource protection provided by the NLCS for the American public.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

TWS is a strong proponent of transitioning our country to a clean energy economy by developing our renewable energy resources responsibly. We believe renewable energy is an appropriate and necessary use of public lands when sited in areas screened for habitat, resource, and cultural conflicts. Identifying and avoiding conflicts early helps ensure projects are permitted faster with limited impact on wildlands. TWS hopes the Department will continue to support a program that ensures our public lands play an important role in supporting renewable energy infrastructure through environmental review, suitability screening, and energy zone identification to find suitable places for renewable energy projects. Specifically we would like to see:

—Increased funding for renewable energy programs across Interior from fiscal year 2016 enacted, up to $110.4 million total. This increase would enhance training opportunities for staff to fully implement the proposed wind and solar leasing rulemaking and mitigation strategies as directed in the Western Solar Plan.

BLM'S FEDERAL COAL PROGRAM

The BLM is commencing a long-term review of the Federal coal program. For too long, the coal program has been plagued by a lack of transparency, an outdated perception of energy responsibility, an unfair return to taxpayers and a lack of consideration of Federal coal's contribution to global climate change. By starting this review, the BLM can ensure that the American people are selling their resources at fair prices in the right ways, while understanding how the program affects the climate. TWS supports the administration's comprehensive review of the BLM's Federal coal program and will be working to ensure that a future coal program corrects the inadequacies of the current model and that the Federal coal program is fit for the 21st century vision of energy development on Federal lands.

IMPLEMENTATION OF LANDSCAPE LEVEL MANAGEMENT

The Wilderness Society supports the Department of Interior's philosophy of looking at development on a landscape level with proper mitigation policies. The re-

cently released draft of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan in the California Desert is a prime example.

—It is crucial that the Department is fully funded to put in place processes that designate areas for energy development, both traditional and renewable, at the same time setting aside important areas for wildlife, cultural, and recreational values.

LEGACY ROADS AND TRAILS

The Legacy Roads and Trails (LRT) program provides the Forest Service essential funding to restore watersheds, improve recreational access, protect aquatic species and advance collaborative restoration projects. LRT funding was slashed 50 percent in fiscal year 2011 and 22 percent in fiscal year 2014. Given the recent evaluation of the Integrated Resource Restoration (IRR) program we recommend that LRT be removed from IRR, to enable it to operate as a complementary program to IRR, similar to CFLR. We also do not recommend that the IRR pilot program be expanded until the test regions have proven that IRR can improve restoration without a loss of transparency and accountability. Specifically, TWS recommends:

—Funding Legacy Roads and Trails at $50 million, distinct from IRR.

FOREST SERVICE PLANNING

The Land Management Planning Program funds amendments and revisions to Land Management Plans, the overarching documents that guide the management of individual forests and grasslands. By providing adequate and consistent funding we advance plans and projects, avoid bad decisionmaking and unnecessary costs, and reduce risks to water quality and quantity, wildlife, and recreation.

—We support funding USFS Land Management Planning at the running 10-year average of $45,712,600.

NATIONAL FOREST TRAILS

There are 158,000 miles of trails in the National Forest System. These trails provide 50 million visitor days of cross-country skiing, hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, and off-road vehicle use each year. Annual visitor days have grown 376 percent since 1977, and the total mileage of trails has grown 56.9 percent to accommodate this use. Unfortunately, the trails maintenance and reconstruction line item has remained essentially flat since 1980, after adjusting for inflation. In fiscal year 2015 the trails budget was cut 9 percent compared to fiscal year 2010, despite the fact that GAO has reported a $500 million trail maintenance backlog. Currently, the Forest Service is only able to maintain a quarter of its trail miles to a minimum standard condition.

—We urge Congress to fund Capital Improvement and Maintenance Trails at its fiscal year 2010 level of $85,381,000 in fiscal year 2017.

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM

The National Wildlife Refuge System is the only Federal conservation system with a mission that prioritizes wildlife and habitat conservation alongside wildlife-dependent recreation.

—We urge the subcommittee to provide a funding level of $506.6 million for the Operations and Maintenance accounts of the National Wildlife Refuge System for fiscal year 2017.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) would like to thank Chairwoman Murkowski, Ranking Member Udall and the members of the subcommittee for providing this opportunity to provide public testimony on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) proposed 4(d) rule on the African elephant and in support of sufficient funding in the fiscal year 2017 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies (Interior) Appropriations Act to meet the President's request for the Multinational Species Conservation Fund (MSCF), Office of International Affairs (IA), Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) Cooperative Landscape Conservation Program (CLCP) and State & Tribal Wildlife Grants (STWG) accounts at FWS, and the International Forestry program at the U.S. Forest Service (FS–IF).

WCS was founded with the help of Theodore Roosevelt in 1895 with the mission of saving wildlife and wild places worldwide. Today, WCS manages the largest net-

work of urban wildlife parks in the United States led by our flagship, the Bronx Zoo. Globally, our goal is to conserve the world's largest wild places in 15 priority regions, home to more than 50 percent of the world's biodiversity. We manage more than 200 million acres of protected lands around the world, employing 4,000 staff including 170 PhD and DVM scientists.

The American conservation tradition is based on promoting sustainable use of our natural resources in order to preserve the world's species and environment for future generations. In recognition of the current fiscal constraints, it is important to note that effective natural resources management and conservation has indirect economic benefits, including contributing to local economies through tourism and other means. Internationally, by supporting conservation, the U.S. is increasing capacity and governance in developing nations and improving our own national security as a result.

No Harmful Rider on Ivory: On July 29, 2015, the FWS issued a proposed rule to close loopholes in the existing ban on commercial ivory sales that have allowed illegal ivory to be sold in the United States for decades. The proposed rule would require sellers to demonstrate that ivory items qualify for an exemption from the law so consumers may be assured they are purchasing a legal product. It also tightens the existing, congressionally-mandated ban on the import and export of most ivory, with some narrow exceptions, including ones for sport-hunted trophies and musicians travelling with instruments that contain ivory. The proposal continues to allow the domestic sale of items such as bona fide antiques and, to accommodate the concerns voiced by many stakeholders, also allows the sale of items like firearms, knives, instruments and artworks that contain only a small amount of ivory. It is also important to note that nothing in the proposed rule would make the possession of ivory illegal, and that States maintain the right to regulate commercial sales occurring entirely within their borders.

Last year's Interior bill in the House contained a provision that would have blocked FWS from proceeding on this rule, forcing the continuation of a system that we know does not work and has been a contributing factor in the poaching of 100,000 elephants over the past 3 years. Given the broad accommodation of most stakeholders that FWS has provided in its proposed rule, WCS encourages the subcommittee not to include the same or a similar rider in the fiscal year 2017 bill.

On the ground in Africa and elsewhere, WCS scientists are seeing, first-hand, the devastating impact poaching is having on elephants, rhinos, tigers and other iconic species. A study published by WCS found that in 2012 alone, 35,000 African elephants were killed for their ivory—that is an average of 96 elephants per day or one killed every 15 minutes. This finding is supported by a subsequent study which also found that 100,000 elephants were poached between 2011 and 2013. Both studies show that conditions are dire for African forest elephants, which has declined by about two-thirds in a little more than a decade. Continued poaching at these rates may mean the extinction of forest elephants in the wild within the next 10 years and the potential loss of all African elephant species in the wild in our lifetimes. Action must be taken now to prevent this catastrophe from occurring.

There is broad consensus that the stunning increase in poaching is due to one factor—the illegal sale of poached ivory in commercial markets around the world. The illegal trade in elephant ivory and other products, like rhino horns and tiger skins, is worth at least an estimated $8 to $10 billion annually, and because of the lucrative nature of this industry, evidence is showing increasingly that transnational criminal organizations and terrorist groups that are involved in other major trafficking operations—drugs, humans and weapons—are engaged in wildlife trafficking as well.

There is no question that China is the largest market for illegal ivory. However, the United States is also one of the larger destinations, both for domestic consumption and as a transshipment hub for Asia. As part of Operation Crash, FWS and Department of Justice have successfully arrested criminals and prosecuted cases in several States over the last few years involving millions of dollars illegal ivory and rhino horn. These busts, although few in number, are strong evidence that there is a domestic problem with illegal ivory, all of which is smuggled in from overseas and which frequently crosses State lines, placing it firmly under Federal jurisdiction.

The problem with ivory is that you cannot differentiate legal ivory antiques, which are exempt from the underlying Federal laws and regulation, from illegal ivory without costly lab tests that can damage the piece. Accordingly, once raw or worked ivory from recently poached elephants is smuggled into the United States, it can easily be placed in the marketplace right alongside genuine antiques. A survey conducted in 2008 of 24,000 pieces of ivory being sold in antique stores in 16 cities in the U.S. and Canada concluded exactly this point, finding that almost a third of these items were potentially illegal. However, due to an unusual quirk in

Federal regulations, Federal law enforcement agents must prove a piece is not exempt from the law in order to determine it is illegal—an impossible task for the FWS and its small team of special agents and wildlife inspectors tasked with enforcing all U.S. wildlife laws. Essentially, the cost of enforcement was simply prohibitive. The proposed rule is essential to closing these loopholes and protecting U.S. consumers from unwittingly purchasing products with ivory from poached elephants.

FWS—Multinational Species Conservation Fund—$11.1 Million: Iconic species such as tigers, rhinos, African and Asian elephants, great apes and marine turtles, face constant danger from poaching, habitat loss and other serious concerns. MSCF programs have helped sustain wildlife populations by controlling poaching, reducing human-wildlife conflict and protecting essential habitat—all while promoting U.S. economic and security interests in far reaching parts of the world. These programs are highly efficient, granting them an outsized impact because they consistently leverage two to four times the Federal investment in matching funds.

WCS has had great success on projects using funds from the MSCF. One grant just awarded to WCS in fiscal year 2015 through the African Elephant Conservation Fund will provide initial funding to use innovative ivory anti-trafficking methods to protect elephants of South Sudan. Among the key parts of the project are the deployment of a sniffer dog team to detect ivory, firearms and other wildlife products at key transit points and the establishment of a national ivory management system for seized ivory to better ensure that confiscated ivory does not reenter the marketplace.

WCS is grateful that the subcommittee appropriated $11.1 million for the program in fiscal year 2016—its first increase in several years—and supports an appropriation of the same amount in fiscal year 2017, which would also be equal to the President's fiscal year 2017 request.

FWS—International Affairs—$15.8 Million: The FWS International Affairs (IA) program supports efforts to conserve our planet's rich wildlife diversity by protecting habitat and species, combating illegal wildlife trade, and building capacity for landscape-level wildlife conservation. The program provides oversight of domestic laws and international treaties that promote the long-term conservation of plant and animal species by ensuring that international trade and other activities do not threaten their survival in the wild. Within IA, the Wildlife Without Borders program seeks to address grassroots wildlife conservation problems from a broad, landscape perspective, building regional expertise and capacity while strengthening local institutions. WCS supports appropriations for this program at $15.8 million, the level included in the President's fiscal year 2017 request.

FWS—Office of Law Enforcement—$75.1 Million: The U.S. remains one of the world's largest markets for wildlife and wildlife products, both legal and illegal. A small group of dedicated officers at the OLE are tasked with protecting fish, wildlife, and plant resources by investigating wildlife crimes—including commercial exploitation, habitat destruction, and industrial hazards—and monitoring the Nation's wildlife trade to intercept smuggling and facilitate legal commerce. Many of the new responsibilities placed on FWS by the National Strategy are enforced by the OLE, and WCS supports the President's request for $75.1 million. Additional funding for the program will support FWS efforts to maximize the scope and effectiveness of FWS' response to the international wildlife trafficking crisis by strengthening forensic capabilities and expanding the capacity of their Special Investigations Unit. It will also ensure OLE has an adequate number of law enforcement agents deployed to enforce laws against wildlife trafficking in the U.S. effectively and allow the agency to continue to support coordinated law enforcement actions against wildlife trafficking overseas through the deployment of FWS attachés in targeted U.S. embassies.

FWS—Cooperative Landscape Conservation—$17.8 Million: Many of the domestic conservation programs in this bill provide funding to States to implement their conservation goals. However, wildlife does not recognize political boundaries, and scarce conservation dollars can best be spent when effective planning and coordination takes place across entire ecosystems. The CLCP funds a network of 22 Landscape Conservation Cooperatives in the U.S. and Canada, which use a collaborative approach between Federal, State, tribal and local partners to identify landscape scale conservation solutions and work collaboratively to meet unfilled conservation needs, develop decision support tools, share data and knowledge, and facilitate and foster conservation partnerships. Funding will support landscape planning and design that will improve the condition of wildlife habitat and improve resilience of U.S. communities. WCS encourages the subcommittee to meet the President's request for $17.8 million for this program.

FWS—State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program—$67 Million: The State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program gives States and tribes funding to develop and implement comprehensive conservation plans to protect declining wildlife and habitats before protection under the Endangered Species Act is necessary. This important program is supported by more than 6,200 organizations that have formed a national bipartisan coalition called Teaming with Wildlife, of which WCS is a steering committee member. WCS recommends Congress provide strong and continued support for the program by meeting the President's request for $67 million in the fiscal year 2017 Interior bill.

USFS—International Forestry—$8 Million: The U.S. economy has lost approximately $1 billion per year and over 200,000 jobs due to illegal logging, which is responsible for 15–30 percent of all timber by volume. The FS–IF program works to level the playing field by reducing illegal logging and improving the sustainability and legality of timber management overseas, translating to less underpriced timber undercutting U.S. producers. Through partnerships with USAID and the Department of State, FSIP helps to improve the resource management in countries of strategic importance to U.S. security.

With technical and financial support from FS–IF, WCS has been working to conserve a biologically rich temperate forest zone called the Primorye in the Russian Far East. The region hosts over a hundred endangered species as well as numerous threatened species, including the Far Eastern leopard and Amur tiger. FS–IF works with us to exchange information and methodologies with Russian scientists, managers, and students on a variety of wildlife-related topics to support conservation and capacity building efforts and ensure the sustainable management of forests and wildlife habitat. WCS supports meeting the President's request of $8 million for fiscal year 2017, equal to the amount appropriated in fiscal year 2016.

We appreciate the opportunity to share WCS's perspectives and make a case for increased investment in conservation in the fiscal year 2017 Interior, the Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. Conservation of public lands is an American tradition and, as far back as 1909, Theodore Roosevelt recognized that the management of our natural resources requires coordination between all nations. Continued investment in conservation will reaffirm our global position as a conservation leader, while improving our national security and building capacity and good governance in developing countries.

PREPARED STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE WILDFIRE RISK REDUCTION AND PROTECTION PROGRAMS

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

The undersigned organizations are writing to express our strong support for maintaining effective funding levels in the fiscal year 2017 appropriations process for essential wildfire risk reduction and protection programs at the USDA Forest Service (Forest Service) and the Department of the Interior (DOI). The important work accomplished through the Hazardous Fuels programs and the State Fire Assistance and Volunteer Fire Assistance programs help decrease total Federal emergency wildfire suppression costs and reduce the threat of fire to people, communities, and both public and private lands.

America's forests and forest-dependent communities are at risk from outbreaks of pests and pathogens, persistent drought, and the buildup of hazardous fuels. Urbanization and development patterns are placing more homes and communities near fire-prone landscapes, leading to more destructive and costly wildfires. In 2015, 68,151 wildland fires burned more than 10.1 million acres. Once again in fiscal year 2015, the 10-year average allocated to the USFS was not enough to meet the suppression needs, forcing the USFS to transfer $700 million from non-suppression accounts to make up for the shortfall. The current wildfire suppression funding model and cycle of transfers and repayments has negatively impacted the ability to implement forest management, among many other activities. Additionally, the increasing 10-year average has not met annual suppression needs since before fiscal year 2002, which is why we thank the subcommittee for the full transfer repayment and increased suppression funding in fiscal year 2016. However, we understand this is not expected to occur every year and DOI and USFS need a long-term fire funding solution that would result in stable and predictable budgets.

We respectfully request a bipartisan fire funding solution be included as part of the fiscal year 2017 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies' appropriations bill. A fire funding solution must fund wildfires like natural disasters by (1) accessing disaster funding, (2) minimizing transfers, and (3) dealing with the continued

erosion of agency budgets over time, with the goal of reinvesting in key programs that would restore forests to healthier conditions.

We appreciate this subcommittee's attention to this increasing and unsustainable natural resource challenge. The fiscal year 2017 appropriations bill can provide for both necessary wildfire suppression and fire risk reduction activities that create jobs and reduce firefighting costs in the long run. We are prepared to help and look forward to assisting Congress in developing a sustainable and long-term solution to fund emergency wildfire suppression.

The Hazardous Fuels Programs at the Forest Service and DOI are the primary source of funding used to reduce wildfire risk on Federal lands. In fiscal year 2017, we urge you to provide $479 million for the Hazardous Fuels Program at the USDA Forest Service and $178 for Hazardous Fuels and Resilient Landscapes at the Department of the Interior. We are also asking that you include report language to encourage the Federal Agencies to coordinate their fuels plans with other planning efforts such as State forestry and conservation plans in order to encourage cross-boundary efforts and increase the effectiveness of this program.

	Fiscal Year 2016 Enacted	Fiscal Year 2017 President's Proposal	Fiscal Year 2017 Request
USDA Forest Service Hazardous Fuels	$375	$384	$479
Department of the Interior			
Hazardous Fuels Management ...	$164	$149	$178
Resilient Landscapes		$30	

State Fire Assistance (SFA) is the fundamental Federal mechanism for assisting States and local fire departments in responding to wildland fires and in conducting management activities that mitigate fire risk on non-Federal lands. SFA also helps train and equip local first responders who are often first to arrive at a wildland fire incident and who play a crucial role in keeping fires and their costs as small as possible. A small investment of SFA funds supports State forestry agencies in accessing and repurposing equipment from the Federal Excess Personal Property and the Firefighter Property programs. Between 2008 and 2012 these two programs have delivered more than $150 million annually in equipment for use by State and local first responders.

In fiscal year 2015, SFA directly funded hazardous fuel treatments on 148,020 acres (with another 126,368 acres treated with leveraged funding from partners) and provided assistance to communities around the country, supporting 2,998 risk assessment and fire management planning projects and 10,160 prevention and education programs.[1] Fires know no boundaries. In 2015, 80 percent of the total number of wildfires were where State and local fire departments had primary jurisdiction. 85 percent of all local and State crews and engines dispatched outside of their geographic areas were responding to Federal fires. In fiscal year 2017, we urge you to provide $87 million for the State Fire Assistance program.

The Volunteer Fire Assistance Program provides support to rural communities and is critical to ensuring adequate capacity to respond to wildfires, reducing the risk to communities, people, homes and property, and firefighters. This capacity is critical because these State and local resources are the first responders to more than 80 percent of wildland fires—whether on State, Federal or private lands. According to the Forest Service Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Justification, the small investment in the Volunteer Fire Assistance program helped provide assistance to 9,318 communities, helped to train 22,272 firefighters, expanded or organized 20 fire departments, and purchased, rehabilitated or maintained more than $8.1 million in equipment. In fiscal year 2017, we urge you to provide no less than $15 million for the Volunteer Fire Assistance Program.

The Joint Fire Science Program is a relatively small budget for a program that successfully yields important results which are directly applied. These tools and technology products support the fire risk reduction community. They help track the effectiveness of Forest Service programs, such as vegetation management and hazardous fuels reduction. Their applied research supports resilient landscapes and communities, and provides key information on wildfire mitigation impacts on water

[1] USDA Forest Service Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Justification at pg. 299.

quality, atmospheric emissions, and other natural resources and ecosystem services. We are concerned about the zeroing out of this program under Wildland Fire Management in exchange for funding a smaller portion from the Forest & Rangeland Research budget. In fiscal year 2017, we request the Joint Fire Science Program maintain a $7 million funding level.

We appreciate the difficult task the subcommittee faces in the current budget climate. However, these vital, interrelated programs safeguard human life, habitat, and property, and reduce the overall cost of wildland fire management. The short-term savings realized by cuts to any one of these programs is substantially outweighed by the ultimate increase in suppression costs and damages caused by wildland fires. Accordingly, we urge you to support funding for these critical programs. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

American Forests
American Forest Foundation
Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies
Framing Our Community Inc.
National Association of RV Parks & Campgrounds
National Association of State Foresters
National Association of Forest Service Retirees
National Ski Areas Association
National Wild Turkey Federation
North American Bear Foundation
North American Grouse Partnership
Public Lands Foundation
Quality Deer Management Association
Ruffed Grouse Society/American Woodcock Society
Sustainable Northwest
The Conservation Fund
The Forest Stewards Guild
The International Association of Wildland Fire
The Mountain Pact
The National Wildlife Institute
The Nature Conservancy
The Society of American Foresters
Tread Lightly!
Whitetails Unlimited

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

The Wildlife Society appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony concerning the fiscal year 2017 budgets for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and U.S. Forest Service (USFS). The Wildlife Society was founded in 1937 and is an international nonprofit scientific and educational association representing nearly 10,000 professional wildlife biologists and managers. Our mission is to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and habitats through science-based management and conservation. We respectfully request the following programmatic funding in fiscal year 2017 to ensure that the Federal budget supports the important work wildlife professionals do to manage and conserve our Nation's wildlife resources.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

The State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program (SWG) has been the Nation's core program for preventing wildlife from becoming endangered since 2001. SWG provides Federal funding assistance to State and tribal wildlife agencies for implementing on-the-ground conservation programs designed to ensure the sustainability of our fish and wildlife resources. In order to receive Federal funds through SWG, each State and Territory must develop a Wildlife Action Plan that examines the health of wildlife, identifies issues of conservation concern, and prescribes actions needed to conserve more than 12,000 at-risk species and their vital habitats. These action plans encourage multi-partner projects, have high accountability, and require matching-funds from States. As the only Federal program focused on keeping common species common, SWG alleviates the need to add more species to the Federal Endangered Species List; thereby saving taxpayer dollars and reducing regulatory uncertainty for businesses. Recent successes of SWG include the New England cottontail rabbit and greater sage-grouse. The Wildlife Society strongly recommends that Congress increase funding for State and Tribal Wildlife Grants to at least $67 million in fiscal year 2017, as per the Agency's request.

Previous budget reductions in SWG, though, have not allowed this highly successful program to reach its full potential. A March 2016 report from the *Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources* highlights the Nation's need for immediate and robust long-term investment in science-based management, and recommends that Congress dedicate $1.3 billion annually to ensure

the effective implementation of all Wildlife Action Plans. As a leading member of *Teaming With Wildlife,* a multidisciplinary, bipartisan coalition of more than 6,400 organizations supporting reliable fish and wildlife conservation funding, The Wildlife Society encourages Congress to consider the legislative solutions presented by this diverse and distinguished panel.

As a member of the *Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE),* The Wildlife Society supports the President's request for the National Wildlife Refuge System's operations and maintenance accounts at $506.6 million for fiscal year 2017. CARE estimates that the Refuge System needs at least $900 million in annual operations and maintenance funding to properly administer its 562 refuges and 38 wetland management districts spanning over 150 million acres. At its highest funding level in fiscal year 2010, the Refuge System received only $503 million—little more than half the needed amount. Without adequate funding, habitats are not restored, invasive species are left unchecked, poaching and other illegal activities occur, and our Nation's wildlife suffers. Moreover, since 2009, the National Wildlife Refuge System has lost over 500 employees (1/7 of all staff), despite generating approximately $4.87 in economic activity for every $1 appropriated by Congress. The Wildlife Society also supports the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Resource Protection Act, which would remove taxpayer responsibility for damage deliberately caused by a third party within the National Wildlife Refuge System by justly attributing those damages to the guilty party.

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act is a cooperative, non-regulatory, incentive-based program that has shown unprecedented success in maintaining and restoring wetlands, waterfowl, and other migratory bird populations. This program has remained drastically underfunded despite its demonstrated effectiveness. We support the Agency's request of $35.1 million and encourage Congress to match this request for fiscal year 2017.

The Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA) Grants Program supports partnership programs to conserve birds in the U.S., Latin America, and the Caribbean, where approximately 5 billion birds representing 341 species spend their winters, including some of the most endangered birds in North America. Reauthorization for appropriations has expired under NMBCA, but the Agency recommends funding the program at $3.9 million for fiscal year 2017 as a sub-account of the Multinational Species Conservation Fund. The Wildlife Society supports this funding, and recommends that Congress reauthorize NMBCA at $6.5 million annually to achieve maximum conservation results under the program.

Through the Ecological Services Program, FWS partners with Federal/State agencies, tribes, local governments, the business community, and private citizens, to help identify species on the verge of extinction and reduce threats to their survival so that they can be removed from Federal protection. FWS is working to implement new strategies to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Ecological Services Program and to reduce the regulatory burden on private landowners and industry partners. To support these actions, and the increased emphasis on consultation and recovery, we recommend Congress match the Agency's request and provide $23 million for Listing, $105.7 million for Planning and Consultation, $34.6 million for Conservation and Restoration, and $89.2 million for Recovery in fiscal year 2017.

Through its International Affairs office, FWS works with many partners and countries in the implementation of international treaties, conventions, and projects for the conservation of wildlife species and their habitats. Careful regulation of imports and implementation of international policies is an important task, and represents our first line of defense against the introduction of threats like the potentially devastating infectious wildlife disease *Bsal,* which threatens the integrity of our diverse and important native salamander populations. We ask Congress to match the Agency's request of $15.8 million in support of FWS International Affairs in fiscal year 2017.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Historically, the Wildlife and Fisheries Management (WFM) and the Threatened and Endangered Species Management (TESM) programs have been forced to pay for the compliance activities of BLM's energy, grazing, and other non-wildlife related programs, eroding both their ability to conduct proactive conservation activities and their efforts to recover listed species. In order to allow BLM to effectively maintain and restore wildlife and habitat amidst the tremendous expansion of energy development across the BLM landscape, we recommend Congress appropriate $108.7 million for BLM Wildlife Management within WFM in fiscal year 2017. We also support the proposed increase of $14.2 million for greater sage-grouse conservation; this

kind of broad-scale conservation is necessary to manage/conserve greater sage-grouse across their entire range.

To allow BLM to meet its responsibilities in endangered species recovery plans, the Threatened and Endangered Species Management Program (TESM), also needs increased funding. BLM's March 2001 Report to Congress called for a doubling of the Threatened and Endangered Species budget to $48 million and an additional 70 staff positions over 5 years. Now, over a decade later, this goal has yet to be met. In light of this, we strongly encourage Congress to increase overall funding for TESM to $48 million in fiscal year 2017.

The Wildlife Society, leader of the *National Horse and Burro Rangeland Management Coalition,* appreciates the commitment of BLM to addressing the problems associated with Wild Horse and Burro Management. The Wildlife Society also thanks Congress for the much needed increase in funding for fiscal year 2016 for continued research and development on contraception and population control. The Wildlife Society, however, remains concerned about BLM's emphasis on fertility control alone. Horses and burros currently exceed the BLM's estimated threshold of ecological sustainability by more than 31,000—over twice BLM's Appropriate Management Level. With nearly 50,000 additional horses living in Federal off-site long- and short-term holding facilities, *The Wildlife Society believes the current language limiting the use of humane euthanasia for unwanted or unadoptable horses should be removed.* BLM needs to use all necessary management tools to bring populations of on- and off-range wild horses and burros within manageable levels. Therefore, The Wildlife Society supports the Agency's request of $80.1 million for Wild Horse and Burro Management, provided that BLM remove excess horses from the range at a reasonable rate and focus additional resources on habitat restoration to correct the habitat damage caused by these animals.

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

The basic, objective, and interdisciplinary scientific research that is supported by USGS is necessary for understanding the complex environmental issues facing our Nation today. The Ecosystems Department of USGS contains programmatic resources for fisheries, wildlife, environments, invasive species, and Cooperative Research Units (CRU). The Ecosystems program strives to maximize research and support for comprehensive biological and ecosystem based needs. The Wildlife Society supports the Agency's request of $174 million for USGS's Ecosystems Department in fiscal year 2017. Furthermore, within the Ecosystems Department, we support the specific request of at least $18.2 million for the underfunded CRU program, which leverages Federal, State, non-governmental organizations, and academic partnerships to provide actionable science that supports management of wildlife and fisheries resources.

The National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center plays a pivotal role in addressing the impacts of climate change on fish and wildlife by providing essential scientific support. In order for this role to be fully realized, we recommend that Congress fund the National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center at the requested $31 million in fiscal year 2017.

U.S. FOREST SERVICE

Current mechanisms for calculating USFS appropriations have resulted in funding shortfalls for proactive wildland fire and fuel management practices, thereby leading to more destructive and costly wildfires. The traditional 10-year moving average for forecasting fire suppression costs for the upcoming fiscal year, has not met USFS suppression needs since fiscal year 2002. In fiscal year 2015, USFS was forced to transfer $700 million from non-suppression accounts to make up for the emergency fire suppression deficit. This has negatively impacted the ability of USFS to implement proactive forest research and management projects and has resulted in the loss of 40 percent of non-fire related USFS professionals. We are thankful to Congress for the full transfer repayment and increased suppression funding in fiscal year 2016. However, we understand this is not expected to occur every year. DOI and USFS need a long-term fire funding solution that would result in stable and predictable budgets. Therefore, we support bipartisan congressional efforts, like the *Wildfire Disaster Funding Act,* to address Federal fire funding challenges, minimize fund transfers, and address the continued erosion of agency budgets over time, with the goal of reinvesting in key programs that would restore forests to healthier conditions.

For the fiscal year 2017 budget, USFS will transition from Integrated Resource Restoration back to a more traditional budget structure with separate line items, including Vegetation and Watershed Management, Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat

Management, and Forest Products. We support this change for the accountability it provides Congress, and support the request of $140.5 million for Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat Management in fiscal year 2017.

Integral to management of our natural resources is a deep understanding of the biological and geological forces that shape the land and its wildlife and plant communities. The research being done by the USFS is at the forefront of science, and essential to improving the health of our Nation's forests and grasslands. We urge Congress to at minimum match the Agency's request of $292 million in fiscal year 2017 for Forest and Rangelands to support this high-quality research.