

Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2020 Highlights

(Note: Numbers are nationwide program funding levels.)

Addressing Safety and Responding to Disasters

- **Wildfire Prevention and Suppression:** Provides a total of \$1.3 billion in wildland fire suppression funding, as well as \$2.25 billion in additional wildfire suppression funding from the fire cap adjustment for the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior. A \$34 million total increase is provided to the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior for hazardous fuels reduction activities to help reduce the risk of wildfires.
- **3D Alaska Mapping:** Maintains funding for Alaska mapping initiatives at \$7.7 million, which will continue to help gather data to improve maps, enhancing safety for activities such as aviation.
- **USGS Earthquake and Volcano Hazards:** Allows Alaska to develop and enhance earthquake monitoring capabilities by including operational funding for newly acquired equipment. Also includes operational funding to upgrade volcano monitoring equipment.

Prioritizing Public Safety and Justice

- **Missing, Trafficked, & Murdered Indigenous Women:** In order to improve the federal response to the epidemic of missing, trafficked, and murdered indigenous women, \$6.5 million is included for the BIA to take a comprehensive look at the issue across the BIA and IHS. Specifically, the bill includes \$1 million for cold case work, \$1 million for background checks, \$2 million for equipment needs, \$2.5 million for training, and a directive for the IHS regarding forensic training. The bill also includes language of the need to boost both coordination and data collection among Tribal, local, state, and federal law enforcement by directing BIA to designate an official within the agency to work with Tribes to develop a set of guidelines on how to best collect statistics. Native American women face high rates of violence and the lack of data on the number of women and girls who go missing or murdered further complicates the Nation's ability to address this crisis.
- **Domestic Violence Prevention Initiative:** Maintains funding at \$4 million for an IHS initiative that promotes culturally appropriate prevention and treatment approaches to domestic and sexual violence from a community-driven context. This includes funding projects that provide victim advocacy, intervention, case coordination, policy development, community response teams, sexual assault examiner programs, and community and school

education programs. The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation, Chugachmiut, Copper River Native Association, Kodiak Area Native Association, Maniilaq Association, Norton Sound Health Corporation, Southcentral Foundation, and Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium all receive funds through this initiative to continue efforts in addressing domestic violence and sexual assault in their communities.

- **Tribal Court Funding (PL280):** Maintains \$13 million in funding to Public Law 280 states, such as Alaska, in order to help develop tribal court systems for communities.
- **Violence Against Women Act (VAWA):** Maintains \$2 million for training and specific VAWA tribal court needs.
- **Small and Needy Tribes:** Increases funding to \$5 million in funding to ensure all tribes have a base level of support to run tribal governments. Almost 90 percent of national funding goes to Alaska.
- **Tiwahe Initiative:** Maintains funding for the program to help communities design a comprehensive approach for the delivery of social services and justice programs. The Emmonak Women's shelter receives funding through this program.

Investing in Communities and Economic Opportunities

- **Payment in Lieu of Taxes:** Provides full funding at \$500 million for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program. The PILT program provides monetary compensation to local governments throughout Alaska that contain federal lands that are not subject to state or local taxation. The revenue helps local governments provide vital services, such as firefighting and police protection, construction of public schools and roads, and search-and-rescue operations.
- **Arctic Priorities:** Supports the Arctic Council and directs the Fish and Wildlife Service to focus on economic opportunities in the region, as well as science and subsistence issues.
- **Increasing Public Access:** Invests in Forests Service recreation access programs to improve the Forest Service's capacity to maintain recreation sites like cabins, trails, and campgrounds, and to help expand recreation-based businesses in the Chugach and Tongass National Forests.
- **Alaska Red Cedar and Economic Timber Sales:** Continues current law that requires that timber sales in Alaska be economic, and requires that Alaska and West Coast sawmills be given the first right to process the timber, in order to keep these jobs in the United States.

- **Tongass National Forest Management:** Requires the Forest Service to gather sufficient data about the timing and availability of young-growth timber to ensure that any timber program in the Tongass provides for a viable timber industry in Southeast.
- **Timber Industry in Alaska:** Dedicates resources critical to programs that support jobs and opportunities in the timber industry in Southeast Alaska. Also notes the harm the retaliatory Chinese tariffs are having on the Alaska timber industry and encourages the Department of Agriculture to consider including domestic timber products on the list of agriculture commodities covered for tariff relief.
- **Mineral Resources and Critical Minerals Programs:** Works to strengthen America's mineral security by directing land management agencies to initiate an Outer Continental Shelf critical minerals inventory. Includes \$10.5 million for a critical minerals initiative that will improve topographic, geological, and geophysical mapping, in order to identify domestic deposits of critical minerals. For the Mineral Resources Program, which includes assessments of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, \$4 million is provided.
- **North Slope Critical Minerals Pilot Program:** Provides \$942,000 for a new pilot program of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to conduct a marine minerals inventory project off of the North Slope.

Protecting Land, Improving Access, and Supporting Recreation

- **National Parks:** Invests in infrastructure improvements on federal lands and provides the National Park Service with \$127 million to address backlog maintenance.
- **Denali National Park Road:** Requires National Park Service to formulate a long-term plan for addressing road improvements at Polychrome Pass.
- **Forest Inventory Analysis:** Includes funding required to partner with states to inventory forests across the nation, including interior Alaska. This information provides the State with important information about the condition of Alaska's forested lands, and dovetails into funding made available for education and management of Spruce bark beetle infestations that threaten Alaska communities with greater risk of devastating wildfires.
- **Contaminated Lands:** Dozens of exploration wells and core tests that were drilled decades ago remain abandoned in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. This bill provides \$3 million for legacy well cleanup, and further directs the Bureau of Land Management to craft a long-term funding plan to complete the clean-up of the wells within ten years. Also directs

BLM to coordinate with all responsible federal agencies to implement a long-term solution to comprehensive cleanup of contaminated Alaska Native lands.

- **The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF):** Funded at \$465 million, an increase of \$30 million, including \$140 million for the National Park Service stateside program, which helps state and local governments to improve public outdoor recreation opportunities.
- **Alaska Land Conveyance:** Includes funds to fulfill requirements to transfer lands to the State and Native Alaskans under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), by providing \$22.8 million for Alaska Land Conveyance.
- **Gustavus Intertie:** Directs the National Park Service to continue working with the City of Gustavus to secure stable, affordable power for the Glacier National Park and the community.
- **Ring of Fire Resource Management Plan:** Directs the Bureau of Land Management to swiftly finalize the plan amendment to the Ring of Fire Resource Management Plan, which addresses recreational and heli-skiing access on lands near Haines.
- **Invasive Species:** Provides support for additional Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) Strike Team in Alaska and increases funding for programs that will help combat and eradicate species like elodea and Northern pike that threaten Alaska's water, such as elodea and Northern pike.

Improving Air Quality, Protecting Watersheds, Investing in Infrastructure

- **Targeted Airshed Grants:** Increases funding to \$56.3 million to ensure that cities like Fairbanks are eligible for grants to support wood stove change-outs in order to help reduce air pollution.
- **Small Remote Incinerators:** A provision is included to prohibit the EPA from implementing its small, remote incinerators rule in Alaska while Alaskans work with the EPA to develop a rule that will work better to address Alaska's rural, unique needs.
- **Transboundary Water Quality:** Allocates increased funding to \$3 million for addressing transboundary water river quality, specifically for stream gauges and a water quality baseline strategy. Also directs the U.S. Geological Survey to work cooperatively with local tribes, stakeholders, and other federal agencies necessary to help develop a water quality strategy for transboundary rivers.

- **Bristol Bay:** Recognizes the importance of the Bristol Bay ecosystem and the concerns the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of the Interior, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the State of Alaska and independent experts have raised with regard to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Pebble Mine. Reaffirms that sound science must drive the permitting process and that if the concerns raised by the agencies cannot be answered within the process, then the agencies should exercise their authority to protect the region's world-class salmon fisheries.
- **PFAS Contaminants:** Addresses PFAS contamination by providing \$20 million in increases to EPA grant programs to support state-led cleanup and remediation efforts of PFAS contaminated water sources, water systems, and lands.
- **Alaska Native Villages Water Program:** Increases funding to \$29.2 million for the construction of new drinking water and wastewater systems, or the improvement of existing systems in rural Alaskan communities.
- **Assistance to Small and Disadvantaged Communities Water Program:** Provides \$25.8 million for a grant program to help bring basic water and sewer infrastructure to communities in need.
- **State Water Revolving Funds:** Maintains funding for the Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Funds at \$2.76 billion, to help facilitate clean, safe drinking water in local communities. Funds can be used to address drinking water and wastewater infrastructure challenges, including addressing problems like lead content in water.

Reducing Regulatory Burdens and Unnecessary Spending

- **Lead Bullets and Fishing Tackle:** Continues to prohibit the EPA from regulating lead content of ammunition and fishing tackle.
- **Fish Grinding:** Directs the EPA to address a longstanding issue of unworkable standards for grinding of fish waste by instructing the agency to develop a policy to treat onshore seafood processors who use the best available technology as in compliance.
- **Chitosan:** Directs the EPA to review and add chitosan—a compound derived from crab and fish byproducts that's regulated as a pesticide—to the Minimum Risk Pesticide List. This would help reduce the regulatory burden on Alaskan companies producing chitosan.

- **Kagalaska and Chirikof:** Prohibits the Fish and Wildlife Service from using funds to conduct a costly caribou hunt on Kagalaska Island in the Aleutian Chain. The legislation also prohibits costly and impractical efforts to remove cattle from the remote Chirikof Island.

Prioritizing Health and Wellness

- **Native Children’s Commission:** The bill provides \$500,000, a \$100,000 increase, for the Commission on Native Children created to identify the complex challenges facing Native children in Alaska and across the country by conducting an intensive study on issues such as high rates of poverty, unemployment, child abuse, domestic violence, crime, substance abuse, and dire economic opportunities. Senator Murkowski, along with former Senator Heitkamp of North Dakota, sponsored legislation creating the Commission.
- **Community Health Aids:** Includes \$5 million for the Community Health Aid Program (CHAP) expansion, as well as maintains current funding levels for the existing program. CHAP is a multidisciplinary system of behavioral, community, and dental health professionals working alongside licensed providers to offer patients increased access to quality care in rural Alaska. The bill encourages the Indian Health Service (IHS) to look at programs which can help educate community health aides on trauma informed care and collecting medical evidence, which has the potential to help communities address the crisis of missing, trafficked, and murdered indigenous women.
- **Tribal Clinic Operational Costs:** Increases funding to \$97 million for Village-Built Clinics (VBCs) and other tribally leased health care facilities – the VBC program is unique to Alaska and supports 150 healthcare clinics in rural areas which often serve as the only health facility in their respective regions.
- **Small Ambulatory Clinics:** Provides a total of \$15 million, to make infrastructure improvements across the nation for providing healthcare delivery to American Indians and Alaska Natives. Grants have previously been provided to Shishmaref, Ninilchik, Kongiganak Village, Tok, and Tatitlek.
- **Zero Suicide Initiative:** Maintains funding at \$3.6 million for an IHS program aimed at preventing suicide by providing tools and support for organizations with patients receiving care.
- **Alcohol and Substance Abuse:** Provides increased funding to \$247.8 million to IHS alcohol and substance abuse prevention programs, to focus on tribal youth and the incorporation of more holistic healthcare models. Programs within tribal communities to combat alcohol and

substance abuse include inpatient and outpatient treatment, and rehabilitation services in both urban and rural settings.

- **Behavioral Health Integration and Facilities:** Maintains funding at \$10 million to help facilitate integrated approaches between medical care, behavioral health, and tribal community organizations, in order to provide the entire spectrum of preventative care to improve outcomes in mental health, substance abuse, and physical ailments.
- **Contract Support Costs:** Fully funds contract support costs, the operational and overhead costs in the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Indian Health Service (IHS), to ensure tribes have the necessary resources they need to deliver programs and services. This is especially important to Alaska because all healthcare for Alaska Natives is directly provided by tribal organizations. The account is continued as an indefinite appropriation so that if estimates made by the respective agencies are too low, funds are available to pay these costs without taking funds from other programs which reduce their capacity.

Supporting Subsistence and Fisheries Management

- **Alaska Subsistence:** Provides over \$14 million in funding for the Forest Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct activities relating to the Federal Subsistence Board, and collaborates with Alaska Natives to gather information, expand employment and capacity building, and assist subsistence users with law enforcement compliance activities, such as obtaining essential permits and meeting harvest reporting requirements.
- **Tribal Management:** Provides \$11.2 million for subsistence programs, extending critical pilot projects and ensuring additional opportunities for Alaska Native involvement in federal subsistence processes. Also includes \$2 million in support for an Ahtna subsistence pilot project.
- **Polar Bear Co-Management:** Directs the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to work and engage in meaningful consultation with Alaska Natives for their subsistence use of polar bears, including consulting with and incorporating the views of Kaktovik residents in its decisions related to polar bear tourism. Also encourages the FWS to explore co-management of the Beaufort polar bear population with Alaska Natives in region.
- **Pacific Salmon Treaty:** Provides \$9.9 million for implementation of the Pacific Salmon Treaty. The Pacific Salmon Treaty allows for the bilateral, cooperative management of Pacific salmon between the United States and Canada, supporting commercial and subsistence fisheries in Alaska.

Investing in Culture and the Arts

- **National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH):** Increased funding is provided to support the arts through NEA and NEH, including support for NEA's the Healing Arts Program, developed by the NEA and the Department of Defense (DoD) to help our nation's wounded and injured service members and their families in their transition into civilian life.
- **Cultural Arts:** Provides \$1.5 million, a \$500,000 increase, to continue an arts and cultural program with Sealaska and the Institute of American Indian and Alaskan Native Culture and Arts Development.
- **Native Language Immersion:** New this year, provides \$2 million in BIA for native language immersion grants for states that do not have Bureau of Indian Education funded schools.
- **Native Handicrafts:** Encourages the Fish and Wildlife Service to do more to ensure that native handicrafts can continue to be sold and increases funding to combat violations of the Indian Arts and Crafts Act.
- **Sealaska Cultural Sites:** Maintains funding of \$450,000 for Alaska Native programs to certify claims for historical places and cultural sites.

###