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| **Recorder Form** | |
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| **Recorder:** Diana Zirul | **Date:** April 26, 2018 |
| **Session Title:** Department of Interior – Indian Affairs Budget Analysis | |
| **Panelists:** W. Ron Allen, Chairman, Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe  Dave Conner, Administrative Officer, Department of Natural Resources, Acting Self-Governance  Coordinator, TIBC Budget Subcommittee, Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians  Jeannine Brooks, Deputy Director, Office of Budget and Performance Management, Indian Affairs,  Department of Interior | |
| **Summary of Issues and Items Discussed:**  **W. Ron Allen**   * TIBC goal with current administration is to protect and enhance our base budget for Tribes services. * Current administration view on climate change causes political detractors and delays in funding. Tribes stand is that climate change is real throughout Indian Country and preparations must be made to deal with it. * Encouraged to stay engaged in the budget process despite the Tribes’ concerns that Tribal recommendations are being ignored by bureaucrats which forces Tribes to go around by going to the legislature. * Recognition that there are tons of need in Indian Country with 125 separate line items which are often difficult to understand which services are included in each item. * Tribes must prioritize top 10 and ensure that Regional Director understands these priorities. * Tribes encouraged to provide written recommendations and if needed to work with legislature especially those who sit on the appropriate legislative committee. * Emphasized the need for Tribes to identify the total unmet needs/unfunded obligations even when some funding is received as it is critical to keep this number in the forefront of the legislature.   **Dave Conner**   * Also emphasized the need to report unmet needs. * Goal of TIBC to develop a strategy to improve the efficacy of the budget formulation process for Tribes and Federal partners. * TIBC established a Budget Formulation Workgroup in an effort to make the budget process better. * Overview of budget which is included in the handouts – FY 2018 appropriation is $3.1B which is $204M above FY 2017 (7.1% increase). * President’s proposed budget cuts for FY 2018 were restored by the legislature as indicated in the handout. * Proposed Presidential budget cuts for FY 2019 are significant and demonstrates that BIA continues to be the agency with the highest proposed cuts of approximately $665M below FY 2018 appropriations. * Focus of these proposed budget cuts deal with services associated with small and needy Tribes, children and families and safety with recommendation that funding for some programs be eliminated in FY 2019. These include funds associated with Tribal scholarships, Tribal Court, aid to Tribal government and Criminal investigation/police security. * Encouraged written comments on the proposed budget cuts for the housing improvement program by May 18. * Provided review of rescissions dating back to 2000 as these funds were used to pay for hurricanes, tax cuts, wars, etc. which has resulted a 9.45% decrease in funding which is ongoing and has never been restored (e.g. 1% cut in 2006 for disaster relief due to Hurricane Katrina which has been taken care of yet the decrease has not been reinstated). * Emphasized the significance of accurately reporting Pay Costs as requested in order that BIA Fixed Costs/Pay Costs “Requirements” needs are adequately identified. * Impact of FY 2008-2019 Pay Costs funding results which recur from year-to-year which are completely unrealistic and has caused DOI to lose over $800M in funding due to failure to fully fund Pay Costs (e.g. Bush administration in FY 2008 was $42M which “fully funded” Pay Costs to the downward trend of only partially funding Pay Costs; lowest in FY 2017 under Obama’s administration of $5M; current FY 2018 is $18M). * Reviewed overhead of FY 2020 Regional Roll UP which again focused on budget cuts/elimination of similar funding for programs proposed in FY 2019. * TIBC workgroup continues to work on streamlining the budget process including looking at the older Priority model to streamline budget process.   **Jeannine Brooks**   * Handout with brief overview of budget for FY 2018 and proposed cuts in FY 2019 and FY 2020. * Ensured Tribes that while it appears that there is a cut for Contract Support Costs which is based on the overall funding levels, this area will be 100% funded as required by law. * The unfunded survey has been set aside as an administrative mandate has been received that the department cease and desist which, although the department may not proceed, the Tribes can conduct if they so choose. * Encouraged submission of Pay Cost data as this is the only means for the Department to ensure that the data is available in preparation of the report. * Changes have been made to ensure that data is collected as this responsibility has been turned over to the Regional offices and the intent is to send out the request earlier this year (October). | |
| **Questions from the Audience:**   * Alaska – expressed concern about not being invited to the discussion regarding unmet needs instead received request only two days prior to deadline, wanted to know how many responded as a result; **response** – will provide report by Region as to number that responded; the hope is that the process will be improved with the Regions taking over the survey responsibility due to increased assistance from the financial personnel on a regional basis; redesigned FY 2020 survey due to the difficulty that Tribes expressed as not certain how to complete FY 2019 survey due to the detail requested; Sharee emphasized the requirement in the self-governance regulation requires that the unmet needs be reported every year. * Alaska – expressed concern about CSC cuts; **response** – assured that Treasury will fund as written in the law. * Expressed concern as to how to get numbers of participation up; **response** – only 53 of the 200 self-governance tribes responded; feels that more communication is critical, use of training videos which are posted to web page, more hands on support available at the Region level; emphasized importance of working with Regional Directors and budget officers. * Michigan – requested formula for Pay costs; also expressed concern that Pay Cost report does not take into consideration when pay raises are not able to be given due to funding cuts and that there is also an issue when employees are cut for the same reasons; **response** – will get information out for Tribes; emphasis on importance of Pay Cost report. * Alaska – expressed concern about difficulty in completing the survey for those who live in remote villages without adequate internet services as portions of the responses were not being saved as the responder moved onto the next section; **response** – advised that the survey is an emailed PDF document that must be saved as a Word document for completion versus working directly from the emailed document as it will not be saved on the emailed PDF. * Question regarding why FY 2017 funding was so low; **response** – FY 2017 dip was due to space reorganization and loss of office space and subsequent dramatic decrease in lease costs which contributes to the fixed costs portion of the formula. * Navaho – explained how southwest develops its needs for priorities by involving community in the process which contributes to their funding requests; **response** – good plan. * Concern expressed that as offices are moved and throughout the BIA reorganization process, Tribal consultation must occur prior to the moves/changes being made as this may cause a loss of historical expertise; must challenge the Administration. * Stressed importance of getting feedback from the Tribes’ representatives to TIBC; must understand Zinke’s priorities are different from the Tribes and must work with “friends are on the Hill” while not forgetting that must work on both ends to ensure our requests are taken seriously. This is especially critical with the discretionary budget process; defense is winning while Indian issues are taken less seriously. * Question regarding the result of the Tiwahe funds and whether will be made whole; **response** - funds were cut but then restored in FY 2018 budget; Tiwahe amounts should be identified in time for negotiations; recurring Tiwahe funds have been approved; this is a demonstration of how testifying at Congressional hearings is significant. * Alaska (Meliak) – expressed concern in small villages where there is delays in receiving funds once approved. This process is harmful to American Indians/Alaska Natives throughout the US as these small tribes do not normally have the alternative resources to cover services while awaiting funds, therefore services are cut, employees laid off, etc.; **response** – must persevere and send a strong message to the legislature to ensure that this is not acceptable; suggestion that Tribes should pursue advanced appropriation funding while waiting similar to the request made of I.H.S. * Alaska (Yukon) – inquiry about advise for tribes to expand AFA’s into non-BIA departments; **response** - Title VI discussion where non-BIA departments have worked on this over the past ten years yet always get push back; expect this to be worse with the current Administration even though there is a Republican recommendation to place programs into the hands of the local areas. It is the feeling that the responsibility of the internal bureaucrats is to push back and defend their position; most of these bureaucrats are not Indians and do not recognize the Trust responsibility. As demonstrated in education there was a fear that if Tribes took over Indian schools, funds would be moved to fund other programs even though history has demonstrated that the education process had been enhanced and funds were not transferred. Tribes also face push back in their own communities, therefore must demonstrate that Tribal management is a good thing. Perhaps the best way for these requests to begin is to introduce the concept in a pilot program to demonstrate success. | |
| **Follow Materials, Documents, Websites for Reference:**  Advised that Power Point was previously provided to Self-Governance; handout in envelope; no other references | |