

TRIBAL CAUCUS

Tribal Co-Chairs  
**W. Ron Allen**  
*Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe*

**Rick Harrison**  
*Chickaloon Native Village*

**Alvin (AJ) Not Afraid, Jr.**  
*Crow Tribe*

REGIONAL  
REPRESENTATIVES

ALASKA  
**Rick Harrison**  
*Chickaloon Native Village*

**Dominic Ivanoff**  
*Native Village of Kotzebue*

EASTERN OKLAHOMA  
**Jefferson Keel**  
*Chickasaw Nation*

**Greg Pitcher**  
*Shawnee Tribe*

GREAT PLAINS  
**Harold C. Frazier**  
*Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe*

**Larry Wright**  
*Ponca Tribe of Nebraska*

MIDWEST  
**Darrell Seki**  
*Red Lake Nation*

**Aaron Payment**  
*South Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians*

EASTERN  
**Cheryl Andrews-Maltais**  
*Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)*

**Kitcki Carrol**  
*United South and Eastern Tribes*

NAVAJO  
**Jonathan Nez**  
*Narajo Nation*

**Myron Lizer**  
*Narajo Nation*

NORTHWEST  
**W. Ron Allen**  
*Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe*

**Greg Abrahamson**  
*Spokane Tribe*

PACIFIC  
**Robert Smith**  
*Pala Reservation*

**Russell Attebery**  
*Karuk Tribe*

ROCKY MOUNTAIN  
**Alvin (AJ) Not Afraid, Jr.**  
*Crow Tribe*

**Terry Tatsey**  
*Blackfeet Tribal Business Council*

SOUTHERN PLAINS  
**Ronnie Thomas**  
*Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas*

**Angela Thompson**  
*Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma*

SOUTHWEST  
**Joe Garcia**  
*Ohkay Ovingeh*

**Shawn Duran**  
*Taos Pueblo*

WESTERN  
**Herminia Frias**  
*Pascua Yaqui Tribe*

**David Decker**  
*Elko Band Council*

# TRIBAL INTERIOR BUDGET COUNCIL TRIBAL CAUCUS

May 24, 2019

The Honorable Tara Sweeney  
Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C St. NW, MIB-4660  
Washington, DC 20240

## Re: Tribal/Interior Budget Council April 2019 Meeting

Dear Assistant Secretary Sweeney:

On behalf of the Tribal/Interior Budget Council (TIBC), thank you for your participation and continuing dialogue with TIBC Tribal representatives during the April 2019 TIBC meeting in Washington, DC. In consideration of the discussions and motions passed by TIBC Tribal representatives during that meeting, we submit the following for your consideration and reply:

## Indian Affairs' FY 2020 Budget Proposal Justification

Decades of data have shown that there is a chronic underinvestment in Indian Country by the federal government and that budget proposals to Congress that reduce or eliminate programs are inconsistent with the federal trust obligations to Indian Country. As such, TIBC Tribal representatives request that the Administration provide a written, detailed explanation for each program that the Administration proposed to reduce or eliminate funding for in the Department of the Interior's (DOI) FY 2020 budget request for Tribal programs.

Annually, the TIBC Committee must make impossible decisions on how to support critical programs with inadequate funding and restrictive parameters imposed by Administration officials. Budget proposals from the Administration that represent a continuation of current funding levels are contrary to findings and recommendations found in countless reports. Additionally, budget proposals that cut funding for Tribal programs are in blatant opposition to the federal treaty and trust responsibilities to Tribal Nations. The current Administration continues to propose reduced funding or the complete elimination of programs that are vital to Tribal Nations and the people they serve. We respectfully request that you provide a detailed written justification that explains how these reductions and eliminations promote the trust and treaty obligations of the federal government to Tribal Nations.

TIBC encourages the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs to advocate for Tribal Nations and for Native people with Congress through better budget proposals. This most sacred mission is bestowed upon you as Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. TIBC Tribal representatives encourage you to remember that human lives and ways of life are impacted by reductions and eliminations in funding for vital programs. It is your

legal and moral duty to advocate for Tribal Nations and their citizens through adequate funding and policy improvements.

### **Carryover or Unexpended Funds in Indian Affairs**

TIBC Tribal representatives request quarterly and annual accountings of regional carryover funds organized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Bureau of Indian Education, including any restrictions on the uses of those funds. This report should identify funding as one-year, two-year, or no-year funding for both regional and central offices. This report would facilitate TIBC Tribal and federal representatives in their budget considerations and decision-making.

### **Fee-to-Trust Land**

TIBC Tribal representatives request a report on activities regarding fee-to-trust lands, in order to provide clarity on the number of applications submitted and processed. Along with this report, TIBC Tribal representatives respectfully request an explanation of the Administration's goals with fee-to-trust processes. The Administration's activities with respect to fee-to-trust are of critical importance to the fulfillment of DOI's federal trust and treaty obligations to Tribal Nations. It is incumbent upon the federal government, as our trustees and federal partners, to facilitate this request.

### **Public Safety and Justice Summit**

TIBC Tribal representatives request a public safety and justice summit that includes Tribal Nations, DOI, the Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and any other relevant agencies involved in ensuring public safety and administering justice in Indian Country.

### **Economic Development Summit**

TIBC Tribal representatives request an economic development summit to discuss how the BIA can improve programming to better promote economic development in Tribal communities. This summit would explore ways to structure Tribal, public, and private partnerships to grow Tribal economies.

### **BIA Roads Maintenance Program Data Collection Pilot Project**

TIBC Tribal representatives formally express their support for the BIA to pursue a Roads Maintenance Program data collection pilot project with Tribal Nations from the BIA Great Plains Region. The TIBC Roads Subcommittee has been working with federal partners to identify the resources and tools needed to conduct this pilot project. During TIBC's April 2019 meeting, a motion was passed to support a partnership between the BIA and those BIA Great Plains Region Tribal Nations that opt to participate in the pilot

project. Advancement of this pilot initiative will facilitate the roles and responsibilities of TIBC.

### **Enhancing Government-to-Government Relations between Tribal Nations and DOI**

TIBC Tribal representatives request that the Administration consult Tribal Nations to discuss enhancements to the government-to-government relationship between Tribal Nations and DOI. Specifically, TIBC Tribal representatives support a greater Tribal Nation advisory role with DOI that allows TIBC to remain the forum for budget, while allowing for other government-to-government dialogue to take place as part of complementary or other advisory forums. TIBC Tribal representatives respectfully request that this consultation between Tribal Nations and DOI take place prior to any DOI actions regarding an enhanced advisory role for Tribal Nations.

### **“Welfare Assistance” and Other Programs with Titles that may be Socially Harmful to Tribal Communities**

TIBC Tribal representatives request that the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs engage Tribal Nations in discussions regarding the name of certain programs that may be harmful to Tribal communities. While TIBC Tribal representatives understand that some program names are a result of specific legislation or federal regulation, there is no question as to the power of language. TIBC Tribal representatives seek program titles that empower Tribal Nations and Native people and encourage DOI to engage Tribal Nations on how these program names can be refined to avoid the negative social impacts on Tribal citizens.

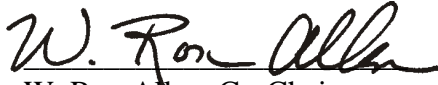
### **TIBC Tribal Representatives Oppose DOI’s Reorganization Efforts until Further Consultation with Tribal Nations Takes Place**

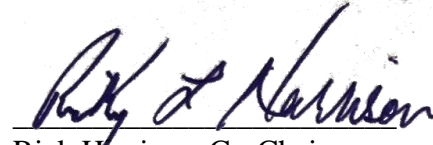
TIBC Tribal representatives passed a motion in opposition of DOI’s reorganization efforts based on watersheds until further consultation with Tribal Nations is conducted and financial information is presented to Tribal Nations on the costs and expenses of this endeavor. Reorganization efforts that direct DOI funds away from Tribal communities have a direct impact on the availability of funds for Indian Affairs programs through DOI. In consideration of the decades of chronic underinvestment in Indian Country, the diversion of any DOI funding to the reorganization effort should be viewed as inconsistent with the federal treaty and trust responsibilities to Tribal Nations. Continued underinvestment in Indian Country negatively affects Tribal Nations’ ability to provide services to their citizens, develop vibrant economies, and manage and protect natural and cultural resources. TIBC Tribal representatives respectfully request further consultation and financial information regarding the costs, expenses, and financial impact of DOI’s reorganization efforts.

*Tribal/Interior Budget Council*  
*Re: Tribal/Interior Budget Council April 2019 Meeting*  
*May 24, 2019*

Thank you, again, for your continued participation and dialogue with TIBC. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Tyler Scribner, NCAI Policy Analyst, at (202) 466-7767 or [tscribner@ncai.org](mailto:tscribner@ncai.org). We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

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

  
Rick Harrison, Co-Chair  
Tribal/Interior Budget Council

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