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# Udall: Omnibus Funding Bill Includes Strong Investments in Indian Country

Bill rejects Trump administration's devastating cuts to Indian programs

Increases funding for IHS & funds critical infrastructure needs for Native Americans

**WASHINGTON** – Today, U.S. Senator Tom Udall, vice chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and ranking member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, released the following statement on the omnibus appropriations bill, which includes important funding for Indian Country that Udall fought to include:

“This bill represents real progress for Indian Country, significantly increasing our investments in Native health care, infrastructure, economies, and communities. It rejects the president’s dangerous proposed budget cuts and instead provides funding increases that will lead to healthier communities and better outcomes across Indian Country.

“I’m proud to have fought for critical resources to strengthen the programs that Indian Country relies on. This bill invests in Tribal health care, increasing

funding by 10 percent for the Indian Health Service, which provides essential health care to over 2 million Native Americans despite chronic underfunding. And, I'm very pleased that the bill also includes additional funding and access to more resources outside of IHS that I requested to assist Tribes in combatting the opioid epidemic. This bill also makes crucial infrastructure improvements across Indian Country, providing resources to repair and replace Tribal hospitals, schools, public safety and justice facilities, and irrigation and dam safety projects.

“Looking forward, we need to build on this strong foundation to ensure that we better meet our responsibilities to Tribes. As vice chairman of the Indian Affairs Committee, I'll keep fighting to deliver effective investments and targeted resources to Indian Country based on meaningful government-to-government consultation.”

### **Highlights for Indian Country**

**Top-line on Tribal Programs** — With a 10 percent increase for the Indian Health Service and a 7 percent increase for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bureau of Indian Education, the bill allows the federal government to better meet its trust and treaty obligations to Indian Country.

**Tribal Infrastructure** — The bill makes significant investments in Tribal community infrastructure. It increases funding for health care facilities at the Indian Health Service by 59 percent, Bureau of Indian Education schools by 78 percent, Bureau of Indian Affairs irrigation and water projects by 84 percent, and public safety facilities at Bureau of Indian Affairs by 212 percent.

**Tribal Public Health and the Opioid Epidemic** - The bill includes additional funding for Tribes to combat the opioid and behavioral health challenges facing many Native communities. It reflects the request Udall and nine other Democratic senators made to Appropriations leadership. The bill includes a 6 percent increase for mental health services and a 4 percent increase for alcohol and substance abuse program funding at the Indian Health Service. The bill expands Tribal access to federal opioid response programs at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), including a new Tribal set-aside of \$50 million in SAMHSA's Opioid Response Grant fund and a \$5 million Tribal set-aside in SAMHSA's Medication-Assisted Treatment for Prescription Drug and Opioid Abuse Program.

**Tribal Public Safety** – The agreement includes strong support for public safety initiatives in Indian Country, including a 5 percent increase in public safety funding for Tribal law enforcement, authorization of funding for school security, and – for the first time ever – a 3 percent Tribal set-aside within the Crime Victims Fund. The Tribal Victims of Crime Act set-aside will address the long-standing issue raised by Tribal leaders of inadequate Tribal access to funding for victim resources. The school security funding authorization is based on language from S.2495, the Udall-cosponsored STOP School Violence Act of 2018, to authorize Department of Justice's Secure Our Schools (SOS) Grants. These SOS grants invest \$75 million in FY2018 and \$100 million per year between FY2019 and FY2028 in early intervention and prevention programs to stop school violence before it happens — including important updates to the grant program to ensure Tribes, Tribal schools, and Tribal law enforcement are able to more fully participate.

**Key Points:**

- **Indian Health Service (IHS):** Overall budget for IHS increases by \$498 million above FY 2017, for a total funding level for the IHS of \$5.5 billion.

Increases funding for IHS infrastructure by \$322 million over FY17 funding - including \$5 million to begin design of the Alamo IHS Health Clinic in New Mexico.

Increases in Mental Health Service funding of 6 percent and Alcohol and Substance Abuse Programs of 4 percent, including \$2 million for the Gallup Detox Center in New Mexico, to address the opioid substance abuse crisis facing many Native communities.

- **Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE):** Overall budget for BIA/BIE increases by \$204 million, for a total of \$3.063 billion. The bill includes an additional \$162 million for BIA and BIE infrastructure, including school construction and maintenance, public safety facilities, and irrigation and water projects.

- **Schools:** Indian Education programs at the Department of Interior are funded at \$914.4 million, an increase of 2.5 percent over fiscal year 2017 funding levels. Elementary and Secondary Indian Education Programs at the Department of Education are funded at \$180 million, an increase of 9 percent over fiscal year 2017 funding levels.

- **Public safety and justice:** Public Safety and Justice programs at the Bureau of Indian Affairs are increased by 5 percent, for a total of \$405.5 million, including \$2 million for Violence Against Women Act implementation and a \$9 million increase in criminal investigations and police services.

- **Water:** Indian Land and Water Claims Settlements are funded at \$55.5 million, an increase of \$10 million above the FY 2017 level, including \$21.7 million for the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project and \$4 million for the Navajo Water Resources Development Trust Fund.

- **Natural Resources:** \$30.6 million to fund natural resources management construction and maintenance needs, including \$24.6 million in irrigation project construction – four times the FY 2017 funding level – and \$38.2 million for dam safety projects.

- **Tourism in Indian Country:** A total of \$3.4 million in new funding is included to implement the NATIVE Act to promote Tribal tourism and economic development. The NATIVE Act was cosponsored by Udall and enacted into law by President Obama in 2016. It requires agencies with tourist assets to include Tribes and Native organizations in national tourism efforts and strategic planning.

- **Indian Arts & Crafts Act Enforcement:** \$2 million in additional funding for anti-trafficking enforcement, including work to address the rampant problem of counterfeit Native American art in New Mexico and across the country. Udall held an Oversight Field Hearing in Santa Fe on the topic in July 2017.