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# Udall Advances Strong Investments for New Mexico in Major Interior & Environment Funding Bill

Udall's appropriations bill fully funds PILT, restores funding for LWCF, increases funding for the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities

Udall successfully fought off new anti-environment provisions, dangerous cuts to EPA and Indian programs

**WASHINGTON** — Today, U.S. Senator Tom Udall, lead Democrat on the Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies, advanced major funding for New Mexico's public lands, infrastructure, environmental protection and stewardship, and programs for Indian Country as part of the Fiscal Year 2019 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. The full Senate Appropriations Committee unanimously approved Udall's bill in a committee business meeting today.

Udall successfully fought to keep the bill clean of any new anti-environmental bill provisions, and the bill represents the first Senate bill of its kind in years to

exclude such poison pill policy riders. Udall's bill rejects the Trump administration's proposed cuts to the EPA, Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Service – which would have had devastating consequences for New Mexico and Indian Country. The bill also rejects cuts to important land management agencies in New Mexico, including the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service. Udall fought to fund many priorities that are critical to New Mexico's economy and way of life: the bill provides \$425 million for the Land and Water Conservation Fund; a significant increase for wildfire suppression, which will bridge the gap before Udall's long-term wildfire fix takes effect next year; it fully funds the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program important to New Mexico counties; and it includes strong resources for Indian Country health care and education, for arts and humanities programs, and for our public lands and national parks.

“Put simply, today's bill is a major win for New Mexico and for Indian Country. I'm proud to have fought for strong resources that will strengthen New Mexico's economy and support our way of life, with robust investments in our public lands, in rural infrastructure, in our outdoor economy, in clean air and water, and in programs to benefit Indian Country,” Udall said. “This bill represents a bipartisan commitment to the American people and New Mexicans to conserve our public lands and cultural institutions, to safeguard our environment for future generations, and to fulfill our trust and treaty responsibilities to American Indians and Alaska Natives.”

“And thanks to bipartisan cooperation, we were able to keep this bill free of new anti-environment provisions – and reject the shameful and inexcusable cuts proposed by the Trump administration to the Environmental Protection

Agency, Bureau of Indian Education, and Indian Health Services and our land management agencies,” Udall continued. “Those proposed cuts would have put our environment at risk and prevented us from providing quality health care and education to tribal communities – and from fulfilling our trust obligation to Indian Country.”

“New Mexicans value our public lands, clean air and water, and the arts and humanities – all of which are vital to the health of our communities and our economy,” Udall said. “As the lead Democrat on the committee overseeing funding of Interior and EPA, I am committed to fighting for adequate resources for the programs and professionals that provide New Mexicans and Americans with the services and protections they deserve.”

U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich welcomed the legislation: “This funding bill makes robust investments to improve our public lands and grow New Mexico’s outdoor recreation economy, and supports our rural communities by fully funding PILT and the Land and Water Conservation Fund,” said Heinrich, a member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. “It also protects Indian Country from the Trump Administration’s proposed cuts to the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Service. I will continue fighting to secure smart investments that strengthen New Mexico’s economy, support our rural and Tribal communities, and protect our public lands for future generations.”

In total, Udall’s bill provides \$35.9 billion in discretionary funding - \$601 million above fiscal year 2018 and \$7.6 billion above the president’s budget request.

**New Mexico highlights of the bill include:**

**Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)**—The bill provides \$425 million for federal land acquisition and conservation grants provided through the LWCF. LWCF is deeply important to New Mexico, allowing for the protection of places like Valle d’Oro, Brazzo Cliffs and Rio Grande del Norte. LWCF is critical for improving recreational access to our federal lands, protecting iconic landscapes, delivering grants to states and local governments to create and protect urban parks and open spaces, and providing farmers and ranchers with easements to allow them to continue to steward their private lands in the face of development pressures. The president’s budget proposed a negative total for LWCF, in the amount of -\$12.9 million, due to rescissions of \$46 million from previously appropriated funding.

**Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)**—The bill fully funds payments to counties through the PILT program, which are estimated at a total of \$500 million.

**Wildland Firefighting**—The bill provides \$2.454 billion for fire suppression at the Forest Service and Department of the Interior, an amount which covers the 10-year rolling average of actual firefighting expenditures plus an additional amount that may be required, based on predictions by the agencies’ forecasting models. This amount is \$508 million more than the fiscal year 2018 level. The increase was provided with discretionary funds. Additional funding will be made available starting in fiscal year 2020 as part of the wildfire cap adjustment that Udall secured in last year’s omnibus.

**Gold King Mine Spill**—Udall secured \$4 million for the EPA to continue monitoring water quality in areas affected by the Gold King Mine Spill, and included language to ensure adequate long-term water quality monitoring program be put in place for the states and tribes affected following the Gold

King Mine Spill and that the EPA will process all state, tribal, and local requests for reimbursements for any cost incurred while the Animas River was contaminated.

**Indian Health Service's Alcohol and Substance Abuse program—**\$245.6 million, including \$10 million for the opioid pilot. The Alcohol and Substance Abuse Program is part of an integrated behavioral health approach to collaboratively reduce the incidence of alcoholism and other drug dependencies in American Indian and Alaska Native communities. The request also includes a \$15 million pilot for a Special Behavioral Health Program for Indians for the prevention and treatment of mental health and substance use disorders. This includes \$2 million for grants and contracts with public or private detox centers that provide alcohol or drug treatment, including Na’Nizhoozhi Center in Gallup, New Mexico.

**Resources to Fight Rising Drought—** The bill provides \$1 million for Water Resources to assess transboundary aquifers, providing new information for state and local officials to address pressing water resource challenges in the U.S.-Mexico border region.

**Indian Arts and Crafts Act Enforcement—** The bill provides \$2 million in additional funding for enforcement of federal laws prohibiting the trafficking of counterfeit Native American art in New Mexico and across the country. Udall held an Oversight Field Hearing in Santa Fe on this topic in July 2017.

**Forest Health—** Udall secured \$2.7 million for forest health institutes, including at New Mexico Highlands University, to enhance the Forest Service’s capacity to execute practical science-based forest restoration treatments that will

reduce the risk of severe wildfires, and improve the health of dry forest and woodland ecosystems in the West.

**Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund—** The bill provides \$10 million for grant funding to federally recognized Tribes for reclamation of abandoned mine lands that support economic development. These new dollars can help address high priority coal cleanup projects, as identified by the Navajo Nation.

**National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities—** The bill provides \$155 million each for the NEA and NEH to support arts and humanities programs, an increase of \$2 million per endowment. The increase was provided after the president once again proposed abolishing these programs, which support arts and cultural programs as well as thousands of jobs in New Mexico and across the country.

**Chaco Canyo—** The bill includes language to express Congress' support for the delay of the oil and gas lease around Chaco Historical Park until robust tribal consultation and historic preservation studies can be completed.

**National Landscape Conservation System—** \$41.8 million to effectively manage national monuments and special management areas, including Rio Grande del Norte and Organ Mountains Desert Peak. This is a \$5 million increase to the enacted level, the first since fiscal year 2016.

### **Overall Highlights**

**Tribal Programs—**The bill provides \$5.772 billion for the Indian Health Service (IHS), \$234 million more than fiscal year 2018 and \$347 million more

than the President's budget request. Within that amount, the bill includes increases of \$104 million for tribal contract support costs, \$115 million for staffing of new health facilities, and \$10 million for tribal opioid treatment and prevention grants. Programs provided through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) are funded at \$3.075 billion, an increase of \$11 million more than the fiscal year 2018 level.

**Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**—The bill provides \$8.824 billion for the EPA, the same level as fiscal year 2018 and \$2.632 billion more than the President's budget request. The bill rejects the administration's proposals to cut research by 45 percent, grants by 48 percent, and regulatory and enforcement programs by 25 percent. It also rejects the request to fund large scale buyouts to cut 3,500 agency staff, roughly 17 percent of the workforce.

The bill maintains funding for the State Revolving Funds at the fiscal year 2018 level, including \$1.164 billion for Drinking Water and \$1.694 billion for Clean Water. The Water Infrastructure Financing Innovation Act (WIFIA) loan program continues at \$63 million, which will support lending of \$6 billion. The bill provides \$25 million for lead contamination testing at schools and child care centers, \$30 million for lead reduction projects in rural areas, and \$15 million for water projects in communities working to improve compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act, which is \$20 million more than the fiscal year 2018 level for these three programs combined. The bill also increases the US-Mexico border water infrastructure program to \$15 million, which is \$5 million more than the fiscal year 2018 level.

**National Park Service (NPS)**—The bill provides \$3.215 billion for the NPS, \$13.4 million more than the fiscal year 2018 level and \$513.6 million more

than the President's budget request. The bill provides \$364.7 million for construction programs, an increase of \$5 million above the enacted level, and preserves and expands resources provided in last year's bill to help address the Service's deferred maintenance backlog. National Heritage Areas funding is continued at the fiscal year 2018 level of \$20.3 million and the Historic Preservation Fund is funded at \$88.9 million, \$8 million less than fiscal year 2018. Funding for State Historical Preservation Offices also continues at the fiscal year 2018 level of \$48.9 million, and Civil Rights grants continue at the fiscal year 2018 level of \$13 million.

**Bureau of Land Management—**The bill provides \$1.309 billion – an increase of \$11.5 million from fiscal year 2018 and rejects cuts to core programs such as public lands and fish and wildlife service management.