

2015 Budget Initiative Tribal Resource Management (TRM)

Preparedness - \$15.0 million for BIA/Tribal Preparedness needs in the following areas:

Indirect Contract Support Costs – (\$7.0 million) BIA distributes funding provided through the Interior's Wildland Fire Management program to many Tribes who operate their own wildfire programs through Self-Governance compacts or P.L. 93-638 contracts. To maintain consistency and meet BIA requirements, BIA provides Indirect Costs (IDC) to Tribes who manage wildland fire programs. IDC is used to provide administrative support for the tribal fire management program. BIA receives a line item appropriation to cover both direct and indirect contract support costs (CSC). However the wildland fire program indirect (CSC) is not a part of the BIA CSC funding and therefore must be provided by the wildland fire program.

Tribal Wildland Fire Program Administrative Support - (\$2.0 million) A recent OIG report identified deficiencies in BIA's accountability of fire suppression expenditures; inadequate staffing was a contributory factor. The BIA and Tribes manage numerous self-determination compacts, contracts, grants, annual funding agreements, and reimbursable agreements. This financial and business management complexity represents a requirement unique to the Bureau of Indian Affairs and is not accounted for in the Bureau's allocation of funding through OWF. Currently, Bureau and Tribal fire management staff administer this workload as a collateral duty. Employees performing these functions lack sufficient education, training, and time, necessary to adequately address business management requirements.

Workforce Development - (\$6 million) Historically, there has been an over-dependency on emergency firefighting workforce hired under the Administratively Determined (AD) hiring authority. Both Direct Service (BIA) and tribal fire programs rely on emergency firefighters to staff a fire program for required service deliverables. For example, two-thirds of their wildland fire engines are staffed below required levels. In addition, only 30% of wildfires on American Indian and Alaska Native trust land were extinguished using Preparedness-funded personnel.

The fire program has an opportunity to address this by creating more opportunities for steady, long-term employment while reducing AD dependence, and provide education, training and leadership development opportunities for American Indian and Alaska Native youth.

Fuels Management / Landscape Restoration – (\$10 million)

Within the treaty making process, Tribes retained reserved rights to hunt, fish, and gather on usual and accustomed grounds and in some cases have co-management rights with federal agencies. For many Tribes, the reserved rights areas fall under the management of other federal agencies and may be the Tribe's highest priority for management. However, adjoining federal agencies do not always have the funds to manage acres commensurate with tribal goals and objectives for protection of both tribal trust and reserved rights lands. Consequently, it is essential that Tribes have the funds necessary to leverage with other federal agencies and participate in collaborative projects to improve the management of these lands.