



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
POLICY, MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
Washington, DC 20240



MAR 16 2007

The Honorable Max Baucus
United States Senate
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Baucus:

Thank you for your February 23, 2007 letter to Secretary Kempthorne. He asked that I respond on his behalf.

Your letter expressed support for the Indian Land Consolidation and the Intertribal Bison Cooperative program. As you know, the Congress did not enact regular appropriations for 2007. Rather, the Congress enacted the Joint Resolution, Public Law 110-5. Section 112 of P.L. 110-5 provides that report language accompanying appropriations acts for FY 2006 have no legal effect and further directs that agencies prepare operating plans for submission to the Appropriations Committees within 30 days.

We are formulating our operating plans consistent with guidance issued by the Office of Management and Budget. OMB issued Memorandum 07-10 on February 15, 2007, providing guidance to Departments and agencies on the development of the operating plans. Based on this guidance, our plans will incorporate funding for programs and projects that were selected as a result of merit-based and competitive allocation processes. This would include projects that were formulated as part of the 2007 President's Budget.

We are not at liberty at this time to disclose decisions on the allocation of the 2007 funds that are being developed for inclusion in operating plans. Operating plans are to be approved by the Office of Management and Budget and submitted to the Appropriations Committees by March 17.

We appreciate your interest in the Department's programs.

Sincerely,

R. Thomas Weimer
Assistant Secretary



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
POLICY, MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
Washington, DC 20240



MAR 16 2007

The Honorable Jon Tester
United States Senate
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Tester:

Thank you for your February 23, 2007 letter to Secretary Kempthorne. He asked that I respond on his behalf.

Your letter expressed support for the Indian Land Consolidation and the Intertribal Bison Cooperative program. As you know, the Congress did not enact regular appropriations for 2007. Rather, the Congress enacted the Joint Resolution, Public Law 110-5. Section 112 of P.L. 110-5 provides that report language accompanying appropriations acts for FY 2006 have no legal effect and further directs that agencies prepare operating plans for submission to the Appropriations Committees within 30 days.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
TASKING PROFILE

ACCN #: 356441 Status: O Fiscal Year: 2007
Document Date Received Date Due Date Action Office Signature Level Doc Source
02/23/2007 02/23/2007 03/09/2007 PMB A/S CM

Addressee: Dirk Kempthorne

From: Baucus, Max; Tester, Jon
United States Senate
Washington
DC 20510

Subject Text: Requesting funding for two high priority issues of importance to Indian Tribes in Montana on which we ask your support.

Required Surnames: OCL; BIA

Mail Carrier: FX

Mail Track#:

POB

Cross Reference:

Copies To: SIO-Exsec; BIA; OCL; PMB - *Monica Nae*

Status Tracking:

MF

Correspondence Specialist:
MFeeney

Corresp. Specialist Phone:
513-0705

2/27/07
PMB

Closed Comments:

Signed:

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 23, 2007

The Honorable Dirk Kempthorne
Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240-0002

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As the Department determines how it will spend funds made available to it via the FY 07 Continuing Resolution, there are two high priority issues of importance to Indian Tribes in Montana on which we ask your support.

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) of the Flathead Reservation have been operating an Indian Land Consolidation Act (ILCA) program, and have been running it quite successfully. We understand that they are the only Tribe in the country that is supplementing BIA ILCA funding for this program with tribal funds. We understand OMB would prefer that the BIA only fund the ILCA program on those reservations with the very highest percentage of fractionated lands on their reservations.

While the Flathead Reservation is in fact highly fractionated, there are reservations with somewhat worse situations. We believe a Tribe putting its own limited funds on the line to fix this problem - one that was created by federally enacted Allotment Acts in the early 1900s - should not suddenly have the program ended. The CSKT are beginning to make tangible inroads into dealing with the fractionated land problem on their reservation, and are likely to create a success story that the Department can point to with pride.

The FY 07 Senate Interior Appropriations Report (S. Rept. 109-275) included the following language on page 47: "In addition to those most highly fractionated lands identified in the budget request, the Committee expects the Department to continue its Fiscal Year 2006 land consolidation partnerships, and for those Tribes that have contributed tribal funds towards land consolidation, the levels should be no less than the funding provided during Fiscal Year 2006." While we realize that language has no effect at this point, it is demonstrative of the importance of this program. We hope the BIA will continue funding to the CSKT ILCA program at the same level they received in FY 06 (\$500,000).

February 23, 2007
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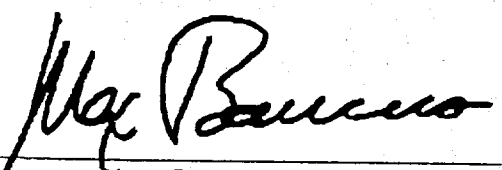
Secondly, we ask that you support continued funding for the Inter-Tribal Bison Cooperative (ITBC). The ITBC was established in 1992 by ten Tribes who had a total of 1500 head of bison. 15 years later, they now have 57 tribal members in 19 states who cumulatively own 15,000 head of bison. ITBC member Tribes are located from the Dakotas and Montana to California, and from Oklahoma to Washington State. The organization exists to restore buffalo to Indian Country to re-establish the traditional and cultural connection between Tribes and buffalo.

In addition to ITBC's restoration efforts, they have implemented a health care initiative to reintroduce buffalo meat into the diets of Indian reservation populations to treat diet related diseases. This health care initiative is projected to effectively combat the epidemic rates of diabetes among tribal populations, and reduce the expenditure of scarce health care funds. Further, ITBC assists Tribes with developing self-sustaining buffalo herds as viable economic development efforts for Tribes that often have little other economic opportunities.

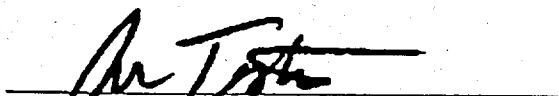
Since the early 1990s, the Interior Appropriations Subcommittees has supported funding every year for the ITBC. It is really more an ongoing program than an earmark. Congressional funding in the BIA budget for FY 06 was \$3 million. As FY 07 CR funding is based on the 06 base levels, we would ask that the ITBC receive funding as close to that amount as is possible.

Thank you for your attention and support for these two programs.

Sincerely,



Max Baucus



Jon Tester