

Federal Lands Highways

Title Federal Lands
Prepared by Kirk Vinish, AICP
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Executive Summary

According to testimony at a recent Congressional hearing, transportation serving tribal communities is the most unsafe, rudimentary and under-maintained transportation network in the nation. Senate Indian Affairs Committee Chairman Byron Dorgan noted that the majority of roads that serve tribal communities are unsafe and unreliable, with motor vehicle accidents the leading cause of death for Native Americans ages 1-34 and the third leading cause of death overall for Native Americans.

Background

The Indian Reservation Roads (IRR) program was established on May 26, 1928, by Public Law 520 (Codified at 25 USC 318(a)). The Act authorized appropriations for survey, improvement, construction, and maintenance of Indian reservation roads not eligible for Federal-aid highway funding. This program has consistently under funded Washington State tribe's transportation needs.

Transportation on federal lands includes the Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Indians Affairs, and the Fish and Wildlife Service. An important research program for these agencies is the CTIP program¹ is funded through the participation of several agencies. CTIP is funded in an amount not to exceed 1/2 of 1 percent of the yearly-authorized appropriation for each FLH Program category (Park Roads, Forest Highways, Indian Reservation Roads, Refuge Roads). Washington Tribes are particularly concerned with the following topics:

- I. Direct the Federal Lands Highways Office of Asset Management to perform comprehensive inventory of all transportation facilities found on federally recognized Indian reservations.
- II. Increase CTIP funding from 1/2 of 1 percent to 3/4 of 1 percent of the yearly-authorized appropriation for each FLH Program.
- III. Simplify the Indian Reservation Road program funding distribution formula. Step 1: Each tribe receives \$50,000 for transportation planning. Step 2: Allocate remaining funds in the same manner used by the States, (e.g. 1/3 total on-reservation road miles, 1/3 vehicle miles traveled and 1/3 population).

Washington Tribes fully support the following recommendations from the National Congress of American Indians.

¹ The Coordinated Federal Lands Highway Technology Implementation Program (CTIP) is a cooperative technology deployment and sharing program between the FHWA Federal Lands Highway office and the Federal land management agencies. It provides a forum for identifying, studying, documenting, and transferring new technology to the transportation community.

- I. Increase funding for existing tribal transportation programs to address chronic unmet needs and keep up with inflation.
 - Increase funding for the IRR Program to \$500 million for FY 2010 with stepped increases of \$ 50 million for every year thereafter;
 - Restore the obligation limitation deduction exemption to the IRR Program;
 - Increase funding for the Tribal Transit Program to \$25 million for FY 2010 with stepped increases of \$10 million for every year thereafter;
 - Increase funding to the Tribal Technical Assistance Programs (TTAPs) to \$2.5 million annually;
 - Increase funding for the IRR Bridge Program to \$50 million annually.
- II. **CREATE A NEW TRIBAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PROGRAM AND PROVIDE TRIBAL FUNDING SET ASIDES WITHIN THE HIGH RISK RURAL ROAD PROGRAM.**
 - Establish a 2% Tribal funding set aside from the High Risk Rural Roads Program;
 - Create a FHWA-Federal Lands Highway Tribal Safety Program funded at \$50 million annually to address the roadway structural and design flaws that contribute to death and injury on Tribal transportation systems;
 - Create a NHTSA Tribal Safety Program funded at \$50 million annually to address the driver and pedestrian behavioral issues that contribute to death and injury on Tribal transportation systems.
- VI. **MINIMUM TRANSPORTATION FUNDING:** Establish minimum base funding, from the IRR program, for all Tribes at \$50,000 per Tribe. These funds would be available to be spent for any purpose allowable under the IRR Program.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

- I. **ADDRESS NATIONAL PARK SERVICE UNMET NEEDS IN WASHINGTON STATE:** There is a significant amount of unmet needs for the Park Service that directly affects park users in Washington State (see Attached).

U.S. FOREST SERVICE

- I. **PROTECT ROADLESS LANDS** through legislation to reduce sources of conflict and controversy in National Forest management. This will also free up scarce transportation funding for the Forest Service to use on high traffic demand areas.
- II. **CONVENE ANOTHER COMMITTEE OF SCIENTISTS TO REVISIT THE ISSUE OF FOREST PLANNING.** Such a committee will have the benefit of using information gathered during the 2000, 2005, and 2008 rulemakings. Therefore a more acceptable balance can be found between adaptability and meaningful standards

on forest use and therefore forest service road funding will be more precisely targeted².

² National Forests Policy Assessment 2008, University of Montana p. 12 “The ability to restore forests and watersheds must confront the National Forest transportation system head-on.”