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NAIHC Applauds \$100 Million Funding Increase to Indian Housing Block Grant

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Washington, DC (March 30, 2018): Last week's full year FY18 spending bill passed by Congress contained a number of increases for tribal housing program. Primarily, an additional \$100 million was included for the Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG). This marks the first sizable increase to the IHBG since 2010, and this year's funding of \$755 million marks the highest level of regular appropriations since the program was enacted under the National American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (NAHASDA).

NAIHC recently held its Legislative Conference in Washington, DC, where many tribal housing professionals in attendance focused their advocacy efforts on the Hill to request increased funding. Since NAHASDA was enacted, the IHBG has not kept pace with inflation, however the additional \$100 million will help close that gap considerably.

"Tribal housing programs across the Country have been fighting for more funding for years," said Sami Jo Difuntorum, NAIHC Board Chairwoman. "I want to thank the members of Congress who worked to include this funding, particularly the leadership of the House and Senate THUD Appropriations Committees and Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and their staff."

Gary Cooper, Vice-Chairman of NAIHC stated "The impact of additional funding is huge. For years, tribes have had to focus their funds on maintaining existing housing units, so this new money will go directly to building and acquiring new units to address the growing housing needs in tribal communities."

One stipulation of the additional funds is that it be allocated to tribal housing programs under a competitive grant process, which should ensure that funds go to shovel-ready projects that can make large impacts in their communities. NAIHC will work with HUD to make sure all tribes are aware of how the program will operate.

In addition to the increase to the IHBG, Congress included \$65 million to the Indian Community Development Block Grant Fund, an increase of \$5 million over last year. More

funds are also available to deliver training and technical assistance to tribal housing programs and their staff.

A few, smaller tribal housing programs saw reduced funding under the omnibus passed by Congress. The HUD-VA Supportive Housing program saw its funding cut from \$7 to \$5 million this year. Despite the funding cuts, NAIHC is still working with members of Congress to pass legislation that would make the HUD-VASH program permanent and allow more tribes to implement the program, which is designed to couple housing opportunities with supportive services specifically for Native American veterans at risk of homelessness.

Additionally, the Section 184 Loan Guarantee Program funding was reduced, however NAIHC has been told that the HUD program should maintain its effectiveness as prior year funding can still be utilized to guarantee new mortgages being issued for homes in tribal communities.

Tony Walters, the Executive Director of NAIHC stated that the increase in funding accomplishes one of the organization's primary goals this Congress. "For the last few sessions of Congress, NAIHC's two goals have been to reauthorize NAHASDA and increase funding for tribal housing programs. The omnibus was a big step in the right direction on funding and I look forward to working with Members of Congress and staff to get NAHASDA across the finish line as well."

About the National American Indian Housing Council: The NAIHC is the only national organization representing the housing interests of Native American, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian communities. The NAIHC is composed of over 270 members representing 498 tribes and housing organizations. NAIHC promotes and supports Native housing entities in its efforts to provide culturally relevant, quality and affordable housing on behalf of Native people throughout the United States. For more information, go to its website at www.naihc.net.

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