

Serving Communities



The Department of the Interior is responsible for protecting lives, resources, and property; generating scientific information; and fulfilling the Nation's trust and other special responsibilities to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and residents of affiliated island communities.

The Department faces challenges as it strives to continue to improve services to these communities. These include:

- Fulfilling trust responsibilities and promoting self-determination on behalf of tribal governments, American Indians, and Alaska Natives.
- Protecting communities from catastrophic wildland fires.
- Safeguarding visitors to Interior-managed lands from illegal activities.
- Providing scientific information to reduce risks from earthquakes, landslides, volcanic eruptions, and other hazards.
- Providing scientific assessments on the quality and quantity of the Nation's water resources and conducting multipurpose natural science research.

The 2007 budget includes \$5.0 billion for programs that provide these services to communities. These funds will improve services and accountability in trust programs, Indian education, and contract support; continue implementation of the National Fire Plan and the President's Healthy Forests Initiative;

SERVING COMMUNITIES MISSION

**Safeguard lives, property and assets,
advance scientific knowledge, and improve
the quality of life for communities
we serve**

strengthen law enforcement and security programs in the U.S. Park Police and Bureau of Indian Affairs; and enhance earth science and analysis to reduce the risks of hazards and support a new Landsat Data Continuity Mission.

TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

The Department's 2007 budget increases funding for unified Indian trust programs over the 2006 enacted level by \$30.2 million. The proposed program increase will expand efforts to consolidate fractionated interests in lands, enhance services, provide more timely information to beneficiaries, and continue improvements in trust management. The budget funds continued implementation of the Department's plan to conduct a historical accounting for individual Indians and Tribes accounts.

Working closely with federally recognized Tribes, Interior also promotes economic development and an improved quality of life for 1.6 million Native Americans in tribal communities across the Nation. To support the effort, the 2007 budget includes \$2.2 billion for BIA programs. The budget gives priority to strengthening Indian self-determination, upgrading management of education programs, and improving law enforcement.

AFFILIATED ISLAND COMMUNITIES

In serving communities, the Department coordinates Federal policy for, and provides financial and technical assistance to, the Territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Interior also oversees financial assistance to the freely associated States: the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau. The 2007 budget requests \$79.2 million in discretionary appropriations for the Office of Insular Affairs to increase economic development within the insular areas; improve the financial management practices of the insular governments; and increase Federal responsiveness to the unique needs of the island communities. Permanent appropriations for the OIA in 2007 will total \$347.1 million, including \$202.4 million for payments to the freely associated States.

WILDLAND FIRE

In the six years since adoption of the National Fire Plan, Interior has become far more effective in responding to wildland fires. Armed with the tools provided by the President's Healthy Forests Initiative and the Healthy Forest Restoration Act, Interior is reducing hazardous fuel loads, improving forest health, and reducing risks to communities more effectively than in years past. In 2007, Interior will maintain its high success rate for containing wildfires at initial attack through more effective and efficient use of preparedness and suppression resources. The Department will also continue to strategically implement hazardous fuels reduction projects to reduce risks to communities and improve forest and rangeland health. The 2007 budget proposes \$769.6 million for the Wildland Fire management program.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND SECURITY

The Interior Department maintains the third largest law enforcement agency in the Federal government with over 4,300 commissioned officers. These law enforcement officers provide for the safety and security of 70,000 employees, 200,000 volunteers, 1.6 million Indian country citizens, and an average of 1.3 million visitors per day on public lands. They protect natural and cultural resources and facilities on approximately one-fifth of the land in the United States, including Interior-managed lands adjacent to the international borders with Canada and Mexico.

The Interior Department's 2007 law enforcement and security budget totals \$630.0 million, an increase of \$18.0 million above 2006. Budget increases focus on providing adequate staffing at BIA detention centers and in the high crime areas of Indian Country, implementing the Park Police staffing plan and ensuring Park Police presence at critical icons

SCIENCE

Science, a cornerstone for the Department's land management decisions, supports work to achieve resource protection, resource use, recreation, and serving community goals. The 2007 budget includes \$944.8 million for the U.S. Geological Survey so that science programs continue to generate relevant, objective information for land managers and for communities throughout the Nation. The budget emphasizes improvements in hazards prediction, assessment, monitoring, and communication; continued operation of the nationwide streamgaging network; and development of a ground data process and distribution system for Landsat 8 data.

PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAXES

Congress passed the PILT Act in 1976 to provide payments to local governments in jurisdictions where certain Federal lands are located within their boundaries. Local governments incur costs associated with Federal lands within their boundaries, but are unable to collect taxes on the lands. Currently, approximately 1,850 local governments use PILT payments to improve local school, water, and road systems, as well as for emergency services and for other necessary infrastructure on over 614 million acres of entitlement lands. Entitlement lands include lands in the national forest system, national park system, and BLM's public lands as well as those affected by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation water resources development projects. The PILT payments supplement \$4.0 billion in other Federal receipts shared with State and local governments. As part of the President's effort to reduce the deficit, the 2007 budget proposes \$198.0 million for PILT. Although the 2007 budget is \$34.5 million below the 2006 enacted funding level, this is 58 to 90 percent higher than PILT funding levels in the 1990s.