



National Congress of American Indians

NCAI News

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Senate Appropriations Committee Approves FY 2003 VA-HUD-EPA Bill

On July 25, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved its FY 2003 funding bill for the Departments of Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies (S. 2797, S. Rept. 107-222). The House Appropriations Committee will not consider its version of the bill until early September.

Funding in the bill meets the Subcommittee allocation of \$91.43 billion in discretionary budget authority, \$2.07 billion below the President's request and \$1.1 billion below the current level. It includes a \$4.2 billion advance appropriation for the Section 8 housing voucher program, as has been the case for the past four years, and \$1.5 billion in emergency spending for FEMA disaster relief, the same as the current level. This broadcast reports on the funding levels for the major programs of interest to tribal governments. The bill and its accompanying report are available at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d107:s.02797>.

The President's budget included a legislative proposal to charge individual agencies, starting in fiscal year 2003, the fully accrued costs related to retirement benefits of Civil Service Retirement System employees and retiree health benefits for all civilian employees. The budget also requested an additional dollar amount in each affected discretionary account to cover these accrued costs. Because the underlying legislation has not been acted on, the FY 2003 request figures in this report have been adjusted to exclude the accrual proposal.

Department of Veterans Affairs

S.2797 provides \$26.5 billion in discretionary funding for the VA, \$2.7 billion above the current level and \$1.2 billion above the budget request. Increases above the President's request are allocated for medical care and medical research.

VA (\$ in millions)	FY 2002 Enacted	FY 2003 Request	FY 2003 Senate Bill
Native American Veterans Housing Loan Program	.54	.56	.56

Department of Housing and Urban Development

The Senate bill provides \$32.1 billion for HUD, \$65.8 million below the current level and \$623.1 million above the budget request. It restores proposed cuts to the Native American Housing Block Grant Program, but not to the Section 184 Indian Housing loan guarantee program. It also provides a \$2.5 million increase for the Indian Community Development Block Grant.

HUD (\$ in millions)	FY 2002 Enacted	FY 2003 Request	FY 2003 Senate Bill
Indian Housing Block Grant	648.57	646.59	648.57
Section 184 Indian Housing Loan Guarantee Program	6.0	5.0	5.0 ¹
Indian Community Development Block Grant	70.0	73.0	72.5

¹ The Senate bill supports a loan principal of not more than \$197.24 million, compared to the current level of \$234.3 million.

HUD (\$ in millions)	FY 2002 Enacted	FY 2003 Request	FY 2003 Senate Bill
Rural Housing and Economic Development (small amt to tribes)	25.0	0	25.0
Empowerment Zones Round II Grantees	45.0	0	30.0

Native American Housing Block Grant – Includes the following allocations: \$5.99 million for the Section 601 Loan Guarantee Program and \$7.2 million (\$2.2 million for the National American Indian Housing Council and \$5 million for HUD) to support the inspection of housing units, contract expertise, and training and technical assistance. In addition, the following report language is included:

The Committee notes that there is not a requirement that qualified Indian and Alaska Native owned construction companies be given priority consideration in construction of Indian housing. In many Indian and Alaska Native communities, the unemployment rate exceeds 80 percent, and housing contracts would provide much needed employment and training opportunities for Native Americans living on reservations and in Alaska Native villages. The Committee directs the agency and its grantees to give priority consideration to qualified Native owned firms in the design and construction of Indian housing (S.Rept. 107-222, page 32).

Community Development Block Grant – The Senate bill continues the following set asides: National American Indian Housing Council (\$2.6 million); Alaska Native-Serving and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions (\$4 million); and, competitive facilities grants for tribal colleges and universities (\$3 million). Within the total for CDBG, \$65 million is provided for Youthbuild activities, including \$10 million for new programs in underserved and rural areas, and \$2 million is provided for the Boys and Girls Clubs of America for clubs in or near, and primarily serving residents of, public and Indian housing. Finally, there are a number of tribe-specific earmarks within a new \$140 million initiative to financial economic and social revitalization efforts.

Environmental Protection Agency

The Senate bill provides \$8.3 billion for the EPA, an increase of \$220.3 million above the current level and \$678.6 million above the budget request. Major changes from the request include a \$238 million increase for clean water state revolving loan funds.

EPA (\$ in millions)	FY 2002 Enacted	FY 2003 Request	FY 2003 Senate Bill
Environmental Programs and Management	2,093.5 ²	2,047.7	2,140.5
Water and Wastewater Grants for Alaska Natives and Rural Areas	40.0	40.0	45.0
Clean Water State Revolving Fund	20.2	18.2	21.8
Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Fund	850.0	850.0	875.0
Superfund	1,311.3 ³	1,272.9	1,272.9
Leaking Underground Storage Tank Facilities	73.0	72.3	72.3
State and Tribal Assistance Grants	3,738.3 ⁴	3,463.8	4,009.6
Tribal General Assistance Grants	52.5	57.5	57.5

The Senate bill includes language, as requested by the Administration and as carried in previous appropriations acts to:

- Waive the 1.5 percent cap on the tribal set aside from the Section 319 Non-Point Source Pollution Grant program

² Includes \$39 million in supplemental funding

³ Includes \$41.3 million in supplemental funding

⁴ Includes \$5 million in supplemental funding

- Increase the tribal set aside cap on the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund to 1.5 percent
- Allow the EPA to award cooperative agreements to tribes or intertribal consortia to assist in implementing federal environmental programs in the absence of an acceptable tribal program, provided that funding for these agreements is not drawn from funds designated for state financial assistance programs

Federal Emergency Management Agency

For FEMA, S. 2797 provides \$5.9 billion, including \$1.5 billion in emergency contingency funds for disaster relief. The bill includes \$25 million for a new pre-disaster mitigation program that will provide competitive grants for projects that reduce future disaster risks. This new competitive grant program, for which \$300 million had been requested by the Administration, is designed to replace the formula-based Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, currently funded through the Disaster Relief Fund.

FEMA (\$ in millions)	FY 2002 Enacted	FY 2003 Request	FY 2003 Senate Bill
Disaster Relief Fund (Discretionary and Emergency Response)	6,520.9	1,842.8	1,842.8
Emergency Management Planning and Assistance	6,173.0	3,747.2	1,747.2
Emergency Food and Shelter Program	140.0	153.0	153.0
Flood Map Modernization Fund	0	300.0	300.0

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