

Joint Statement by Treasury Secretary Steven T. Mnuchin and Secretary of the Interior David L. Bernhardt on Distribution of Coronavirus Relief Fund Dollars to Native American Tribes

May 5, 2020

WASHINGTON – U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Steven T. Mnuchin and Secretary of the Interior David L. Bernhardt today issued the following statement after agreeing on a path forward to provide Coronavirus Relief Fund dollars to Native American Tribes:

“We are pleased to begin making \$4.8 billion in critical funds available to Tribal governments in all states,” said Secretary Mnuchin. “Our approach is based on the fair balancing of tribal needs.”

“Thanks to President Trump and Secretary Mnuchin for working with Congress to pass the CARES Act as historic financial support will now begin to be disbursed to Native Americans battling the COVID-19 health crisis,” said Secretary Bernhardt. “I appreciate the Secretary of the Treasury’s determination in providing a clear pathway to get these resources promptly delivered.”

The path forward agreed to by the Secretaries will:

- Distribute 60 percent of the \$8 billion to Tribes based on population data used in the distribution of the Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG), subject to a floor of \$100,000. This data is based on U.S. Census figures and is already familiar to Tribal governments.
- Distribute the remaining 40 percent of the \$8 billion based on the total number of persons employed by the Indian tribe and any tribally-owned entity, and further data to be collected related to the amount of higher expenses faced by the tribe in the fight against COVID-19.
- Payment to Tribes will begin today based on the population allocation, and will take place over several banking days. Amounts calculated for Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act regional and village corporations will be held back until pending litigation relating to their eligibility is resolved.
- Payments to tribes based on employment and expenditure data will be made at a later date. Treasury will work with Tribes to confirm employment numbers and seek additional

information regarding higher expenses due to the public health emergency.

Treasury notes that the pending litigation has introduced additional uncertainty into the process of implementing the allocation and making payments to the Tribes, but Treasury is endeavoring to make payments of the remaining amounts as promptly as possible consistent with the Department's obligation to ensure that allocations are made in a fair and appropriate manner.

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