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Office of the Chairman

Timothy L. Nuvangyaoma

Office of the Vice Chairman

Clark W. Tenakhongva

HOPI TRIBE IS NOTIFIED OF CARES ACT RELIEF AID

The Hopi Tribe Receives Notice about the \$85.5 Million allocated Relief Aid

KYKOTSMOVI, AZ – May 14, 2020 — On Friday, March 27, 2020, following a voice vote in the U.S. House of Representatives, President Trump signed into law H.R. 748, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). The 2 trillion dollar relief package, which includes billions of dollars for Indian Country, was passed by the Senate on March 25, 2020.

More than a month later, the U.S Department of the Treasury notified the Hopi Tribe that it would be receiving an allocation in the amount of 85.5 million dollars as part of the CARES Act Emergency Response.

Yet the process to receiving these funds has been far from easy with tribes encountering numerous obstacles and having to overcome various challenges on the federal level. Hopi Tribal Chairman, Timothy L. Nuvangyaoma, commented on the process saying, “We wanted to make sure we were at the table from the very start when it was announced that Hopi might be receiving some help. Because of our due diligence to understand COVID-19 and to respond swiftly, I believe our eagerness to join the conversation around the CARES Act assistance helped us navigate the process to secure the funding and take care of our people.”

Tribal governments were also previously slated to receive a share of the \$8 billion in direct emergency relief from the CARES Act—COVID-19 stimulus bill, however, the Department of the Interior faced concerns from several tribes as well as a lawsuit over whether Alaskan tribal corporations were eligible for funding, which has resulted in delays.

Representative Deb Haaland (D-N.M.), a member of the Laguna Pueblo and the vice chairperson of the House Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States, said in a statement, “No community should be left behind during this pandemic, but it was an all-out fight with the Administration and Republicans in the Senate to ensure Tribes, urban Indian organizations, and tribal organizations have the resources they need to keep Native American communities healthy and supported economically. We fought for it every step of the way, especially the \$8 billion for tribes in the relief package to ensure Native Americans have the same access to health care resources and economic support as other governments.”

“As you are aware, the detrimental impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have had a disproportionate health care and economic impact on federally recognized tribes due to a chronic lack of essential resources,” reads a letter signed by Democratic lawmakers including Deb Haaland of New Mexico, co-chair of the Congressional Native American Caucus, Ruben Gallego of Arizona, chair of the House Natural Resources Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the U.S., Raul Grijalva of Arizona, chair of the House Natural Resources Committee and Assistant House Speaker Ben Ray Lujan of New Mexico. Each of these congressional leaders, along with several other representatives, were instrumental in pushing for assistance to the tribal communities including Hopi.

Since receiving notice of the 85.5 Million dollar allocation to the Hopi Tribe, the Department of the Treasury has released guidelines detailing how the funds will be distributed to the tribes:

- 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.

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

Hopi Vice Chairman Clark W. Tenakhongva, added his thoughts on the funding process stating, “Until a resolution has been drafted and presented to the Hopi Tribal Council to accept the CARES Act funding for Coronavirus Relief this money is not officially part of the Tribal coffers, however once these funds are accepted it is my hope that we can prioritize efforts to improve community infrastructure which in turn will improve our ability to respond and prepare for future emergencies such as this.”

Similar sentiments were echoed by Hopi Chairman Timothy Nuvangyaoma who stated that “The goal is to recognize and acknowledge all recent expenditures and future expenses incurred by the Hopi Tribe, the Hopi Emergency Response Team and the Hopi villages in their direct response to the pandemic. We want to make sure we are considering our short term and long-term objectives for the Hopi community in regards to infrastructure, healthcare, social programs, education and child care development to name a few. We want to be better prepared for any future emergency response.”

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For questions of more information, please call the The Hopi Tribe;

Office of the Chairman at (928) 734-3102, OR Office of the Vice Chairman (928) 734-3113.