



# The Federal Monitor

*News of Issues Affecting Tribes and Tribal Housing Programs*

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## **National American Indian Housing Council**

NAIHC is a non-profit organization, which effectively and efficiently promotes and supports American Indians, Alaska Natives and native Hawaiians in their self-determined goals to provide culturally relevant and quality affordable housing for native people.

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## **ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT – INTERIOR Bureau of Indian Affairs**

The *American Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* (ARRA) continues to be rolled out by federal agencies. Please find an update on the tribal housing program within the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI).

### **Housing Improvement Program (HIP)**

DOI administers the Housing Improvement Program known as HIP through the Bureau of Indian Affairs. This program provides funds for rehabilitation of housing for the neediest within tribal communities: Indian elders and low-income people. Forty million dollars (\$40 M) in funding was allocated to DOI's HIP and jobs programs. (See Public Law 111-5).

Under ARRA, the Secretary has already made the HIP awards for FY 2009 based on prior grantees. No formula or competition was used for making awards to tribes. The Secretary looked to congressional report language for guidance on how to administer the HIP funding (\$20 M). The Senate language reads as follows:

**BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS - OPERATION OF INDIAN PROGRAMS** - The Committee has provided \$40,000,000 for operation of Indian programs and recommends that the funds be allocated as follows: \$18,000,000 for the workforce construction training program, which will be focused in areas with the highest unemployment; \$2,000,000 for the workforce training and development program, which is a national program focused on training for certified plumbers and pipefitters; and \$20,000,000 for the housing improvement program. As it utilizes the funding for housing improvement, the Bureau is directed to work closely with the Department of Energy to ensure that funding from the Weatherization Program is incorporated to the maximum extent possible. (Senate Report 111-3)

According to BIA Tribal Operations, the Secretary also took into account the following factors to award HIP funds: 1) tribes with clean audits; 2) HIP will create jobs for 18-24 months; 3) tribes with high unemployment rates; and 4) tribes with large number of HIP eligible participants. Tribes that were awarded HIP funding will be receiving award letters in coming weeks.

### **CABINET UPDATE**

President Barack Obama named Ken Salazar as the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. The U.S. Senate confirmed his appointment on January 20, 2009. Mr. Salazar formerly served as a U.S. Senator from the state of Colorado.

President Obama named Larry EchoHawk as Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. Mr. EchoHawk must be confirmed by the U.S. Senate.