



# The Federal Monitor

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*News of Issues Affecting Tribes and Tribal Housing Programs*

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The National American Indian Housing Council is a not-for-profit organization representing tribes and tribal housing organizations on affordable housing, mortgage lending, finance, and economic development issues.

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### ***NAIHC Congressional Tour of Alaska Native Housing Conditions Spanned Over 2000 Miles***

Between August 22<sup>nd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, The National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC) conducted a successful congressional tour of Alaska. It was NAIHC's largest tour yet with staffers from the offices of Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS), Senator Jim Bunning (R-KY), Senator Olympia Snowe (R-ME), Senator Tim Johnson (D-SD), Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Congressman Emanuel Cleaver (D-5<sup>th</sup> MO), Congressman Martin Olav Sabo (D 5<sup>th</sup> MN), Congressman Barney Frank (D-4<sup>th</sup> MA), Congresswoman Marilyn Musgrave (R-4<sup>th</sup> CO), Congressman Walter B. Jones (R-3<sup>rd</sup> NC), and Congressman Eni Faleomavaega (D-AS) joined NAIHC along with representatives from the Democratic Policy Committee and the National Congress of American Indians. The group visited Bethel, Eek, and Kasigluk in the Yukon-Koskowim Delta, a region that spans 56,000 square miles. In the Bering Strait they visited the communities of Nome and Teller, Alaska. With an evening stop over at Point Barrow, the group flew over 600 miles from the Bering Strait, across the top of the Arctic Slope, and inside the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to visit Kaktovik, Alaska.

Local media coverage flying across the state of Alaska proved successful as interviews were conducted even during fuel layovers. It was an awakening experience for the Capitol Hill staffers as they visited Alaskan Native homes and met with tribal leaders and city mayors. The group witnessed a severe lack of sewer and running water. Many Alaskan Native villages use indoor "honey buckets." The term describes the human waste removal method using a bucket. The tour highlighted the pressing need for infrastructure development to improve the housing conditions for Alaskan Natives.

Due to high transportation costs, residents pay over six dollars for a gallon of milk in the hub communities of Bethel, Nome, and Barrow. All durable goods, such as ply-wood and non-durable goods, such as fresh vegetables must be flown in to the remote villages by air, accessible year-round or shipped by barge, accessible only during the short summer months. The transportation barriers endured by the tour attendees, displayed the increased cost that impedes the economic growth of rural Alaskan Native villages. With the upcoming conference for H.R. 3058 or the Transportation, Treasury and Department of Housing and Urban Development (TTHUD) appropriations bill, NAIHC will count on the staffers influence and support to keep level funding from FY 05 as supported in the senate version of the TTHUD bill.

### ***FY 2006 Appropriation Update***

On August 3, 2005, President George W. Bush signed into law the FY'06 Interior Appropriations, P.L. 109-54. Programs directly impacting Indian housing in the

Interior Appropriations:

<b>Indian Housing</b>	<b>FY'05 Enacted</b>	<b>FY'06 Budget</b>	<b>FY'06 Enacted</b>	<b>FY'05 Enacted v. FY'06 Enacted</b>
BIA Housing Improvement Program	\$19.1	\$19.1	\$19.1	Level
BIA Loan Guarantee Program	\$6.4	\$6.3	\$6.3	\$-.1

***Native American Veteran Home Loan Bill Moves in House***

On September 8, 2005, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity passed H.R. 1773 introduced by Rep. Stephanie Herseth (D-SD), a bill that mirrors its Senate counterpart, **S. 917, Native American Veterans Home Loan Act**, which was introduced on April 28th by Senator Daniel K. Akaka (D-HI). The legislation in both bills will re-designate the current pilot program for direct housing loans for Native American Veterans as permanent. The Veterans Direct Home Loan for Native Americans is available to eligible Native American veterans who wish to purchase or construct a home on trust lands. The Subcommittee passed to incorporate the bill with H.R. 3665, a bill that authorizes the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide adaptive housing assistance to disabled veterans who live with another family member. The bills will be sent to full committee for mark-up. S. 917 was incorporated into S. 1325 and was passed by the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs on July 28, 2005.

**Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Will Hold Hearing on Indian Housing**

The Senate Committee on Indian Affairs announced that they intend to hold a hearing on Indian housing on September 28, 2005 at 2:30pm. NAIHC has been asked to work with Committee staff to provide witnesses and issues areas. As more information becomes available it will be immediately provided to the membership.

**NCAI Fund for Hurricane Katrina**

The National Congress of American Indians is coordinating Hurricane Katrina relief donations to send much needed help to affected tribal members. If your tribe would like to contribute please send checks to NCAI 1301 Connecticut Ave, NW Suite 200, Washington, DC 20036. (designate Hurricane Relief in the subject line of the check) Donations will go directly to tribes in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

**SAVE THE DATE- 2005 LEGAL SYMPOSIUM**

National American Indian Housing Council is hosting its 2005 Legal Symposium at the Treasure Island Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada December 6-9. Please register at [www.naihc.net](http://www.naihc.net) or call 1-888-625-7667. The Legal Symposium will host discussions on the legal, financial, and regulatory issues impacting Indian housing. Register today!!!

**NAIHC Office of Governmental Affairs Increases Staff With Two  
New Hires**

The Office of Governmental Affairs has expanded to a staff of three with two new hires, Ms. Jennifer McLaughlin, who holds an LLM in Indigenous Peoples Law and Policy from the University of Arizona and was legal consultant for the Passamaquoddy Tribe, will be our new Legislative Associate. Megan Alvanna-Stimpfle, our George Mason intern during this past summer, just received her Bachelor of Science in Economics and will be our new Legislative Assistant. Please welcome them.