

Written Testimony of the Ramah Navajo Chapter-Ramah Band of the Navajos

**F.Y. 2025 FEDERAL BUDGET REQUEST SUPPORT AND CONCERNS FOR DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR (DOI)-BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS (BIA) SUBMITTED TO U.S. HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENTAL AND RELATED AGENCIES  
May 07, 2024**

HONORABLE CHAIRMAN AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

I, Darnell J. Maria, Executive Director for the Ramah Navajo Chapter, hereby submit this written testimony regarding the DOI-BIA FY 2025 Budget.

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**1) Inadequate Funding of Tribes' 638 Contract Programs as Compared to BIA Programs**

Under P.L. 93-638, tribes directly operate many of the Federal programs that were formally operated by either BIA or Indian Health Services. Tribes decide which programs to operate, not the BIA. Federal law requires that these programs be funded at the same level they would have been funded had the Secretary operated these programs directly. This includes funding for facilities operations and maintenance and replacement of buildings, equipment, and vehicles. These programs, however, continue to be woefully underfunded. Yet, every year, the BIA puts tribes through an "exercise" to prioritize unmet needs and budget requests. Our priorities reach national recognition, but we rarely receive an increase in program funds.

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The table below shows over the past six (6) years what funds the Chapter has received:

Contracts	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
CTGP	786,031	785,378	788,386	800,951	800,951	841,284
Fac. O&M	37,125	82,562	61,136	66,322	38,402	20,291
Detention O&M	62,056	60,445	61,401	64,206	64,206	12,754
Law Enforcement	703,848	706,562	708,991	715,976	748,689	763,414
Detention	1,042,927	1,047,654	1,063,131	1,120,117	1,128,575	1,176,857

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Detention	1,042,927	1,047,654	1,063,131	1,120,117	1,128,575	1,176,857

Written Testimony of the Ramah Navajo Chapter-Ramah Band of the Navajos

**F.Y. 2025 FEDERAL BUDGET REQUEST SUPPORT AND CONCERNS FOR DEPARTMENT OF  
INTERIOR (DOI)-BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS (BIA) SUBMITTED TO U.S. HOUSE  
APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENTAL AND RELATED AGENCIES  
May 07, 2024**

HONORABLE CHAIRMAN AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

I, Darnell J. Maria, Executive Director for the Ramah Navajo Chapter, hereby submit this written testimony regarding the DOI-BIA FY 2025 Budget.

The Chapter thanks you for holding these hearings on an annual basis. We sincerely appreciate the **U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environmental and Related Agencies**. More work, however, remains to be done. We have identified four (4) priority issues for this year, and respectfully request your sincere consideration and advocacy with appropriate Agencies to address the following issues:

**1) Inadequate Funding of Tribes' 638 Contract Programs as Compared to BIA Programs**

Under P.L. 93-638, tribes directly operate many of the Federal programs that were formally operated by either BIA or Indian Health Services. Tribes decide which programs to operate, not the BIA. Federal law requires that these programs be funded at the same level they would have been funded had the Secretary operated these programs directly. This includes funding for facilities operations and maintenance and replacement of buildings, equipment, and vehicles. These programs, however, continue to be woefully underfunded. Yet, every year, the BIA puts tribes through an "exercise" to prioritize unmet needs and budget requests. Our priorities reach national recognition, but we rarely receive an increase in program funds.

For many years, and at least since 2018, the Chapter has continued to receive its program funds at the same level with only minor increases and even some decreases. When increases are funded by Congress, the tribes often do not receive those increases in the year the funds are apportioned to BIA. BIA withholds those increases and pays them out in subsequent years despite its duty to comply with the Prompt Payment Act. For example, Ramah received FY 2022 Congressionally appropriated increases in FY 2023 for Real Estate and Road Maintenance programs. As another example, although Congress increased appropriations to BIA in FY 2023, we have experienced a decrease in the funding we received from BIA. This funding is important to us as we have been operating at a 25% deficiency for years in operating costs for our contracted programs.

The table below shows over the past six (6) years what funds the Chapter has received:

Contracts	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
CTGP	786,031	785,378	788,386	800,951	800,951	841,284
Fac. O&M	37,125	82,562	61,136	66,322	38,402	20,291
Detention O&M	62,056	60,445	61,401	64,206	64,206	12,754
Law Enforcement	703,848	706,562	708,991	715,976	748,689	763,414
Detention	1,042,927	1,047,654	1,063,131	1,120,117	1,128,575	1,176,857