

RAÚL M. GRIJALVA
7TH DISTRICT OF ARIZONA

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
RANKING MEMBER

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD, ELEMENTARY, AND
SECONDARY EDUCATION

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE
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March 29, 2023

Honorable Kay Granger
Chairwoman

House Committee on Appropriations
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member

House Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member DeLauro:

I am requesting funding for the Tohono O’odham Nation (Nation) in Fiscal Year 2024. The entity to receive funding for this project is the Tohono O’odham Nation located in Arizona State Route 86, mile marker 74 San Simon Village, Pisinemo District, Tohono O’odham Reservation, Arizona 85634. The Tohono O’odham Nation has more than 35,000 members, and its Reservation encompasses some 2.8 million acres of remote and rugged desert terrain, including a 62-mile border with Mexico. The funding would be used for the construction of the Western Police and Fire Substation/Regional Emergency Operations Center. This center would allow for the permanent base of operations for the Tohono O’odham Nation Fire Department (TONFD) and Tohono O’odham Nation Police Department (TOPD) to support direct first responder service to the Nation’s western districts (these include all or portions of the Nation’s Pisinemo, Chukut Kuk, Gu Achi, Sif Oidak, Hickiwan, Gu Vo, and San Lucy Districts). This project will improve emergency response times, foster collaboration between Department of Public Safety (DPS) programs and deliver joint public safety service to the western districts.

The TOPD and TONFD departments, which are headquartered in the capitol, Sells, simply cannot provide adequate emergency response services to the Nation’s members that live more than 40 miles away in the western portions of the Reservation (including Pisinemo, Chukut Kuk, Gu Achi, Sif Oidak, Hickiwan, Gu Vo, and San Lucy Districts). Response times are further delayed by roads that often are inaccessible due to flooding and monsoon events, making it necessary for TONFD and TOPD to reroute their responses over 100 miles to reach the western communities – resulting in excessive and unacceptable delays, effectively leaving these western communities virtually on their own without access to emergency management, police and fire resources or communications.

The project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds as it will improve emergency response times, foster collaboration between Department of Public Safety (DPS) programs and deliver joint public safety service to the western districts. The requested funding, supplemented by funding provided by the Nation, would allow construction of a combined facility that would serve as a regional EOC, co-locating TOPD, TONFD, emergency response personnel, key Office of

Emergency Management personnel, and providing consolidated joint public safety communications capability for these key DPS components (TOPD, TONFD, and Emergency Medical Services are not licensed on a common mobile radio band or frequency). This would allow the Nation to provide greatly enhanced public safety services, including the ability to shelter in disasters, to the Nation's members living in its western communities.

The project has a Federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized by section 614 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5196c), as amended by section 202 of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (9/11 Act).

I certify that I have no financial interest in this project, and neither does anyone in my immediate family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raúl M. Grijalva". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress