

PLEASE REPLY TO:

- 2207 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-6165
- 2424 SPRINGER DRIVE
SUITE 201
NORMAN, OK 73069
(405) 329-6500
- 711 SW D AVENUE
SUITE 201
LAWTON, OK 73501
(580) 357-2131
- SUGG CLINIC OFFICE BUILDING
100 EAST 13TH STREET, SUITE 213
ADA, OK 74820
(580) 436-5375



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

November 9, 2023

TOM COLE
4TH DISTRICT, OKLAHOMA

DEPUTY WHIP

COMMITTEE ON RULES
CHAIRMAN

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
VICE CHAIRMAN

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN
DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES –
CHAIRMAN
DEFENSE

Honorable Patrick McHenry
Chairman
House Financial Services Committee
2129 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Maxine Waters
Ranking Member
House Financial Services Committee
4340 O'Neill HOB
Washington, DC 20515

House Financial Services Committee Member Hearing Day
Statement to be Submitted to the Record— Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act Reauthorization

I submit the following statement in support of reauthorization for the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA). Originally passed in 1996, NAHASDA is a block grant program that provides annual, dedicated funding to tribal housing programs, and helps fulfill the United States' trust and treaty obligations to Indian tribes. It has succeeded in native communities throughout the United States since its enactment.

Native American communities often face extreme and unique housing and economic challenges and reauthorizing NAHASDA will help Indian tribes address these in an efficient manner. In 2019, the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey reported that American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) were almost twice as likely to live in poverty as the rest of the population — 23.0% compared with 12.3%. The median income for AI/AN households is 30% less than the national average (\$45,476 versus \$65,712). In 2017, a Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) assessment found that 15.9 % of tribal homes were overcrowded, compared to only 2.2% nationally.

NAHASDA has been amended and reauthorized several times, but the most recent authority for the law expired in 2013—ten years ago. Like every authorized program, NAHASDA requires improvements and updates, so the programs function in a way that best benefits its grantees. This includes provisions to assist veterans with housing vouchers that are coupled with healthcare services; streamline the process for mortgages to receive approval of federal guarantees under the Section 184 Indian Home Loan Guarantee Program; and consolidate the number of environmental reviews for tribal housing projects. While Congress has provided funding for NAHASDA since 2013, reauthorization would provide more certainty for future appropriations and better assist tribal housing entities in successfully developing housing options.

There are over 570 federally recognized tribes in the U.S. that use and rely on NAHASDA programs. Tribes not only depend on these programs for immediate housing needs, but also to leverage these funds for infrastructure and economic development opportunities. For example, tribes often invest their Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG) funding to participate in programs such as, the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, to work with lenders and expand their housing infrastructure. The Pascua Yaqui Tribe leveraged \$25 million of their NAHASDA funds into another \$110 million of private investment to develop over 350 homes for families in their community. While the NAHASDA funding only made up 23% of the project costs, they were able to use these funds to open the doors to other economic investment opportunities that they otherwise would not have been able to.

As Co-Chair of the bipartisan Congressional Native American Caucus, I recently led a letter with majority Republican support urging for inclusion of Senate amendment #1078 to the Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). This amendment includes language to reauthorize NAHASDA and passed by an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 86-11. I encourage my colleagues participating in NDAA conference negotiations and members on the House Financial Services Committee to consider keeping this amendment in the final bill. Should this amendment not be included in the final FY24 NDAA, I respectfully request the House Financial Services Committee to take up the issue of reauthorizing NAHASDA, so it can continue to move through the legislative process. It has been 10 years since its last reauthorization and it's time for Congress to step up to their commitment to Indian country.

Thank you for your time and consideration and I urge the House Financial Services Committee to take up NAHASDA reauthorization.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Cole", written over a horizontal line.

Tom Cole
Member of Congress
Co-Chair, Congressional Native American Caucus

TOM COLE
4TH DISTRICT, OKLAHOMA

DEPUTY WHIP

COMMITTEE ON RULES
CHAIRMAN

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
VICE CHAIRMAN

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN
DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES –
CHAIRMAN
DEFENSE



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

November 9, 2023

PLEASE REPLY TO:

- 2207 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-6165
- 2424 SPRINGER DRIVE
SUITE 201
NORMAN, OK 73069
(405) 329-6500
- 711 SW D AVENUE
SUITE 201
LAWTON, OK 73501
(580) 357-2131
- SUGG CLINIC OFFICE BUILDING
100 EAST 13TH STREET, SUITE 213
ADA, OK 74820
(580) 436-5375

Honorable Patrick McHenry
Chairman
House Financial Services Committee
2129 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Maxine Waters
Ranking Member
House Financial Services Committee
4340 O'Neill HOB
Washington, DC 20515

House Financial Services Committee Member Hearing Day
Statement to be Submitted to the Record—H.R. 4155

I submit the following statement in support of my legislation, H.R. 4155, the Tribal HUD-VASH Act of 2023. This legislation would not only permanently secure the Tribal HUD-VASH program, but also allow tribes to utilize these vouchers within their community, regardless of the housing unit.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) created the Tribal HUD-VA Supportive Housing (Tribal HUD-VASH) Program in January 2015 to provide rental assistance and support services to homeless or at-risk Native American veterans living on or near a reservation or other Indian lands. Tribes and Tribally Designated Housing Entities (TDHEs) that are eligible to receive block grants under the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (NAHASDA) can apply for these grants. Since then, the program has expanded to 29 tribes and TDHEs. This program is funded annually through appropriations, but has not been authorized in statute.

Native Americans serve in our nation's Armed Forces at five times the national average, with 19% serving since 9/11. Even before they were granted American citizenship in 1924, Native American men and women have served in every major conflict since the Revolutionary War. According to HUD's annual Homelessness Assessment reports, there are 1,034 homeless Native American or Alaska Native veterans and Native Americans and Alaska Natives are overrepresented in the homeless veteran population relative to their share of the veteran population overall.

The Tribal HUD-VASH Act of 2023 permanently authorizes the Tribal HUD-VASH program and allows for the placement of Native veterans in Formula Current Assisted Stock (FCAS) units without a resulting negative impact on a tribe's Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG). The IHBG is the main HUD formula grant program for tribes since NAHASDA authorization in 1996. Part of this formula includes FCAS units, or all housing developed pre-IHBG that is owned or operated by the tribe or tribal housing authority. Under current guidance,

when a Tribal HUD-VASH voucher is used on a FCAS unit, the tribe or tribal housing authority must take that FCAS unit off their formula total, which decreases their IHBG grant and penalizes the tribe for housing a Native veteran. This disincentivizes tribes from using the program if the only housing available is their FCAS units. Currently there are 90 tribes that have 33,000 FCAS units nationally.

Thank you for your time and consideration and I urge the House Financial Services Committee to swiftly pass H.R. 4155.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Cole", written over a horizontal line.

Tom Cole
Member of Congress
Co-Chair, Congressional Native American Caucus