

Design funds needed for BIA schools

Bureau of Indian Affairs schools at Kalskag, Shaktoolik, Kotzebue and Akiak are in critical need of funds for design, construction or improvements. Sen. Ted Stevens has told the Senate Appropriations Committee.

The senator asked the committee to reprogram BIA funds for the following: \$350,000 for design at Kalskag; \$121,000 for design at Shaktoolik; \$350,000 for a fire sprinkler system at Kotzebue; and a transfer of \$180,000 from design to construction for the Akiak school.

In a letter to Interior Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Robert C. Byrd, Stevens pointed out that Kalskag

and Shaktoolik are the first and second priority schools on the bureau's construction list.

He also noted that negotiations are now under way to transfer the jurisdiction of the Kotzebue BIA school to local control and that the bureau has the responsibility to bring the school up to standard.

The \$180,000 for the Akiak school was appropriated two years ago for design of the school. Since then, the State of Alaska appropriated design and construction funds and the design phase has been completed. The senator asked that the \$180,000 be transferred from design to construction to be used in conjunction with

state construction funds.

The BIA had proposed this year to take over \$1 million from Alaskan projects which would make these essential BIA school projects impossible, Stevens said.

"I would hope that the committee would agree that we cannot justify reprogramming funds for unessential projects in the Lower 48 when many BIA schools in Alaska lack indoor plumbing," the senator told Byrd.

He also told the BIA in recent appropriations subcommittee hearings that it is imperative that the Office of Management and Budget analyze as soon as possible the needs for funds to implement

the omnibus Native claims bill, proposed by Stevens and signed into law in January so that the funds could be added to this year's supplemental appropriations bill.

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