

NANCY EGAN: Thank you, MR. Under Secretary for meeting with us today. I'm from the Western Region and we serve tribes in the western six states, Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon and Washington. And as an organization we have all continuously worked together and strived to make improvements in this program. And our program goal is to be efficient and continue to improve services. And in order for us to continue to improve those services, we need the funding.

And as through the years I've observed within our organizations, as well as our regions and national association, we have been able to work together collectively and been able to communicate and reiterate what our needs are to serve these programs. Because a lot of times we have individuals coming into the programs that are in need of food. They don't have the income; some of them hardly meet even the minimum of income. And a lot of times, FDPIR commodities is their only source for food and the stretch is difficult. So we have a lot of individuals that alternate between food stamps and the commodities programs. And sometimes it's hard to say, well, you were served already in the other program, and you'll have to wait until next month. And this is someone that doesn't have food on their table right now, and these are the households we serve at FDPIR.

We reiterate it's very important to communicate, and I think we have done that. And I believe it's very important that we need to continue to fund this program, FDPIR. And we are compared to Food Stamps, and I know I have had questions about Food Stamps; why does Food Stamps have this. In other words, it's competitive, and a lot of times the clients are not able to go to the nearest town, such as a location I live in are like 100 miles either direction, miles to get a good price on products for food. And in the winter, that's very difficult for someone to make that trip without a vehicle, or even if they do have vehicles, because of the weather. So it is very difficult circumstances from a lot of the other participants in the program.

This program really helped me when I was in need, and a lot of times this program has supplemented a lot of families on the reservation when they had nothing else, and commodities were fairly important to them. And I think those were the ideas and concepts we need to consider when it comes to this reauthorization, is the importance of this program and service we provide to the people. We are here as a spokesperson for the people and the individuals, and we represent them, but yet at the same time the people that are receiving these benefits are the ones that actually benefit than with our commodities and acceptability and report we have had, that has been really important to help us. At least that gives the clients an idea that they're being heard. And from my area in particular, they had suggestions and recommendations they made and they were very impressed and happy that some of these products were in the Food Package. And so now, when it comes to the commodity acceptability report, they'll complete them, because they know their voice is heard. I hope today, after this listening session, that we can truthfully say that our voice was heard.

MR. BOST: You can say that. I would not have come if that were not the case. There are many other places that people want me to come, and I chose to come here today.

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NANCY EGAN: I'm glad you decided to come here and speak to us, MR. Under Secretary, and to listen to these representatives of regions and some of the tribal council representatives.

MR. BOST: You represent the Western Region? Where are you physically located?

NANCY EGAN: Right on the Idaho-Nevada border.

MR. BOST: Where? What town?

NANCY EGAN: \*(unable to understand)

MR. BOST: I know where that is. Maybe I will come and visit.

NANCY EGAN: That would be good.

MR. BOST: What will you show me if I come?

NANCY EGAN: The conditions of our warehouse, and we have -- I know there was mentioned earlier the warehouses not being able to be utilized in kind, that's been most difficult, not only with my program but other programs within the region. We are not real -- it's like we are being told that our warehouse is valued at nothing. And this is a service we provide to the people, and based on the depreciation value of the facility we have now, in order to get anything out of it, the allocation for 40 years, which came up to \$1,810, that's all WIC counts as a value of your facility. We started in 1985 where we first started providing that, and that's \$1,810 and that puts a damper on our budgets when we are trying -- some programs I know struggle to meet their 25 percent, where as others can meet that 25 percent without any difficulty.

And that brings me to the budget formula. I think that needs to be considered of all tribes. I know we have representatives on this Task Group, but I still think that the government-to-government relationship really needs to be emphasized in developing this formula that we need. And I know there is small programs in the Western Region, as well as very large, and we need to take into consideration all the programs. And I think also there needs to be a waiver within a formula, if you do a formula. For me it's whether we go with a formula, we will be on a set amount, this amount of money; we are going to receive this money, and I know thereafter that's all we will receive. That doesn't take into consideration the changes. Some have tailgate sites and some have to purchase fuel, maintenance of the vehicles, and there is a lot of other issues that need to be considered in developing this formula. It's not something we can come across and say, this is a formula that will fit everybody. It's not going to be able to fit everybody, and all the programs. We need to look at the services number of people that are being served, and the number of people that will be effected.

Right now, if we were to go to a formula today, my program would not even survive. It wouldn't be there. We would have to go to a tailgate, and if we can get involved in the tailgate, then the people would have to travel over a hundred miles to get to the nearest tailgate location, which is not feasible for our tribe or the people we serve. Those are some of the considerations I think those are really important. And you need to take a look at what is really there, especially the participants that

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we serve. I think those are the ones that would be effected the most, not directors. Staff will also be without employment. So we are going to be adding unemployment to the already unemployed on the reservation if we were to take this program away.

MR. BOST: Thank you.

DARLENE BARNES: Thank you.