

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 14, 2018

Contact: Patrese Atine, (703) 838-0400

patine@aihec.org

AIHEC Applauds Passage of the 2018 Farm Bill that Increases Resources and Equity for Tribal Colleges and Universities

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) applauds passage of the 2018 Farm Bill. With necessary updates and enhanced provisions, the legislation includes specific provisions from the bipartisan Cultivating Resources, Opportunity, Prosperity and Sustainability for Indian Country (CROPS) Act introduced by Senate Indian Affairs Committee Chairman John Hoeven (R-ND) and Vice Chairman Tom Udall (D-NM) that provides Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) with greater access to resources, tools, and partnerships essential for agricultural production, research, and increased agribusiness in Indian Country.

“AIHEC thanks Senators Hoeven and Udall for their leadership on the CROPS Act which prioritized the needs of Indian Country, including Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) as well as Senate and House Agriculture Committee leadership Chairman Pat Roberts (R-KS), Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Chairman Michael Conaway (R-TX) and Ranking Member Collin Peterson (D-MN) for their tireless efforts to ensuring TCUs are recognized as full members of the nation’s land-grant system,” said AIHEC’s President & CEO Carrie Billy. “This legislation will now allow TCUs to compete for grant funds similar to all designated land-institutions under the Smith Lever 3(d) programs, particularly the Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR) and Federally Recognized Tribes Extension programs and updates the 1994 Land-Grant list to include Red Lake Nation College.”

Other key provisions important to Tribal students include an update to the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research program to allow TCUs that offer an associate’s degree or a baccalaureate degree in forestry to participate, as well as a new competitive grant program for land-grant institutions, entitled “New Beginnings for Tribal Students,” to provide student support services, tutoring, and career counseling to Tribal students pursuing degrees in agriculture.

“We urge President Trump to quickly sign this bill into law,” said David Yarlott, Jr., AIHEC’s Board Chair. “The 2018 Farm Bill addresses a critical number of priorities for Indian Country, including TCUs, allowing Tribal students the benefits of actively participating in U.S. agricultural competitiveness.”

xxx

The American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) comprises the nation’s 37 Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), of which 35 are 1994 Land-Grant Institutions. TCUs are public institutions of higher education operating more than 75 sites in 16 states and serving approximately 160,000 American Indians, Alaska Natives, and other rural residents each year in academic and community-based programs. In 1994, the Tribal Colleges took a significant step toward greater participation in the American higher education system when American Indian reservations became the last lands under the American flag to receive federal land-grant status, and with that designation, to participate in vital agriculture and natural resource programs operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). This historic – and long overdue – recognition occurred with the passage of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994.

