



National Congress of American Indians

# NCAI News

January 22, 2002

## **Murray Telecommunications Planning Grant Proposal Included In Senate Farm Bill**

In December, Senator Murray (D-WA) successfully amended the Agriculture, Conservation, and Rural Enhancement Act of 2001 ([S. 1731](#)) to include up to \$5 million per year for planning and feasibility studies on the deployment of broadband Internet services.

Tribal governments would be eligible for up to \$100,000 per year in grant funding under the amendment, which also includes among the eligible entities state governments, consortia of local governments, telecommunications cooperatives, and state and regional non-profit organizations.

S. 1731 was pulled from the Senate floor in December after efforts to end a filibuster on the bill proved unsuccessful. At this point, further consideration of the measure is unclear.

Senator Murray's amendment is similar to, but smaller in scope than, her stand-alone legislation, the Community Telecommunications Planning Act ([S. 1056](#)), which would provide \$60 million in FY 2002 and such sums as may be necessary in subsequent years to help rural and underserved areas build their telecommunications infrastructure. Tribal governments would be among the eligible applicants under the S. 1056, which gives funding priority to eligible entities that propose to use their awards in rural and underserved areas.

At its 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Session, NCAI members approved resolution [#SPO-01-009](#) in support of the Community Telecommunications Planning Act.

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