



Legislative Action Alert

May 11, 2016

**ZIKA VIRUS FUNDING NEEDED FOR TRIBES!
LETTERS OF SUPPORT **DEADLINE EXTENDED** TO FRIDAY, MAY 13,
2016**

Contact your House Representatives ASAP and urge them to sign on to a letter requesting that Tribes be included in supplemental funding for Zika virus mitigation. Congressman Grijlava (D-AZ) and Congresswoman Kirkpatrick (D-AZ) are circulating a sign on letter this week to leadership in the U.S. House of Representatives requesting that any supplemental funding to address the Zika virus contain dedicated and sustained funding streams, in parity with states, for vector control in Tribal communities.

- Use the attached sample letter on your Tribal letterhead and send to your Member of Congress before this Friday, May 13, 2016.

There is still time to act - the closing date for the sign on letter has been extended to Friday, May 13!

- To find out who your Representative is, please visit www.house.gov

Background:

Congress is currently considering a \$1.9 billion supplemental funding request from the President to address the Zika virus in the United States and internationally. It is critical that this funding be approved and, furthermore, that an adequate portion of this funding go directly to Tribal communities to mobilize an effective local response to the potential public health crisis.

As of May 4, 2016, there were already 472 travel-associated Zika virus disease cases reported in the United States. The Zika virus is spread by the Aedes mosquito and has been found recently in areas of Central America, the Caribbean, and South America. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that Zika infected mosquitos could reach the [lower part of the United States](#) this year.

An alarming concern with the Zika virus is its ability to be passed from a pregnant woman to her fetus. Infection during pregnancy can cause a serious birth defect of the brain called microcephaly and other severe brain defects. Other problems have been detected among fetuses and infants infected with Zika virus before birth, such as defects of the eye, hearing deficits, and impaired growth.

The President requested emergency funding over two months ago to properly address this emerging public health concern and Congress still has not acted – leaving the U.S., and Indian Country's rural communities in particular, vulnerable to the threats posed by this harmful virus. **We hope that you will take the time to support this important issue today for Indian Country, and the entire nation, by reaching out to your Representatives and encouraging them to sign on to the Tribal funding support letter being circulated by Congressman Grijlava (D-AZ) and Congresswoman Kirkpatrick (D-AZ).**

A sample letter for you to place on your Tribal letterhead and send to your Member of Congress is attached. Please send within the next two days! Be sure to share a copy of your letter with NIHB to help us track and bolster this effort. Please contact Michelle Castagne, NIHB Congressional Relations Associate, with any questions at mcastagne@nihb.org or (202) 507-4083.

To learn more about the Zika virus, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>

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