



## ENERGY

Tribal energy resources are vast, largely untapped, and critical to America's efforts to achieve energy security and independence, reduce greenhouse gases, and promote economic development for both Indian Country and the United States as a whole.<sup>97</sup> For example, in 2018 the Office of Indian Energy reported that the utility-scale renewable energy potential on tribal lands is 6.5 times the national potential.<sup>98</sup> As part of a nationwide commitment to a diversified approach to energy development, energy infrastructure is integral to many tribal nations' efforts to create jobs, infrastructure, and improve lives of their citizens. DOI estimates that undeveloped traditional energy reserves on Indian lands could generate up to \$1 trillion for tribal nations and surrounding communities, most of which are located in rural areas. In 2014, DOI reported that Indian energy resources provided over \$1 billion in revenue to tribal nations and individual Indian resource owners.<sup>99</sup>

Even with substantial potential, there are but a few commercial-scale energy projects operating in Indian Country. Tribal nations boast nearly a quarter of the nation's on-shore oil and gas reserves and developable resources, one-third of the nation's western low-sulfur coal,<sup>100</sup> almost 3.5 percent of the nation's wind energy, and approximately five percent of the nation's total solar energy potential.<sup>101</sup> Despite the energy potential in Indian Country, tribal nations face many challenges, including unique laws, regulations, and policies that apply to energy development on tribal lands. Additionally, many tribal nations are just beginning to construct adequate physical infrastructure, gain access to capital, and engage in workforce training specific to energy development. Given the historic, social, and economic impediments tribal nations and citizens face, and the relatively short time tribal nations have been involved in energy development, their successes are clear indicators of future potential.

Investing in and empowering tribal nations provides strong returns and outcomes for tribal and rural communities. For example, between 2010 and 2018, the Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs invested more than \$70 million in more than 170 tribal energy projects valued at nearly \$154 million.<sup>102</sup> This investment is already paying significant dividends. The Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs reports that these projects provide a collective tribal savings of more than \$14 million each year.<sup>103</sup>

Additionally, the National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL DOE) reports that the technical potential of tribal lands is about six percent of the total national technical generation potential.<sup>104</sup> Tribal nations need access to robust capacity-building support and technical assistance programs. These programs are necessary to advance the 150-plus tribal energy projects that are currently proceeding through the development, financing, and construction stages. There are three key components to future tribal success

in this arena. First, removing economic barriers to growth. Specifically, NCAI requests that where possible, Congress reduce or completely eliminate the 50 percent cost-sharing requirement that burden tribal nations. Second, is a continued commitment to technical and financial assistance programs that not only support infrastructure development but also the capacity of tribal programs and offices to carry out their responsibilities – including addressing staffing issues. Lastly, additional support is needed to bolster the tribal work-force in the energy sector and to retain more liaison employees within DOE.

This FY 2021 budget request identifies energy programs providing innovative and important tools to support existing initiatives and facilitate new investment in tribal energy development. This budget request seeks to meet critical analytical and planning, capacity-building, and resource-management needs of tribal nations. Continued focus on developing tribal energy resources will contribute significantly to national energy security, clean energy projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and tribal economic development and job creation.

### Key Recommendations

#### DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

##### Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations Bill

##### Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

- Provide \$4.7 billion for LIHEAP, with \$51 million allocated to tribal nations and tribal organizations.

LIHEAP is intended to assure that low-income families will not be forced to choose between food and heat. With high unemployment and longstanding barriers to economic security, much of Indian Country cannot afford the rising costs of heat and power. Alaska Native villages are experiencing some of the highest costs for energy, with fuel prices recently reaching over \$7 per gallon.<sup>105</sup> In FY 2019, LIHEAP was appropriated \$3.69 billion total, with \$40.7 million<sup>106</sup> allocated to tribal nations and tribal organizations. This funding is well below the FY 2011 levels of \$4.7 billion, with \$51 million to tribal nations. Full funding is crucial to address the extreme need for heating assistance in Indian Country. Accordingly, funding for FY 2021 should be a minimum of \$51 million for tribal nations.

#### DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

##### Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill

##### Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs

- Provide \$30 million for DOE Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs.

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-58) established the Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs. Since its inception, the Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs has established new programs and aligned efforts across DOE in close consultation with tribal nations in response to priorities identified by tribal nations and the DOE Indian Energy Working Group. The Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs provides technical assistance, direct and remote education, policy research and analysis, and financial assistance to tribal nations, Alaska Native Village and Regional corporations, and Tribal Energy Resource Development Organizations.

The resources the Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs provides assists tribal nations with many aspects of energy development, including planning, project development, transmission interconnection, utility formation, and intertribal coordination. Providing \$30 million in funding to the Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs for FY 2021 will help tribal nations overcome the unique obstacles that hinder energy development in Indian Country.

**DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY****Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill****Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs**

- *Provide additional 2.5 million for credit subsidy costs together with an additional \$2 million in administrative funding for the Tribal Energy Loan Guarantee Program (TELGP).*

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 (Section 2602(c)) authorized DOE to establish TELGP and create related loan guarantee regulations. FY 2017 appropriations provided \$9 million dollars to establish the program, with \$8.5 million for the credit subsidy cost and \$500,000 for administrative expenses. FY 2018 appropriations provided \$1 million to the program for administrative costs. The funds must be used to support the development or expansion of generation projects that employ commercially proven and available renewable energy technologies. In 2018, DOE issued its first solicitation for TELGP. Tribal nations continue to urge Congress to aggressively fund the program by providing an additional \$2.5 million for credit subsidy costs. Lastly, appropriations language should not impose stricter limits on the use of program resources than those included in the Energy Policy Act of 2005.