



# TRIBAL PRIORITIES FOR SOLVING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

The Congressional Action Plan for a Clean Energy Economy and a Healthy, Resilient, and Just America.



Photo Credit: ATNI

## INVEST IN TRIBAL WORKERS AND BUILD A FAIRER ECONOMY

Indigenous communities have contended with a history of economic hardship due to legacy issues of land loss, climate change, and social-economic disruption. Also, the production of fossil fuels and uranium has been an important economic engine for many communities. These systemic factors compound the economic precariousness that Tribes all around the U.S. are facing in the clean energy transition.

Indigenous communities are also contending with desperate shortages of health-care professionals. This workforce issue compounds the impacts of climate change. A broadened idea of the low-carbon economy could help to address this issue. Support for healthcare and domestic work could place monetary value on work often performed without compensation. Women, who are often traditional leaders, have typically performed this kind of work.

Finally, current U.S. Census data are ill-suited to describing the demographic and economic status, trends, and needs of Indigenous communities. This situation has inhibited planning and implementation to improve Tribal economic conditions and consequently demands investment.



Photo Credit: Protectors of the Salish Sea

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[ATNI Tribal Review of the Congressional Action Plan](#)

High-paying jobs are critically needed in Tribal communities. The transition toward a clean energy economy poses an opportunity to address the long-standing economic disparities dealt with by Indigenous Peoples and other economically vulnerable communities. At the same time, this transition will impose an economic hardship on many Tribal communities that have borne the burden of fossil fuel production. In addition, building a fairer economy must include sectors besides clean energy. Investments are critical in health care, elder and youth care, domestic work, education, and the arts. Fair labor standards, trainings, and other community programs must include a wide range of low-carbon sectors.

Overarching Tribal priorities that Congress should integrate into policies to build a fairer economy include: *Uphold the federal trust responsibility, treaties, and commitment to formal government-to-government relations; and Strengthen social-economic resilience and Tribal leadership in the economic transition to clean energy.*

### TRIBAL PRIORITIES THAT CONGRESS SHOULD CONSIDER:

- > **Uphold the Federal Trust Responsibility, Treaties, and commitment to formal Government-to-Government relations.**
  - **Recognize Tribal sovereignty** in new legislation and regulations to support equity and fairness for workers.
  - **Ensure the inclusion of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent** of Indigenous communities, as specified in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and NCAI Resolution #SD-15-024, in agreements regarding community benefits and labor.
  - **Resolve legacy issues**, for instance, compensate uranium workers.
- > **Strengthen social-economic resilience and Tribal leadership in economic transition to clean energy.**
  - **Establish a National Economic Transition Office** to assist Tribes and Indigenous Communities that are being adversely impacted by the transition away from fossil fuels toward clean energy.
  - **Expand the definition of the clean economy** to include other low-carbon sectors such as health care, care-giving, domestic work, education, and the arts.
  - **Improve demographic and economic data resources** for Indigenous communities. Consider alternatives that offset deficiencies in U.S. Census data, such as providing communities with resources to conduct population surveys.
  - **Develop apprenticeships, internships, training opportunities, and childhood education for the low-carbon economy**, particularly in remote areas. Engage Tribal colleges and universities.