

National Tribal Green Building Codes Summit Statement

July 21, 2011

On June 23-24, 2011, an historic summit of tribal leaders; federal agency, non-profit and academic representatives; architects; and lawyers was held in Denver at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency office. This National Tribal Building Codes Summit was the first to bring together tribal and federal leaders to advance green building code development and was organized by the recently developed national Tribal Green Building Codes Workgroup which consists of more than 50 representatives. The Workgroup is committed to providing support and technical assistance for tribes interested in adopting green and culturally-appropriate building codes and standards and, or developing tribe-specific systems to ensure safe, sustainable, affordable, and culturally-appropriate buildings on tribal lands.

Our goal is to advance tribal goals in developing, implementing and enforcing culturally relevant green building codes, policies and programs leading to healthier, more sustainable communities.

There is a groundswell of interest from Native Nations to provide homes that are in keeping with cultural traditions, in both form and value. **As representatives from different and diverse Nations, we all want to provide healthy, nontoxic, and sustainable homes for our people. It is this intent that underpins our work. We see green building codes as a framework to guide sustainable community development. As such, this Summit was organized to further support development of tribal green building codes and determine a protocol for us to move forward together.** During this first meeting, Summit participants identified existing green building codes, technical, policy and planning resources related to green building codes, opportunities for further development and barriers associated with code development and implementation.

We, the participants of the National Tribal Green Building Codes Summit, recognize the dire need for healthy, affordable homes and high performance, sustainable buildings in Indian Country. Native Nations have high levels of; homelessness, severely crowded homes, a lack of adequate water and sanitation systems, poor indoor air quality, a high percentage of poorly insulated, and non-electrified homes. Unlike the rest of the country, where there is a housing surplus, not enough homes exist in Indian Country. It is estimated that well over 200,000 housing units are needed to provide adequate housing in tribal areas. While there is an urgent need to supply more housing, it is recognized that homes must be built in such a way to meet the environmental, social and cultural priorities of Tribal people.

We acknowledge that this Summit was a first step in an effort to work together in support of the goal stated above and the following priorities shared by Summit participants:

- It is important to maintain clarity about the need to have a tribally-driven and culturally-based process.

- We need to develop an ongoing forum and information sharing space to maintain and expand a Tribal Green Building Code Workgroup.
- Our emphasis needs to be on the development of a **process** rather than a product, from which tribally-determined green building codes and, or tribe-specific systems can develop.
- Codes need to support each Native Nations' sovereignty, and be reflective of the community and culture.
- We need to further education, training and capacity building in regards to sustainable building, tribal and federal policies, and sustainable building codes.
- We need to develop sustainable funding sources for tribal code development and sustainable tribal housing.
- We will work to develop Native bioregional-based economies around our need for sustainable communities and appropriate, high-performance housing.
- We need to plan, educate, and design for affordability: sustainable housing needs to be affordable!
- We, the tribal representatives, request that federal agencies improve collaboration and aggregate resources in this area.

Organizations Present at the Summit

Tribes and Tribal Organizations

- [Acoma Pueblo](#)
- [Intertribal Council on Utility Policy](#)
- [Kayenta Township \(Navajo Nation\)](#)
- [National American Indian Housing Council](#)
- [Navajo Nation](#)
- [Pinoleville Pomo Nation](#)
- [Reno-Sparks Indian Colony](#)
- [Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians](#)
- [Spirit Lake Tribe](#)
- [Sustainable Nations](#)
- [Yankton Sioux Tribe](#)

Federal Agencies

- [Bureau of Indian Affairs](#)
- [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#)
- [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#)
- [U.S. Department of Energy](#)
- [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development](#)
- [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#)

Other Organizations

- [Atkin Olshin Schade Architects, Sustainable Native Communities Collaborative](#)
- [Development Center for Appropriate Technology](#)
- [GreenWeaver Inc.](#)
- [Hobbs Straus Dean & Walker](#)
- [National Renewable Energy Laboratory](#)
- [Pacific Northwest National Laboratory](#)
- [Photonica](#)
- [Sandia National Laboratory](#)
- [University of California, Berkeley](#)

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