



## **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** February 27, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Directive to Increase Collaboration between Federal Partners

**TO:** Local Tribal Infrastructure Task Force Agency Contacts

**FROM:** Principals of the Tribal Infrastructure Task Force

The purpose of this memorandum, developed on behalf of the Tribal Infrastructure Task Force (ITF), is to take action on recommendations from a report released by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) in May 2018, titled “Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure - Opportunities Exist to Enhance Federal Agency Needs Assessment and Coordination on Tribal Projects” (GAO-18-309), available at: [www.gao.gov/products/GAO-18-309](http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-18-309). The GAO conducted this engagement to understand how federal agencies coordinate their efforts to address drinking water and wastewater infrastructure needs. As part of the report’s findings and recommendations, the GAO highlighted needs for increased collaboration among federal agencies. The GAO recommendations were directed to the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development Agency; Housing and Urban Development, Office of Native American Programs; Health and Human Services, Indian Health Service; and to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Recommendations 11 through 16 collectively read as follows:

*“[ITF member agencies], in cooperation with other members of the tribal infrastructure task force, should direct [local ITF member agency] offices to identify and pursue additional mechanisms to increase their collaboration.”*

To implement these recommendations and enhance interagency effectiveness in supporting tribes, we ask each ITF member agency, acting within their authorities, reach out to and work with your partners and counterparts in other federal agencies to increase the level of collaboration in the provision of safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

To assist with these efforts, we have attached a list that provides ITF member agency programs with weblinks to contact information that you can use to facilitate collaboration. Additionally, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign developed and maintains the Tribal Contact

Manager, an online tool with contact information from federal, state, and regional organizations that provide technical assistance and funding resources to support tribal water and wastewater systems and operators. This site provides a helpful resource to facilitate collaborative actions and can be accessed here: <http://wateroperator.org/tribal-contact-manager>.

The ITF formed over a decade ago with the shared goal of assisting tribes in improving quality of life by providing infrastructure and promoting sustainable practices to support the provision of safe drinking water and basic sanitation for tribal communities. By working together to more fully align and coordinate federal activities and to communicate with tribal representatives we can more readily achieve this shared goal. We thank you in advance for your continued commitment and enhanced efforts.

Should you have any questions, please email Sam Russell at [Russell.Sam@epa.gov](mailto:Russell.Sam@epa.gov) or Matthew Richardson at [Richardson.Matthew@epa.gov](mailto:Richardson.Matthew@epa.gov).



3/5/2020

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Jennifer L. McLain, Director  
Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water  
United States Environmental Protection Agency

Date



2/28/20

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Edna Primrose, Assistant Administrator  
Water and Environmental Program  
United States Department of Agriculture

Date




2/27/2020

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Mark Calkins, Director  
Sanitation Facilities Construction Program  
Indian Health Service  
United States Department of Department of Health and Human Services

Date



3/3/2020

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Gary Nemec, Director  
Office of Grants Evaluation  
Office of Native American Program  
United States Department of Housing and Urban Development

Date

Attachment:

**Key Contact Infrastructure Task Force Member Agencies**

Environmental Protection Agency

Clean Water Indian Set-Aside Program

<https://www.epa.gov/small-and-rural-wastewater-systems/forms/contact-us-about-small-and-rural-wastewater-systems#indian>

Drinking Water Infrastructure Grant – Tribal Set-Aside

<https://www.epa.gov/tribaldrinkingwater/regional-tribal-drinking-water-coordinators>

Indian Health Service

Division of Sanitation Facilities Construction

<https://www.ihs.gov/dsfc/staff/>

United States Department of Agriculture

Rural Development

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/browse-state>

Housing and Urban Development

Office of Native American Programs

<https://www.hud.gov/codetalk>