

## INFRASTRUCTURE TASK FORCE WASTE PROGRAMS SUB-WORKGROUP

March 2, 2023

3:00 – 4:30 p.m. EST

### Notes

#### **Roll Call and Introductions**

EPA, Indian Health Services, USDA, Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) and FEMA were represented. Absences included HUD, CDC, and BIA

#### **Charter Review**

- Brief overview of the Infrastructure Task Force Waste Programs Sub-Workgroup Charter, chaired by ORCR
  - Purpose: Continue to identify programs and address program initiatives that improve planning & construction operation and improve O&M of sustainable infrastructure in Native American and Alaskan territories.
- Objective & Scope include:
  - Promote sustainable waste management programs and sustainable solutions to address waste issues.
  - Promote sustainability through the development and implementation of integrated waste management plans.
  - Collaborate on ways to leverage federal government resources, assist tribes in waste management, & provide outreach materials/info.
- ITF MOU was updated in 2021, but Solid Waste Charter has not been revisited. The group is asked to think about amendments that may be necessary prior to the next meeting.

#### **Demonstration of the Tribal Waste Management Training Repository & Discussion**

- Tribal Waste Management Training Repository Tool demonstration
  - Objective #1: Provide Tribes access to detailed waste management trainings and training registration.
  - Objective #2: Enhance technical assistance that EPA provides to tribes.
- Training repository was developed to support Objective #1 and is available for all Tribal partners. It will be open to public this March.
  - Repository contains past trainings, technical assistance, and resources for education and outreach, which will be updated regularly.
    - Contractors & federal agencies supported this effort.
  - Six categories: Solid/Hazardous Waste, Planning Tools, Collection and Disposal, Circular Economy/SMM, Public Outreach and Education, and a specific category for Alaska.
  - Question raised about whether partner agencies not submitting originally can have materials added. EPA would be happy to extend that opportunity to all the federal partners, so please contact Denise Roy ([Roy.Denise@epa.gov](mailto:Roy.Denise@epa.gov)) for follow up.

#### **Tribal Solid Waste Operations & Maintenance Needs and Discussion**

- Tribes and EPA members have been in discussions regarding funding for maintaining and operating a Solid Waste Management program. This is not a new discussion but has historically been an issue.

- EPA would like partner member support in exploring this topic and trying to identify a solution. Political leadership at EPA have taken up the issue.
- The Infrastructure Task Force has been working on O&M funding since 2008. Back then it only focused on water and wastewater.
  - IHS has a repository with information on organizations' water system. Completed a survey to assess and compare tribally owned organizations' operations and maintenance. 2021 report was limited by the number of Tribes that participated.
  - In future iterations of this study, and to add solid waste to the study, it would be helpful to provide more clarity on the project end-goal to encourage more Tribes to participate. They were reluctant and suspicious of how data might be used during the water/wastewater study. Make sure it is clear that it is to provide a broader understanding of O&M needs/costs to assist with Government with identifying resources for tribes plus to assist with Tribal decision making.
- Agreement to review the old reports, provided via email to the group, and consider updating and expanding the report to cover the solid waste funding gap for operations and maintenance.

#### **BIL Funding and leveraging opportunities**

- EPA office received \$375 mil. under BIL
  - \$25 mil towards in-house work to outline best practices regarding collection + recycling batteries.
  - \$75 mil for recycling education & outreach grants.
    - Proposal deadline for first round (\$30M) has passed, now in the stage of reviewing proposals.
    - Will issue future RFAs for remaining funding.
  - \$275 mil for Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling
    - During first year (\$110M) of funding split out, RFA's were divided out –
      - \$30 mil allocated for states/territories.
      - \$40 mil allocated for Tribal grants.
      - \$40 mil allocated for local/county governments.
    - Will issue future RFAs for remaining funding.
- Would like federal partners to consider the re-establishment of TSWMAP (Tribal Solid Waste Management Assistance Program) to leverage funding and streamline grant processes
  - Federal Agencies would collectively issue a single RFA and then be rewarded a grant from the most appropriate federal agency.
  - Partnerships between agencies ensure capacity to collaborate/help with programmatic assessments and support more projects that previously could not be funded.
  - Tedd Buelow (USDA-RD) suggests proposal referrals, rather than requesting agencies to volunteer funding a proposal.

#### **Wrap up and plan for future meetings**

- Charles supports Tribal attendance at recurring federal agency meetings
  - Recommends federal agency meetings on quarterly or semi-annual meetings.
  - Tribal attendance at these meetings on semi-annual or annual basis.
- Felicia Wright concurs, expressed intention to participate more regularly in these meetings.
- David Harvey agreed and stated that a focused meeting on specific topics is helpful.

- Carolyn Hoskinson will send out notes and take into consideration all the discussions when planning the next meeting, both agenda and timing.