

DRAFT Meeting Summary
Tribal Infrastructure Task Force (ITF) Principals Meeting
November 18, 2021

Welcoming Remarks

Following introductions, co-chairs of the ITF Yu-Ting Guilaran and Wynne Miller of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) welcomed the meeting participants and highlighted how the recent bipartisan infrastructure legislation will allow the ITF agencies to increase their support to Tribes across the Country. Ms. Guilaran stated that this is the biggest source of funding EPA has received for water infrastructure and it will allow EPA to invest in projects to improve public health, increase climate resilience, and provide jobs across the country.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Summary

EPA facilitated a discussion describing the infrastructure funding each ITF agency received in the new Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The information provided by each agency is summarized below.

US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Note: All funding amounts listed are for tribal and non-tribal projects combined.

EPA Office of Water - Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water (OW/OGWDW)

- \$11.7 billion has been allocated to the drinking water State Revolving Fund (SRF) to improve water infrastructure.
- \$15 billion has been allocated to the SRF for lead service line replacement projects. \$4 billion for managing emerging contaminants such as the PFAS compounds.
- \$5 billion has been allocated to the WIIN grant program.

EPA Office of Water - Office of Wastewater Management (OW/OWM)

- \$11.7 billion has been allocated to the Clean Water SRF program. The portion of SRF funding that will be allocated to Tribes has yet to be determined.
- An additional \$1 billion has been allocated to the Clean Water SRF program for managing emerging contaminants.
- EPA programs to improve water quality in specific geographic areas, such as Chesapeake Bay, the Great Lakes and Puget Sound have also received funding.

EPA Office of Land and Emergency Management (OLEM)

- \$375 million was allocated to support recycling and solid waste infrastructure programs across the country, including tribal programs.

Department of Interior - Indian Affairs (IA)

- \$2.5 billion was allocated for water settlement programs with \$500 million/year available for the period from 2022-2026.

Department of Interior - Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)

- \$ 8.5 billion was allocated over 5 years to support 10-12 programs including:
 - 1.15 billion for water storage, groundwater storage and conveyance.
 - \$1 billion for the rural water supply act/program.
 - \$1 billion for water recycling projects.
 - \$400 million for the water smart program.
 - \$500 million for dam safety.
 - 250 million for water desalinization projects.
- Consultation meetings are planned with tribes and other stakeholders to inform them about funding and the opportunities it provides.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- CDC is not getting infrastructure funding under the bill but has received funds to support their climate resiliency and public health programs that can support the programs managed by the other ITF agencies.
- CDC funding will be provided to state and tribal programs for:
 - Health equity projects to support communities facing environmental health exposures.
 - An Agency-wide data modernization initiative to update existing information on public health and make it readily available to other agencies and the public.
 - Health equity projects including Tribal projects.
 - Updates to public health data related to lead contamination being done by the National Center for Environment Health (NCEH). They are interested in working with the ITF to describe positive impacts that come from replacing drinking water service lines that contain lead.
 - Supporting the NCEH to update GIS data on environment health exposures across country focusing on socio-economic indicators at the local community level.

US Department of Agriculture (USDA)

- No infrastructure funding was included in the legislation for USDA.

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

- No infrastructure funding was included in the legislation for HUD.

Indian Health Service (IHS)

- \$3.5 billion was allocated to IHS over the next five years to fund projects on the Sanitary Deficiency System (SDS) list. The total need identified on the SDS list is currently at \$3.36 billion. IHS will fund SDS Tier 1 projects first and then fund Tiers 2 and 3 projects with the remaining funds. IHS is looking to coordinate with other federal agencies on funding they will be providing to IHS.

Coordination Between ITF Agencies Related to the Infrastructure Funding

During the discussion about the infrastructure legislation several items were raised for further coordination between the ITF agencies. These include:

- A question raised by EPA regarding the climate resilience components in the IA funding for water utilities and how it relates to EPA programs related to climate resiliency for water utilities. A follow-up conversation with representatives from Indian Affairs was recommended.
- The EPA Climate Change Committee, comprised of staff from the offices within EPA's Office of Water, would like to collaborate with IA and other ITF Agencies. EPA requested that the other agencies provide contacts that EPA committee members could reach out to for further discussions.
- EPA is looking to coordinate with IA on issues related to drinking water violations and with lead service line replacements.
- EPA and CDC discussed coordinating on the use of CDC's GIS data related to public health and water systems and on data related to health improvements as lead water lines are replaced. The agencies agreed to set up a follow-up discussion with the proper staff. The meeting will be coordinated at the staff level of the ITF.
- EPA requested a meeting with IHS to discuss the Buy American requirements that IHS uses compared to those used by EPA.

Work Plan Updates

EPA facilitated a short conversation regarding updates to ongoing ITF related projects.

- The ITF Memorandum of Understanding has been finalized and is awaiting final signatures.
- EPA will be meeting with the National Tribal Water Council (NTWC) in early December 2021 and requested input from ITF members if there should be further coordination between the ITF and the NTWC. There has been a historical connection between the ITF and the NTWC with the last formal meeting in 2018. It was decided that EPA would ask

the NTWC if they had specific issues to discuss with the ITF and the ITF staff would discuss the next steps in this coordination process.

- Solid Waste Federal Training Workgroup (EPA-OLEM). EPA thanked the other ITF participants for their collaboration in this workgroup. A final data repository will be posted online and a demonstration will be provided at the ITF meeting in the spring of 2022.
- GAO 18-309: Opportunities Exist to Enhance Federal Agency Needs Assessment and Coordination on Tribal Projects. All but one of the recommendations have been addressed with USDA working to resolve the final issue.
- Tribal Utilities Workforce Document – The draft of EPA’s workforce document is undergoing final review and will be completed and published shortly.
- Water and Wastewater Resources for Tribal Utilities - The information in the document is being reviewed by EPA staff. This group will discuss how to share the information including possibly publishing the table to an EPA webpage.
- HUD Tribal Housing and Related Infrastructure Interagency Task Force (THRIITF) – The Task Force is completing an in-depth review of the 12 recommendations from a prior workgroup and developing an implementation plan that will provide recommendations and associated time frames to improve the process for Tribes to receive federal infrastructure funding. This includes recommendations to align the NEPA categorical exclusion process between federal agencies and develop consistent approaches for archeology and floodplain analyses. Three tribal consultation webinars have been completed and there are tribal representatives on the task force. A copy of the proposed plan and other information on the task force’s work is provided here: https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/ih/codetalk/resources/THRIITF

Attendees

US Department of Agriculture (USDA)

- Steven Polacek, Policy Coordinator, Rural Utility Service (RUS), Rural Development Agency (RD)
- Delores “Lola” Maratita, Community Program Specialist (RUS)

US Department of Health and Human Services: Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- John Sarisky, Chief, Water, Food and Environmental Health Services Branch
- CAPT Troy Ritter, Water, Food and Environmental Health Services Branch

US Department of Health and Human Services: Indian Health Service (IHS)

- RADM Mark Calkins, Director, Division of Sanitation Facilities Construction (DSFC)
- CAPT David Harvey, Deputy Director, DSFC

US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

- Gary Nemec, Director, Grants Evaluation, Office of Native American Programs (ONAP)

US Department of Interior: Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)

- Kelly Titensor, Native American Affairs Adviser, BOR
- Jeffrey Morris, Program Manager, Native American and International Affairs Office, BOR

US Department of Interior: Indian Affairs (IA)

- Judith Wilson, Director, Office of Facilities, Property and Safety Management, IA
- Scott Sufficool, Public Health and Safety Manager, Office of Facilities, Property and Safety Management, IA

US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

- Office of Water (OW)
 - Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water (OGWDW)
 - Yu-Ting Guilaran, Deputy Director
 - Protection Branch Tribal Team: CDR Samuel Russell, Team Leader and ITF Coordinator; Laura Montoya, WIIN Grants; Deborah Vacs Renwick, Sustainable Systems;
 - Office of Wastewater Management (OWM)
 - Wynne Miller, Deputy Director; Catherine Allen, Branch Chief, Sustainable Communities and Infrastructure Branch; Matthew Richardson, Tribal Lead and ITF Coordinator, Sustainable Communities and Infrastructure Branch
- Office of Land and Emergency Management (OLEM), Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery (ORCR)

- Sonya Sasseville, Division Director, Program Implementation and Information Division; Caroline Klos, Branch Chief, Federal, State and Tribal Programs Branch; Charles Reddoor, National Tribal Programs Coordinator; Kim Katonica.
- Office of International and Tribal Affairs (OITA) - American Indian Environmental Office (AIEO)
 - William Post