

Winter 2025 RTOC Action Items

NOTE TO EPA - Please include a DATE of when a response will be completed for each Action Item.

Identifier	Action Items	Tribal Contact	Lead	Response
1	The IRA Grants have been reinstated but what is the timeframe for implementation and can the grants be extended?		MSD	Grants with IRA funds were reinstated and recipients have since been able to drawdown from their ASAP accounts. No-cost extension requests are being approved and are being processed.
2	1. Request a copy of the Region 9 budget request to Headquarters to include the amount being requested? 2. Where can the regional budget for the past 10 years be found?		ORA, MSD	1. Regions are not part of the budget formulation process. That process is handled solely by OCFO, the Office of Administrator and NPMs. Unfortunately, budget requests are developed at the agency level and therefore regions do not become aware of what the regional budgets will be until the annual appropriation is signed and at that time OCFO will load the region's full budget into the agency's financial system. Meaning Region 9 does not have "budget requests" sent to headquarters to provide, since that part of the process does not exist. 2. All budget information is maintained in the agency's financial system. There is not one specific place where the region's budget info is maintained. There are many pieces that make up the region's budget some we have charts and external data, for other info we work directly in the agency financial system. Depends on what specific information they would like to obtain. If it's Grants, the Grants branch can assist with pulling that info. The more specific the request can be the more likely branches can pull that information together.
3	EOY Reporting; submittal of EOY reports but not received feedback in a timely manner from the project officer. Who can the Tribe follow up with?		Tribal Section	Issues or concerns with the performance of any EPA staff member should be elevated immediately and directly to the appropriate manager for action. If the manager is unable to resolve the issue, the issue should be elevated further, to the Division Director.
4	Provide update on the RTOC Tribal Representatives elections. Provide information on who at EPA is handling the voting.	Tribal Caucus	Tribal Section	Facilitating and administering RTOC elections is typically done by the EPA RTOC Coordinator. Per the Charter, formal ballots were sent out to Tribal Chairs and Environmental Directors on the second Friday of January (1/10/25). By the second Friday in March (3/14/25), ballots were counted and elected representatives were notified via email. Elections for RTOC Tribal Co-Chair and NTOC representatives will be conducted at the Spring RTOC by the Tribal Caucus.
5	Clarify the EPA positions of Manager 1 and Manager 2, what do they do and what is the difference between the two?		Tribal Section	The Tribal Section 1 and 2 Managers each supervise a team of 6-7 GAP Project Officers. As supervisors they manage personnel operations, including recruitment, performance management, and conflict resolution to foster a high-performing workforce. Both managers support GAP Project Officers as they administer GAP grants and together make final funding decisions for all applications submitted and are in direct and daily communication about these decisions to ensure consistency across the two sections. The managers and staff of Sections 1 and 2 meet jointly together each week and conduct the majority of their work jointly. Some of the different duties between each section are: Tribal Section 1- Plans and implements the EPA/Tribal Conference, Working Effectively with Tribal Governments, Tribal Consultation and Tribal Section 2- Plans and implements RTOCs, Tribal Newsletter, and Tribal Leader Roundtables. Update 5/27/2025: The EPA is currently undergoing a HQ led reorganization, which will impact the current structure and set up of these two sections. Regions will not be given an opportunity for input, nor have any information to share on the reorganization.
6	How to remove Tribal Programs from EJCEER?	Tribal Caucus	ORA	EPA, like all federal agencies, was expected to soon undergo a reorganization and restructure. The responsible parties for these changes are not seeking any feedback/input/or discussions on the proposed plan for the reorganization from Region 9 EPA. Furthermore, there was a court order in May that prohibited EPA from moving forward on any actions or plans with the reorganization/restructure. As a result, EPA is not able to discuss this topic until further notice.
7	We expect that the Federal government's agreements to work directly with us will be honored.  We anticipate the release of allocated funding and require increased funding in many communities.  Tribes expect meaningful consultation and communication from the EPA; silence is simply unacceptable.  We are asking how will the EPA plan to support the efforts of the Tribes to continue important work; (work that at times is to correct the environmental destruction of the Federal government on Tribal lands.)  We ask how will the Regions expect communication going forward.	Luya Rivera Tribal Council Secretary Middletown Rancheria	ORA, Tribal Section	EPA Region 9 developed a Tribal Communications Plan and provided the draft to the RTOC Tribal Co-Chair and the American Indian Environmental Office for review and reflection. The Plan will be finalized once their insight is received and incorporated.

8	Not an Action Item but an invitation for EPA staff to participate in the GAP Workgroup calls/meetings.		Tribal Section	Region 9 Tribal Section Managers acknowledge this invitation and will work with Tribal GAP Workgroup lead on future relevant participants depending on agenda topics
9	Be direct, we are supposed to be co-regulators / partners. Tribes understand EPA cannot tell us everything but stop blindsiding us with these decisions. Maintain the Tribal EPA relationship (communication).		OITA	A written response to this action item has not been received.
10	More funding. a. Larger base funding for Clean Water Act Section 106 and 319 programs. b. Funding for air regulatory monitoring c. Tribal specific funding allocation options i.e., Self-Governance, Treatment as State (TAS), or environmental block funding. These will allow for more flexibility and less administrative burden for tribes and EPA. GAP grant is the most burdensome of all EPA media grants; and look at making it more flexible and to make changes on a national level. d. In the EPA Annual Budget requests, include a larger base funding and an annual increase.		OITA	A written response to this action item has not been received.
11	Calling for the release for all Tribal funding, tribal leadership has been unequivocal in calling for the immediate release of all federal funds environmental programs and projects. These funds are critical to fulfilling federal obligations and supporting environmental protection efforts. Congressional leaders have also urged the OMB to ensure these programs remain unaffected by unnecessary bureaucratic delays.		OITA	A written response to this action item has not been received.
12	Lack of communication from EPA through this current ordeal. What is EPA's contingency plan for communication with Tribes? As an example, a Tribe in Region 9 has not heard from their GAP Project Officer, and currently is unable to drawdown funds.		OITA	A written response to this action item has not been received.
13	What are your goals and priorities? How does tribal priorities fit in the Administrators 5 pillars? What has EPA heard from Tribes thus far?		OITA	A written response to this action item has not been received.
14	To acknowledge the complexities of environmental protection regarding the different needs and priorities of tribal government. How will you support self-determination, recognizing Tribal conservation interest reach beyond the reservation boundaries?		OITA	A written response to this action item has not been received.
15	Reminder of meaningful and collaborative consultation. Tribal consultation must be early, on-going, and sustained – not an afterthought. Decisions made in DC have real world impact on us, even seeming minor agency decisions can have significant consequence as in the decision to reorganize Region 9's EPA Tribal Program Office.		OITA	A written response to this action item has not been received.
16	Fulfilling federal commitment to Tribal Nations is not only a legal obligation but a moral one.		OITA	A written response to this action item has not been received.
17	Move Tribal Programs in Region 9 from EJCEER and placing it as a stand alone program		OITA	See response to Action Item #6.
18	Request to bring back the Tribal Program Project Officers, since it is seriously impacting Tribal programs.		OITA	Tribal Section Project Officers were removed from Administrative Leave and returned to the office on February 27, 2025.