

**Meeting Summary
Tribal Infrastructure Task Force Principals Meeting
October 14, 2022**

Welcoming Remarks

Following introductions, Yu-Ting Guilaran and Wynne Miller of EPA welcomed the meeting participants and discussed how the ITF has grown with the inclusion of the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Bureau of Land Reclamation in 2022. They also summarized the discussion topics of for the meeting as laid out in the agenda sent to the participants (and attached to this meeting summary).

ITF Agency Updates

Commander Sam Russell facilitated a discussion with the ITF agencies reviewing their work to implement projects funded under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). A summary of the information provided by each ITF agency is provided below.

Indian Health Service (IHS)

Admiral Mark Calkins updated the group on the additional funding to IHS to support tribal infrastructure projects.

- \$700 million is allocated over five years for a total of \$3.5 billion.
- The initial funding was sent out the IHS areas in June 2022, funding 469 individual projects. The deadline for Tribes and IHS to establish formal agreements for the projects was extended to December 2022.
- The 2022 updates to Sanitary Deficiency System (SDS) list are expected to be completed in November 2022.

Admiral Calkins was asked if any of the 2022 funding went to solid waste projects for Tribes. He said they would be funded if they were considered a Tier 1 project on the SDS list, but didn't believe any solid waste projects were part of the 2022 funding. He mentioned that the IHS areas were asked to identify projects for which additional planning was needed, including for solid waste projects, to raise them to the Tier 1 project status.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Yu-Ting Guilaran provided an update on EPA's Drinking Water Infrastructure Group, Tribal Set Aside Program

- Of the \$50 billion allocated to EPA for funding state and tribal drinking water infrastructure programs, \$868 million was allocated for Tribes.
- For fiscal year 2022, \$114 million was allocated for Tribal drinking water projects.
- A memo issued on May 27, 2022 provided the priorities for selecting Tribal projects for funding. Specific amounts of the \$114 million are set aside for projects related to managing emerging contaminants (\$16 million) and lead service line replacements (\$60 million).
- Ongoing coordination with IHS is needed to implement the projects that will be completed with this funding.

Wynne Miller provided information on EPA's Clean Water Indian Set Aside program (CWISA).

- Funding available through the CWISA program has doubled when the new funding is combined with the regular annual funding to the program.
- A total of \$62 million was allocated for fiscal year 2022
- Of this funding \$2 million is allocated, as in past years, to projects involving training and technical assistance for Tribal utilities.
- Funding was also allocated to support projects related to emerging contaminants including those where water quality criteria have yet to be established under the Clean Water Act. This funding will include projects related to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)
- EPA is looking for opportunities to further collaborate with the ITF to enhance the process for implementing the projects currently available for funding.

Sonya Sasserville of the Office of Land and Emergency Management provided summary of their current programs.

The office is working to reinvigorate the solid waste systems subgroup of the ITF and will include FEMA and Tribal representatives in these discussions. The subgroup will identify solid waste management challenges and discuss how they could help tribes. The first meeting will take place in Jan or Feb 2023 – Charles Reddoor will send out possible meeting dates.

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)

Judith Wilson, Scott Sufficool, and Captain James Ebert provided an update on current BIA programs.

- BIA has been allocated \$216 million for climate resilience and relocation projects and \$250 million for construction projects for irrigation facilities, dams and other facilities. Work is underway to talk with Tribes about these projects.
- Three irrigation projects have begun including for the Colorado River in Arizona and for facilities in Montana and Washington.
- BIA is looking at ways to address water sanitation needs and address past violations for Tribes. A project addressing water and wastewater infrastructure needs for Columbia River Treaty Fishing sites was mentioned as an example.
- Upcoming sanitary surveys for 80 water systems operated by BIA will identify lead replacement needs for the communities surveyed.

Bureau of Reclamation (BUR)

Kelly Titsoner provided an update on BUR programs.

- \$248 million has been allocated for Tribal water system projects.
- Funding is available for large scale water recycling projects. Tribes eligible along with other communities. Each project requires a 75% non-federal cost share. BUR is working to help Tribes access these funds.
- BUR drinking water reservoirs are below typical water levels across the west as of September 2022.
- \$4 billion has been allocated for drought mitigation projects focused primarily on the Colorado river basin and others with similar drought issues.
- \$12.5 million is available for drought relief for Tribes impacted by BUR water projects.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Steve Polacek provided an overview for USDA

- The agency's regular tribal set aside program is working normally, and no additional funding was awarded under the recent BIL or IIJA legislation.
- USDA is currently updating the regulations for the tribal set-aside funding process.
- Grants related to the Alaska Native Health Board were discussed. The state of Alaska is matching 25% of grants costs and USDA welcomes input and coordination on managing this program.

Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Gary Nemecek informed the group that no funding was provided to HUD for Tribal programs under the BIL or IIJA legislation, but that HUD is still using funding from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 to support their Tribal programs.

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

John Sarisky mentioned that health equity is an important issue for CDC and they are now coordinating more with Tribal communities.

Interagency Collaboration Under the BIL

The group discussed that further staff level coordination can help improve collaboration between the ITF agencies that are spending the recently allocated funds to support Tribes. A meeting between EPA and IHS staff was recommended to help coordinate the implementation of projects funded by EPA that will be implemented by IHS.

Closing Remarks

Yu-Ting Guilaran and Wynne Miller thanked everyone for participating in the meeting and recommended that further quarterly meetings be set up to continue the discussions. They also recommended that future meeting be given more time to promote coordination between the agencies.

Attendees

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

- Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water (OGWDW)
 - Yu-Ting Guilaran, Deputy Director
 - CDR Samuel Russell, Protection Branch Tribal Team Leader, and ITF Coordinator;
 - Marietta Echeverria;
- Office of Wastewater Management (OWM)
 - Wynne Miller, Deputy Director
 - Catherine Allen, Branch Chief, Sustainable Communities and Infrastructure Branch
 - Matt Richardson, Tribal Lead and ITF Coordinator, Sustainable Communities and Infrastructure Branch
 - Grace Persico, Sustainable Communities and Infrastructure Branch
- Office of Land and Emergency Management (OLEM)
 - Sonya Sasseville, Division Director
 - Caroline Klos, Branch Chief
 - Charles Reddoor, National Tribal Programs Coordinator
- American Indian Environmental Office
 - William Post

Indian Health Service (IHS)

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

Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

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

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

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

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)

- Judith Wilson, Director, Office of Facilities, Property and Safety Management, BOR
- Kelly Titensor, Native American Affairs Adviser, BOR
- Scott Sufficool, Public Health and Safety Manager, Office of Facilities, Property and Safety Management
- James Ebert

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

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