



# Healthy Communities & Ecosystems

## July 21-22, 2009

National Tribal Caucus Discussions with  
Steve Owens, Asst. Administrator

USEPA Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic  
Substances



# Goals

**Indigenous Native Peoples rely on their ecosystems to support traditional foods, medicines and cultural practices.**

- ❖ Ensure Tribal communities and ecosystem resources are not impacted by pesticides, legacy chemicals and other sources of toxic contamination.
- ❖ Protect Tribal community and ecosystem health through pollution prevention/sustainable development.



# Environmental Priorities

- ❖ Develop and adopt Risk Assessment Models that reflect subsistence consumption and other cultural exposure pathways
  - EJ ISSUE: Current environmental standards do not protect the safety and health of federally recognized Tribes/ANVs
- ❖ Improve access to Pollution Prevention funding and technical assistance.



# Budget Recommendations

- ❖ Provide \$14 million for Tribal/ANV OPPTS projects/programs.
- ❖ Provide funding and technical assistance for Tribes/ANVs with Treaty Rights and other indigenous peoples who rely on ecosystem resources outside their legally recognized boundaries
- ❖ Provide technical assistance to enhance Tribal capacity.
- ❖ Provide alternative approaches such as direct implementation, circuit riders, or DITCAs and other mutually acceptable activities for programs that Tribes do not wish to fully implement or take on delegated authority



# Programmatic Constraints

- ❖ Available program grants (e.g. lead, pesticides, P2) are small, narrowly focused and highly competitive.
- ❖ Grant RFPs often do not take into account the unique jurisdictional, governmental and environmental circumstances of Tribes.
- ❖ Lack of consistent grant application and management guidelines.
- ❖ Grant benefits are often outweighed by the administrative burden they represent.



# Suggested Remedies

- ❖ *Update and implement OPPTS Tribal Strategic Plan.*
- ❖ Develop an alternate funding mechanism such as a block grant or self-governance (638) program that supports an ecosystem approach.
- ❖ Establish set-asides to reduce competition.
- ❖ Provide grant/program guidance specifically designed for federally recognized Indian Tribes.
- ❖ Seek permanent authorization of Direct Implementation Tribal Cooperative Agreements (DITCAs) and establish a set-aside fund for DITCAs.



# Cross Media Issues

- ❖ **Enforcement/Compliance Assistance**
  - lack of \$ : leads to problems e.g. with one size fits all pesticide enforcement standards
- ❖ **Information Sharing**
  - Coordination among TPPC, successor to FOSTTA's TAW, TC and other tribal workgroups
  - general grants/direct implementation activity
- ❖ **International and local transboundary and large ecosystem initiatives**
  - **EJ ISSUE:** Provide ample opportunity for Tribal community & government involvement and influence – Gulf of Mexico, South Florida, Puget Sound, Columbia River Basin, Great Lakes, *US Mexico Border*