

CY 2010 RTOC SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITY

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EPA Division/ Office: Waste Management Division/Tribal Solid Waste
Name of Priority: Sustainable Infrastructure

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Goal: Improve tribal access to sustainable infrastructure programs such as green building, alternative energy and weatherization, and water collection and conservation through collaborative efforts among federal and state agencies, non-profits, universities, private interests and other entities to address physical infrastructure needs and support for ongoing activities.

Objective 1: Maintain communication between US EPA, Tribes, and other federal agencies.

Sub-objective A: Develop a Green Building Strategy that outlines US EPA Region 9's role for promoting sustainable infrastructure development on tribal lands.

Status: In February 2009, a Green Building Strategy was completed. This Strategy was drafted by US EPA and guided by input from RTOC representatives. The Strategy outlines EPA's role in assisting tribes as they pursue sustainable infrastructure development. This is a living document and will be reviewed throughout each year to ensure it reflects the development goals of tribes and appropriately outlines the role of US EPA and the RTOC Sustainable Infrastructure workgroup.

Sub-objective B: Continue to lead the RTOC Sustainable Infrastructure workgroup.

Status: A Solid Waste workgroup meeting was held in January 2008 to discuss tribal interest in green building and, as a follow up to strong tribal interest, a presentation was delivered in April 2008 focused on incorporating green building techniques into home renovations. As a result of the growing momentum, EPA and tribes began work on a Regional Tribal Green Building Strategy, organized the first-ever Tribal Summit at one of the country's largest green building conferences, and successfully recruited the EPA Leadership Development Program participants to select the topic as their multi-year project.

At the April 2009 RTOC meeting the first Sustainable Infrastructure Workgroup session was held separate from the Solid Waste workgroup. The Department of Energy (DoE) presented information on how to apply for the Recover Act Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant funds. The purpose of our meeting was to provide tribes with an opportunity to learn more about the criteria and parameters of these grant funds

directly from the DoE. In addition, tribes were able to brainstorm ideas of how to utilize these funds most meaningfully.

At the July 2009 RTOC meeting we held the second Sustainable Infrastructure workgroup session that focused on the EPA Leadership Development Program (LDP) project. The Team presented their research findings on barriers to sustainable infrastructure development and received feedback from tribes as to whether or not these barriers were accurate and also if they had missed any.

At the February 2010 RTOC meeting the third workgroup session was an open discussion to review the activities of the workgroup's first year and to refocus direction to ensure it is addressing the interests of tribes. During this meeting representatives focused on two issues: green built homes and renewable energy projects. Reps reiterated that HUD homes are not built well, and that tribes need to take a lead in improving their cultural fit and environmental and social sustainability. One issue limiting tribes is that HUD builds according to local building codes, which most tribes do not have. Realizing this, the workgroup will research green building code standards. Templates will be posted on EPA's website when they become available.

With respect to renewable energy, reps agreed that links with universities and non-profits can be productive, and that the group should create a clearinghouse for information on successful collaborations and new opportunities for tribes to collaborate outside the federal/tribal relationship. There was also agreement that more information is needed on renewable energy support available from NREL and DoE.

Sub-objective C: Provide information and outreach to tribes on a variety of topics. This includes providing template green building codes; additional web resources for funding green building components and/or projects; and energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Status: EPA is working with contractors to research diverse funding opportunities for tribes in Region 9. This will include federal and state resources, and non-profit organizations if applicable. Two draft tribal green building codes have been developed and circulated for comment, and a workshop on code development has been held (see below).

Sub-objective D: Create and/or organize Sustainable Infrastructure presentations for the Annual Tribal/EPA Conference and other Tribal/EPA meetings. Topics could include green building and energy.

Status: The Tribal Solid Waste Team organized 3 presentations for the Annual Tribal/EPA Conference in 2008. Sessions included:

- Green Building: Reducing Energy Use, Traditional Principles and Modern Implementation
- Tribal Perspectives on Green Building
- Alternative Energy Options

The Region 9 Tribal Solid Waste Team organized 5 presentations for the Annual Tribal/EPA Conference in 2009. They also had a vendor booth to provide additional materials that could not be included in the conference due to the limited number of sessions. Sessions included:

- How Federal Agencies can support Green Building in Indian Country
- Renewable Energy 101
- HUD Funding Opportunities
- Renewable Energy Opportunities on BLM lands
- Tribal Green Building Projects

Objective 2: Increase the number of tribal homes that are weatherized and/or powered by renewable energy. This work will be done through some grants, but primarily through increased partnerships with other federal agencies such as DoE and USDA, increased partnerships with the Region 9 Tribal Programs Office, and increased cooperation and funding opportunities with Region 9 states.

Sub-objective A: Work with DOE to bring the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy training to tribes in Region 9. This training increases knowledge and builds tribal capacity in energy efficiency and renewable energy strategies.

Status: Since early 2009, DoE had conducted three 3-day workshops in Region 9. The first workshop was held in Mendocino County and included participation from **6** tribes in the region. The second workshop was January 2010 at the Tohono O'odham Nation and included participation from tribes in Arizona. The third workshop was February 2010 at the Bishop Paiute Reservation and included participation from 6 tribes.

Networking through the workgroup has helped several tribes access Grid Alternatives, a non-profit organization that assists low-income homeowners, leading to installations of roughly 3 kW systems on dozens of homes and counting. **To date, 26 tribal homes in California have had solar systems installed by Grid Alternatives, offsetting 4,634 tons of CO2.**

Objective 3: Increase the number of tribes covered by tribally developed sustainable building codes through grants, EPA-sponsored training, and targeted technical assistance. Work with tribes to develop at least 1 new tribal green building code.

Status: In FY10, 1 tribe was funded through GAP to develop green building codes. The development of building codes is being piloted to see how much value this activity brings to the tribe. Once these codes are developed, HUD and all other buildings would need to follow the codes as outlined in the codes.

In FY11, EPA contracted with Ross and Associates and subcontractor, Development Center for Appropriate, to develop a model code template and to provide technical assistance to tribes that are adopting green building codes. **To date, 2 tribes have received assistance and one has adopted a green building code.**

Additionally, in FY11 members of this workgroup started the National Tribal Green Building Code Workgroup which includes several tribes, federal agencies and non-profit, private sector

organizations that work on sustainable building. **The goal of this national workgroup is to advance tribal goals in developing, implementing and enforcing culturally relevant green building codes, policies and programs leading to healthier, more sustainable communities.** This goal supports the goals of this RTOC workgroup and vice versa.

Reporting Dates: Quarterly at each RTOC

Objective 4: Develop an Annual Multi-Stakeholder Sustainable Infrastructure Resources Fair within Nevada, California and Arizona that would be funded through the RTOC and coordinated by one tribe in each state.

Sub-objective A: Work from the existing Resources Fair model that is being used by HUD and EPA to develop a Tribally-controlled Resources Fair in each state within Region 9. *This effort would not be a duplication of efforts because the agencies are no longer organizing these fairs on an annual basis. Whenever the agencies organize such fairs, it would be in coordination with the designated tribe involved in coordinating these fairs.*

Status: In April 2011, the Sustainable Infrastructure workgroup submitted a FY13 budget proposal to support tribal staff needed to achieve this objective.

Reporting Dates:

Assistance Needed from EPA and Tribes: Participation in workgroup activities, meetings, conference calls; contribution to written documents; collaboration with local, regional, and national partners.

For Further Information, Please Contact:

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