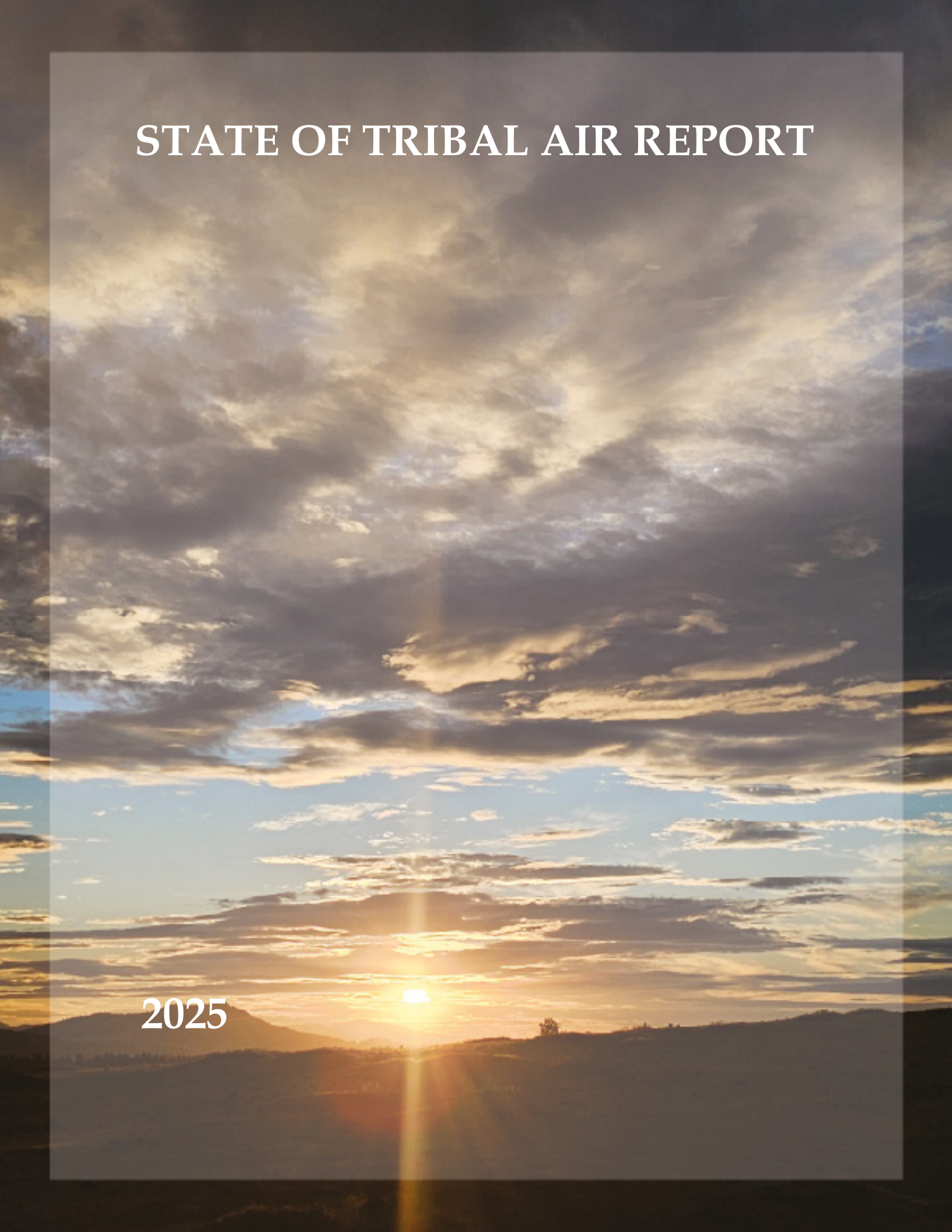


STATE OF TRIBAL AIR REPORT

2025





National Tribal

A I R A S S O C I A T I O N

The National Tribal Air Association is funded through a cooperative agreement from the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Air & Radiation (OAR).

National Tribal Air Association

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Executive Summary

Tribal governments are essential leaders in protecting air quality and public health across American Indian and Alaska Native communities (AI/AN). Through Tribal air programs, they monitor pollution, conduct community outreach, and engage in Clean Air Act regulatory processes. These efforts generate critical environmental data in regions underserved by state monitoring networks and ensure Tribal communities have the information needed to safeguard their citizens and natural resources.

Over the past decade, Tribal air programs have grown substantially in both number and technical capability. Many Tribes now operate air monitoring networks, participate in and monitor federal rulemaking, and implement Clean Air Act (CAA) programs through Treatment as State (TAS) authority – demonstrating expanding Tribal leadership in environmental protection.

Despite this progress, Tribal air programs remain significantly underfunded relative to their responsibilities. Many Tribal environmental departments rely on minimal staff to manage multiple programs spanning air quality, water protection, waste management, and climate resilience. Limited resources hinder Tribes' ability to maintain monitoring networks, retain trained personnel, and address emerging challenges, such as wildfire smoke, industrial emissions, and other air hazards.

In 2025, funding instability, delays, and cancellations of many federal environmental and climate-related grant programs created uncertainty and confusion. These disruptions affected the Tribes' ability to sustain staff, operate monitoring equipment, and plan long-term environmental initiatives.

At the same time, many Tribal communities continue to experience disproportionate environmental and health burdens. AI/AN face higher exposure to contaminants and

elevated rates of respiratory and environmental health concerns. Tribal air programs are vital in identifying pollution sources, communicating risks, and developing locally tailored solutions.

Federal support programs, including the Tribal Air Monitoring Support (TAMS) Center, the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP), and the National Tribal Air Association (NTAA), have strengthened Tribal capacity. However, sustained and increased investment is necessary for Tribes to fully implement Clean Air Act programs and protect community health.

Strengthening federal support for Tribal air programs is essential to advancing environmental protection, supporting Tribal sovereignty, and ensuring that Tribal governments have the resources needed to monitor air quality, respond to emerging environmental threats, and protect the health of current and future generations.

Audience and Purpose

The Status of Tribal Air Report (STAR) is designed to provide a national overview of air quality, Tribal air programs, and the successes and challenges that face Native American Nations in implementing the CAA and other air programs. The report is designed to provide elected Tribal Leaders, national decision makers, and Tribal environmental professionals with an annual snapshot of air quality and Tribal air quality programs across the country.

This report is compiled by NTAA, a member-based organization with 162 member Tribes. The organization's mission is to advance air quality management policies and programs, consistent with the needs, interests, and unique legal status of American Indian Tribes and Alaska Natives. As such, NTAA uses its resources to support all federally recognized Tribes in protecting and improving the air quality within their respective jurisdictions. Although the organization always seeks to represent consensus perspectives on any given issue, it is important to note that the views expressed by NTAA may not be agreed upon by all Tribes. Further, it is also important to understand that interactions with NTAA do not substitute for Nation-to-Nation consultation, which can only be achieved through direct communications between the federal government and American Indian Tribal Governments and Alaskan Native Villages.



Photo courtesy of Carey McKelvey

“The organization’s mission is to advance air quality management policies and programs, consistent with the needs, interests, and unique legal status of American Indian Tribes and Alaska Natives.”

Background and Introduction

The 1990 amendments to the CAA authorized the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to treat federally recognized Tribes in a manner similar to states for the purpose of implementing the CAA. In February 1998, EPA promulgated the Tribal Authority Rule (TAR), which established the framework through which Tribes may seek approval to develop and implement air quality programs under the Act. Since that time, Tribes across the United States have continued to build, strengthen, and expand Tribal Air Programs to protect air quality and safeguard the health and welfare of Tribal communities.

NTAA was established in 2000 by resolution of the National Congress of American Indians. NTAA has been supported through funding from EPA, initially awarded to the National Tribal Environmental Council and later administered by ITEP. As of 2025, NTAA continues to serve as the national voice for Tribal air programs, providing leadership, policy coordination, and technical support on air quality issues of importance to Tribes.

Since its founding, NTAA has supported Tribes through a wide range of programmatic and policy activities. In 2025 these efforts included the development of 18 Policy Resource Kits and the submission of five formal policy comment letters addressing key air quality and regulatory issues. NTAA hosted informational webinars on emerging contaminants such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), including perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), and partnered with the National Tribal Water Council to deliver a joint webinar on EPA's Tribal Reserved Rights Rule. NTAA continues to facilitate policy coordination between Tribes and EPA through regular monthly calls and convenes topic-specific workgroups focused on priority issues, including wildfire and wood smoke impacts and Alaska-specific Tribal air quality challenges. These ongoing activities demonstrate the



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continued growth of Tribal air programs and underscore NTAA's essential role in supporting Tribal capacity, elevating Tribal perspectives in national air policy discussions, and advancing Tribal sovereignty in environmental governance in 2025 and beyond.

Tribal Program Statistics

Tribal Air Programs Successfully Implemented the Following Initiatives

2025 Program Statistics

Total Grants Received from EPA

Year	CAA 105**	CAA 103	SIRG*
2018	40	82	2
2025	58	61	22

*State Indoor Radon Grant (SIRG).

**Total Clean Air Act (CAA) 103/105 in 2018 is 122 and in 2025 is 119, slightly fewer grants but a significant increase in mature Tribal programs under Section 105; Tribes were growing programs while resources were not growing.

Tribes with Approved TAS

Year	Regulatory TAS	Non-regulatory TAS
2018	9	52
2025	10	62

Note. Under the Tribal Authority Rule (TAR) and Clean Air Act (CAA) Section 301(d), Tribes can be found eligible to have Tribal Air Status (TAS) status for various aspects of the CAA, including receiving grants or for developing their own programs, such as a Tribal Implementation Plan (TIP). Tribes can have both regulatory and nonregulatory TAS and can add to TAS with additional CAA sections over time.

Total Approved Program

Year	Tribal Implementation Plans	Delegated Programs	Title V Permit Programs
2018	5	12	2
2025	8 ¹	13	2

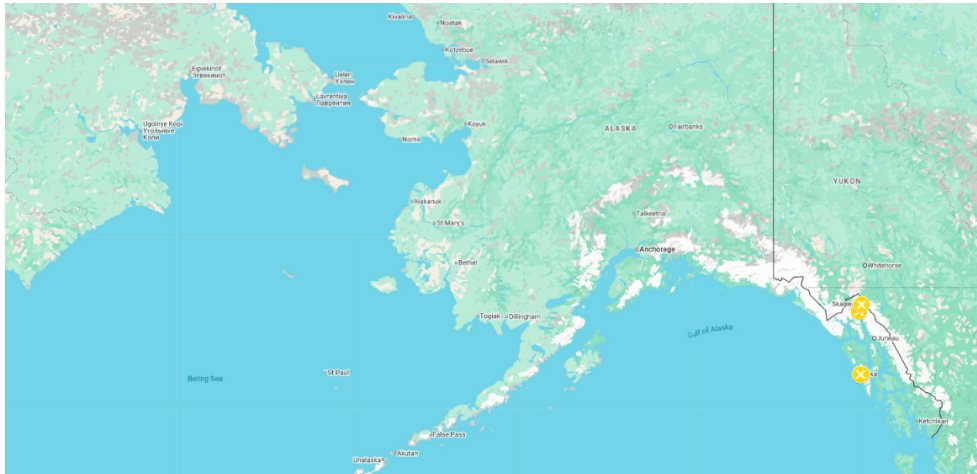
Ambient air monitoring, including the Air Quality Index, can be conducted by regulatory and non-regulatory monitors. Note. NCore = National Core network; CASTNET = Clean Air Status and Trends Network.

¹ Note: two Tribes in 2024 added language to their TIPs or took on additional delegation to broaden their programs.

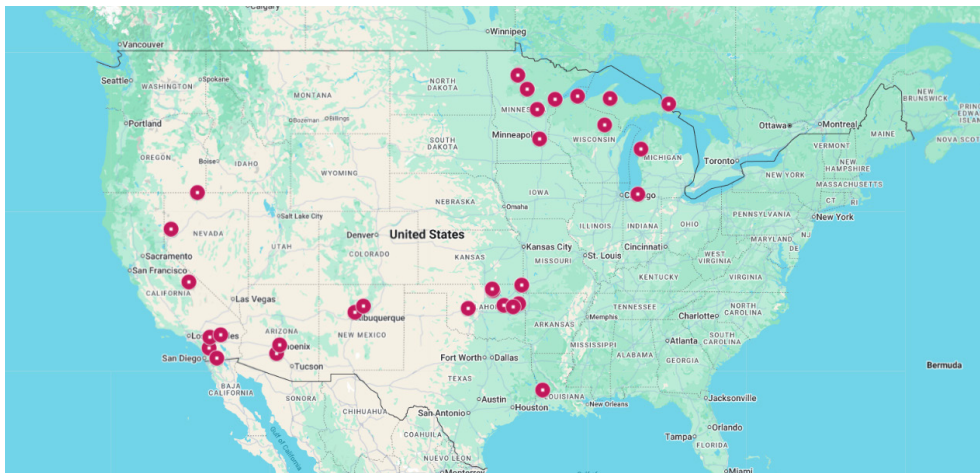
Air Quality Status in American Indian and Alaska Native Country

Region	Areas in Nonattainment		Air Toxics Programs	
	2018	2025	2018	2025
1	3	3	5	3
2	1	1	1	2
3	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	3	3
5	4	4	14	15
6	0	1	2	2
7	0	0	4	3
8	3	4	8	2
9	154	100	6	17
10	1	1	22	32

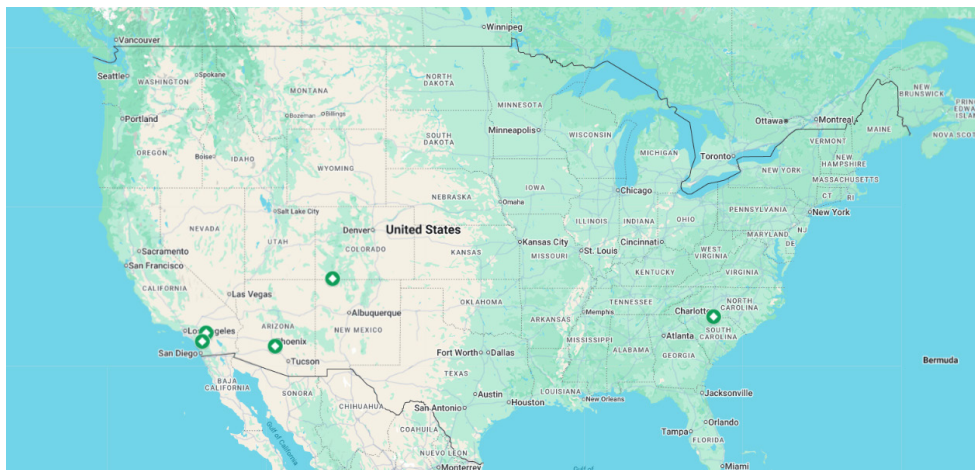
Alaska Monitoring Programs



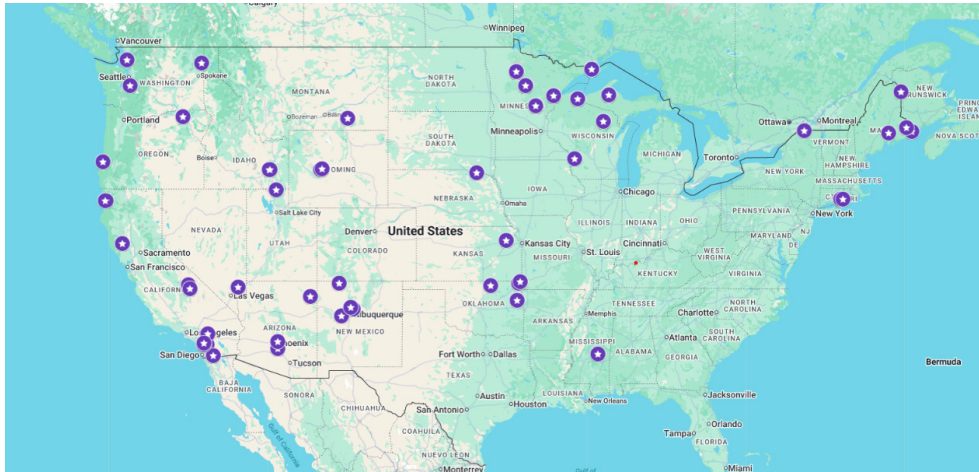
Tribal Emissions Inventories



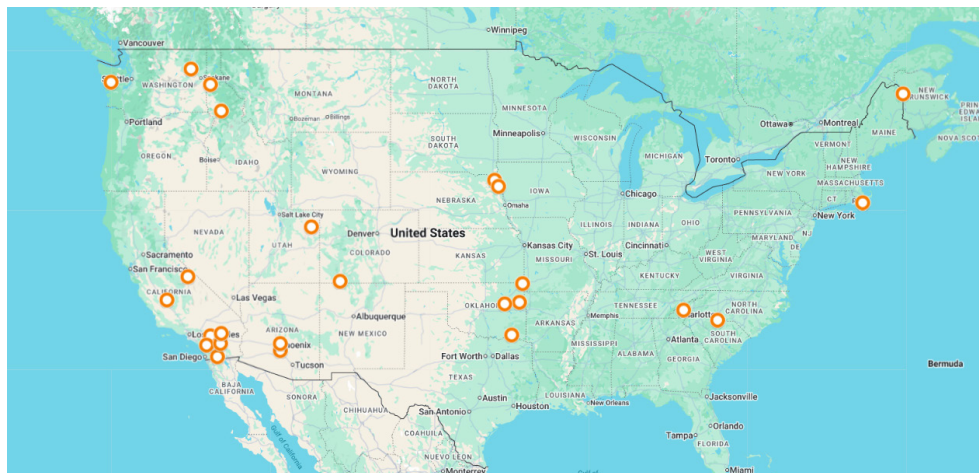
Separate NAAQS Designation



Treatment as a State Designation



Tribal AirNow



Indoor Air Quality Programs

Indoor air quality is a priority for many Tribes. Indoor air quality issues range from mold, asbestos, chemical pesticides and cleaning products, radon exposure, and wood smoke. Tribes find funding for addressing indoor air quality through a range of programs,



Photo courtesy of Carey McKelvey

including CAA 103 as well as from Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and other programs such as State Indoor Radon Grants (SIRG). The following shows the funding from annual SIRG activities in 2023 and 2024 and the active state and Tribal grant programs:

FY23 funding = \$10,995K

- 49 states had active grants
- 18 Tribes had active grants

FY24 funding = \$9,130K

- 49 states had active grants
- 22 Tribes had active grants

Climate Pollution Reduction Implementation Grants

According to data reported on [USAspending.gov](https://www.usaspending.gov)¹, approximately 100 Tribes and Tribal entities have received Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) funding since the program's inception. Collectively, these awards total approximately \$325 million, including both non-competitive Tribal planning grants and competitive implementation grants awarded under the Tribes and Territories Competition.

¹ <https://www.usaspending.gov>

Tribal Program Funding Challenges

Impacts of Uncertainty and Funding Cuts on Tribal Air Programs

Uncertainties, Delays, and Confusion

2025 was a transition year from the Biden administration to the Trump administration, marked by significant shifts in federal funding priorities following the presidential inauguration in January 2025 (Pember, 2025). The year began with federal funding freezes initiated by the Trump administration and the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), which disrupted



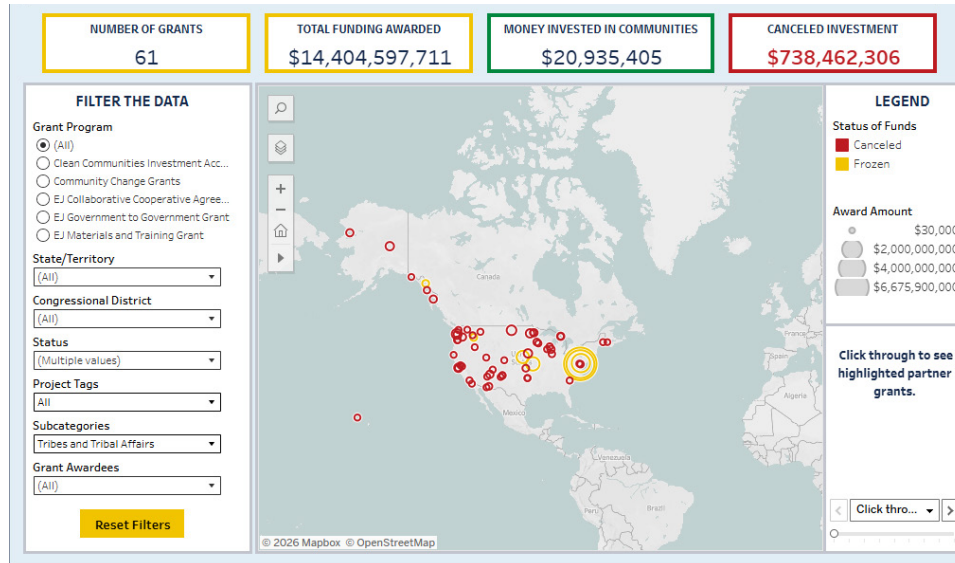
Photo courtesy of Carey McKelvey

the normal operation of federal grant programs and delayed or halted the disbursement of congressionally appropriated funds (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities [CBPP], 2025; Pember 2025). These freezes undermined organizations' ability to retain staff and maintain essential day-to-day operations, as grant recipients across the country reported delayed payments, sudden funding suspensions, and increased financial instability (CBPP, 2025; ProPublica, 2025). Funding cuts and financial uncertainty are not new challenges for Tribes and their air programs, but the events of the past year imposed unprecedented strain on Tribal environmental capacity due to the scale and abruptness of the disruptions.

During the early 2025 federal grant freeze, more than 200 federal programs became inaccessible to Tribes, including programs authorized under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) (Native News Online, 2025; Shok, 2025). Tribes experienced grant-access uncertainty, delays, and confusion, often learning of suspensions only after funds disappeared from federal payment systems or after inconsistent federal guidance following the freeze and its rescission (Schuit, 2025; Perez, 2025). Although federal court rulings in late January and February 2025

blocked the administration from pausing, freezing, or terminating federal grants, including environmental funding, confusion and uncertainty persisted due to inconsistent communication and new implementation rules (Sabin Center for Climate Change Law, 2025; Pearson & Damon, 2025). Litigation remains ongoing to recover some of the canceled or frozen grants, particularly those related to climate and clean energy programs, though many grants have been permanently terminated or remain unrecoverable, resulting in lasting funding losses for Tribal governments and Native-serving organizations (Colman, 2025; Edwards, 2025).

Distinctions must be made between “frozen,” “canceled,” and “terminated.” In federal grant administration, “frozen” funding refers to awards that were temporarily paused and inaccessible to the grantee pending further agency action. “Canceled” funding refers to awards that were revoked and for which funds would not be released. “Terminated” funding refers to situations in which an entire program or funding stream permanently ended (NRDC, 2025a; Inside Climate News, 2025a). The National Resources Defense Council (NRDC, 2025a) developed an interactive map documenting 910 federal grants and sub-grants that were classified as “frozen,” “canceled,” or “in progress,” with “in progress” indicating that a grant remained technically active but was considered uncertain or at risk due to federal actions (NRDC, 2025a; NRDC, 2025b). According to the NRDC map, Tribes in every EPA region were impacted by grant freezes or cancellations, demonstrating the nationwide scope of the funding disruptions affecting Tribal governments and Tribal-serving organizations (NRDC, 2025a; Inside Climate News, 2025a). The map presented here includes only Tribal grant programs that were “frozen” or “cancelled,” not those listed as “in progress,” because “in progress” grants remain legally active despite ongoing uncertainty and risk (NRDC, 2025a). NRDC notes that the dataset is not comprehensive, and reflects only 12 selected congressionally mandated EPA programs, meaning additional affected grants and programs are not captured in the map (NRDC, 2025a; NRDC 2025b).



Terminated and Cancelled Programs and Funding

Earmarked programs under the Biden Administration’s IRA and the BIL were discontinued or disrupted during early 2025, particularly funding streams supporting clean energy deployment, environmental justice, climate adaptation, research, and Tribal sovereignty-related initiatives, following federal funding freezes and subsequent grant cancellations (Inside Climate News, 2025a; NRDC, 2025a). Environmental and Climate Justice Grants (ECJ) were frozen or canceled, including hundreds of Climate Pollution Reduction and Community Change grants, many of which had already been awarded and obligated to recipients nationwide (Inside Climate News, 2025a; NRDC, 2025b). Tribal governments and Tribal consortia were among the impacted recipients, with many having planned to leverage these grants to build or expand air quality and climate program capacity, hire staff, acquire monitoring equipment, and support long-term environmental governance, efforts that were halted or placed at significant risk by the funding disruptions (NRDC, 2025a, Earthjustice, 2026)

The Trump administration’s fiscal year (FY) 2026 budget proposal, released on May 2, 2025, called for nearly a 24% reduction to core Tribal programs, including substantial cuts to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Tribal law enforcement, and education programs (Oxendine, 2025a; NAFOA, 2025). These significant reductions have strained Tribal administrative capacity, which is essential for managing and leveraging grant funding.

The “One Big, Beautiful Bill Act,” signed into law on July 4th, 2025, further eliminated or rescinded IRA programs across multiple federal agencies (Congress.gov; 2025; Kirkland & Ellis, 2025). These programs had supported community air monitoring, water quality studies, climate planning, environmental justice community hubs, clean energy deployment, and workforce development. (Inside Climate News, 2025b; National Wildlife Federation, 2025).

Tribal staff invested substantial time and effort into researching and applying for funding opportunities under the IRA and the BIL. Yet many of these Tribal funding streams were later terminated despite being fully approved and allocated (NRDC, 2025a; Floodlight, 2025; Public Rights Project, 2025). The following provides specific examples of federally funded programs that have been clawed back, although some grant terminations are being challenged. This list is by no means comprehensive, but outlines specific programs that could have been supplemental to Tribal Air Programs.

Environmental Protection Agency

EPA cancelled or terminated grant programs include technical assistance centers, ECJ, Community Change grants, the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, and Environmental Justice Block grants.

EPA Mountains and Plains Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center (MaPTCC)

On February 21, 2025, EPA terminated the MaPTCC technical assistance center serving 28 Tribal Nations across the Mountain/Plains region (EPA Region 8), eliminating a key Tribal access point for federal environmental funding and grant-navigation support (Montana State University, 2025a; Thakore, 2025). The program helped Tribal professionals to draft competitive applications, assemble partnerships, and navigate federal compliance, which is especially critical for small, understaffed environmental departments (Thakore, 2025; Montana State University, 2025b) . The termination of this program reduced Tribal access to competitive funds (Thakore, 2025; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2025).

EPA Environmental and Climate Justice (ECJ)

National cancellation of ECJ and climate-resilience grants affected Alaska Native and Pacific Northwest Tribes, many of whom rely on climate-related funds for erosion, permafrost thaw, wildfire smoke, and air quality monitoring projects. (Earthjustice, 2026) The Alaskan Native Village of Kipnuk had received a \$20 million EPA Community Change grant for erosion control, climate resilience, and infrastructure protection, but the grant was revoked in the nationwide termination (Alexander, 2025; Naiden, 2025).

Other grant programs that were eliminated under the “One Big, Beautiful Bill” Act include the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund and Environmental Justice Block grants, removing \$1.3 billion in Tribal-eligible climate funds and leaving many Tribal projects stranded. (Associated Press, 2025; Brown, 2025)

Department of Energy (DOE)

Tribes experienced major DOE clean-energy funding cuts in 2025, including energy access, hydrogen hubs, grid upgrades, battery storage, and large-scale renewable energy projects. These cuts were widespread and severe, driven by DOE’s cancellation of billions of dollars in clean-energy grants, many of which Tribes had been awarded or were relying on for project financing. According to the Alliance for Tribal Clean Energy (Tilton, 2025), DOE’s grant claw-backs caused 85-90% of Tribal Clean Energy to be rescinded.

DOE Clean Energy Funding

These cuts included renewable energy demonstration projects, energy efficiency pilots, electrification design studies, and community decarbonization planning (Klein, 2026). EERE (Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy)-funded IRA programs were a major source of Tribal solar and efficiency planning dollars (Yardsale, 2025). These cancellations eliminated a critical route to Tribal clean-energy deployment funding. Furthermore the DOE cancelled 24 awards, equivalent to \$3.7 billion in clean energy grants under the Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations (OCED) (Klein, 2026). These projects would have funded carbon capture, sequestration, and decarbonization initiatives and the OCED received \$0 in the FY2026 spending bill (Klein, 2026). Many Tribes were partners with other organizations for the OCED grant programs and the funding could have provided workforce development, port/industrial

decarbonization near Tribal communities, and co-benefits for local air quality (Yardsale Energy, 2025; Fuel Cells Works, 2025). Two Tribes that were specifically impacted include the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians (Region 9) in a regional clean hydrogen hub partnership and the Red Lake Nation (Region 5) in a long-duration energy storage project (Yardsale Energy, 2025).

DOE Tribal Solar for All

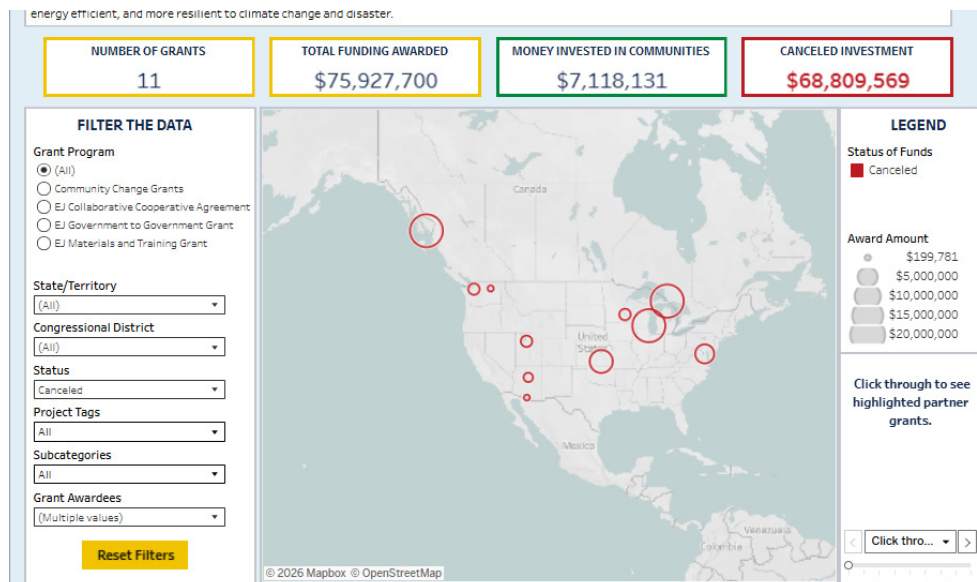
Tribal Solar for All would have been a major source of Tribal solar and workforce development funds. Tribes were awarded over \$500 million in Solar for All grants, 85-90% of which were clawed back after the Trump administration canceled IRA-based clean-energy grants (Edwards, 2025). A 14-Tribe coalition, the Tribal Renewable Energy Coalition, lost \$135 million already awarded in Solar for All funding before it was canceled (DiGangi, 2025; Huber, 2025). The Hopi Tribe (Region 9) had received an award for \$25 million to install rooftop solar on approximately 900 homes that didn't have electricity (Tilton, 2025). Not only would the project have allowed these families to have electricity for the first time, but it could have provided jobs and spurred economic growth in the community after the Navajo Generating Station officially closed in 2019. However, after a year of planning, the project was cancelled (Tilton, 2025).

Impacts on Tribal Air Quality Programs

Although GAP (General Assistance Program) funding and CAA 103/105 grants have remained in place, the impact on Tribes from freezes, cancellations, and termination of grant programs in 2025 has meant a significant reduction in staffing, resources, and services. The following table includes specific cancelled grant programs in EPA Regions 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, and Alaska. This list is by no means exhaustive of all Tribal air programs affected by grant funding freezes, cancellations, or terminations since 2025. The list was pulled from the NRDC dataset (NRDC, 2025a) and includes a manual review of grants specifically stating anything relating to air quality. Although EPA Regions 1, 2, and 4 experienced grant funding cancellations, there were no cancelled grants listed on NRDC's dataset that specifically dealt with air quality. This list provides examples of specific grant programs in each EPA Region in which the funding would have benefited Tribal air quality programs in American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

Nonetheless, NTAA recognizes that other environmental projects, such as wildfire prevention, clean energy, greenhouse gas emissions reduction, carbon sequestration, etc., also impact air quality.

While some cancelled grants might be restored pending litigation, most climate and environmental justice grants are permanently gone due to the budget bill (“One Big Beautiful Bill”) passed by Congress, which rescinded all unobligated environmental justice and clean energy grant funds (Associated Press, 2025; Brown, 2025).



Region	Grant Name, Status, Project Description, and Award
Region Alaska	
Metlakatla Indian Community	<p>Community Change grant cancelled Awarded \$19,500,000, \$19,500,000 not utilized before cancellation</p> <p>This project will advance regenerative practices, including developing Native seaweed farming as a nature-based solution that can reduce the footprint of terrestrial agriculture, plastics, and fiber markets and bolster economic opportunities in this remote community. Additionally, the grant will improve air quality by investing in municipal waste management, which will end open-air municipal trash burning, and electrification of kelp farming boats, boosting local economic returns from seaweed farming and processing within the community, and will also implement strategies to protect Native community access to ancestral waters.</p>
Region 10	
Confederated Tribes of Coleville Reservation	<p>Environmental Justice Cooperative Agreement cancelled Funding Awarded \$200,000, \$63,296 not utilized before cancellation</p> <p>This cooperative agreement is to fund the installation of a network of consumer-grade PurpleAir particulate matter PM2.5 monitors to provide real-time data during the smoke season, with the application of correction equations to provide data regarding the frequency, intensity, and location of high-PM2.5 events due to dust storms or industrial emissions. Project activities include disseminating relevant data interpretations and providing education to allow regional residents to make informed choices about their activities during times of high air pollution.</p>
Tulalip Tribes of Washington	<p>Environmental Justice Government to Government Grant cancelled Funding Awarded \$977,919, \$868,407 not utilized before cancellation</p> <p>The recipient will serve communities that have a high proportion of sub-standard housing, yet no tools for assessing which homes have high smoke infiltration and dangerous heat. Partnership for Air Matters will develop a climate-vulnerability rapid-assessment tool that will use existing data sets to estimate which homes have the highest likelihood of smoke infiltration and high heat. Similar to a health impact assessment or EJ screen, the CVRA is a decision-making support tool, only for indoor exposures.</p>
Region 9	

Red Feather Development Group	<p>Environmental Justice Collaborative Cooperative Agreement Funding Awarded \$500,000, \$343,213 not utilized before cancellation</p> <p>This cooperative agreement will fund the recipient to develop programming to address the environmental health disparities stemming from poor indoor air quality, increase climate resilience in Hopi and Navajo Tribal communities, increase the number of Indigenous trade professionals providing healthy heating expertise, and reduce the energy burden experienced by Tribal members by providing families with safe and efficient heating options. Project activities will include DIY healthy heating education workshops, pro wood stove installation and maintenance courses, and in-home healthy heating education and heating repair case management.</p>
Tohono O’Odham Nation	<p>Environmental Justice Government to Government Grant</p> <p>Funding Awarded \$199,781, \$48,597 not utilized before cancellation</p> <p>The recipient will focus on education, involving Tribal members in the study, design, and conduct of local air quality plans, and identifying and prioritizing which roads will be upgraded so that 15 miles of road will be treated and maintained. Project activities will include training that will educate on how vegetation can be a tool for reducing air pollution with hands on work along these roadways resulting in new roadside vegetation to mitigate air pollution. Through the leadership of the Nation’s environmental protection office, the SEJCA environmental specialist will conduct information and educational meetings in all eleven of the Nation’s districts and their communities. Each district will develop a local plan that addresses for its communities the air quality issues that affect the entire Reservation.</p>
Region 8	
State of Utah Department of Environmental Quality	<p>Environmental Justice Government to Government Grant</p> <p>Funding Awarded \$1,000,000, \$869,491 not utilized before cancellation</p> <p>This project will address air pollution inequities in underserved urban, rural and Tribal communities in Utah through 1) radon testing, remediation, and mitigation, and 2) enhanced PM2.5, PM10, and ozone monitoring using low-cost sensors. This work follows a community-engaged approach and leverages close community partnerships and an existing low-cost air quality sensing network infrastructure.</p>

<p>Montana State University Mountains & Plains Technical Assistance Center (MaPTCC)</p>	<p>Thriving Communities Collaborative <i>Note: Although this grant did not mention air quality, the program was a technical assistance center for Tribes, providing information, resources, training, technical assistance, and grant writing/management assistance.</i></p> <p>A \$10 million technical assistance center that helped 28 Tribal Nations apply for and manage grant funding. The center previously helped Tribes access federal climate, air-quality, and infrastructure dollars made available by the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). Its termination eliminated region-wide grant-writing support, reducing Tribes’ ability to secure climate and EJ funds.</p>
<p>Region 7</p>	
<p>Wichita State University</p>	<p>Environmental Justice Materials and Training Grant Funding Awarded \$8,000,000, \$6,150,076 not utilized before cancellation</p> <p><i>Note: Although this grant did not mention air quality, the program would have been a community engagement and outreach hub for Tribes in the region, providing information, resources, training, technical assistance, and grant writing/management assistance. This grant will fund Wichita State University to remove barriers and improve accessibility for EJ communities by providing training and other assistance to build capacity for navigating federal grant application systems, writing strong grant proposals, and effectively managing grant funding. WSU will also provide guidance on community engagement, meeting facilitation, and translation and interpretation services for limited English-speaking participants, thus removing barriers and improving accessibility for communities with environmental justice concerns and will also create and manage communication channels to ensure all communities have direct access to resources and information. Activities will include serving as a hub for information, training, resources, technical assistance, and connection for addressing environmental justice and energy justice concerns in underserved communities in MO, NE, KS, IA and federally recognized tribes; hosting grant writing/management trainings and civic engagement trainings; responding to requests from the general public regarding environmental and energy justice grant making and program needs; providing training and technical assistance to identify communities of greatest need; and acting as a community engagement and outreach hub for the region.</i></p>
<p>Region 5</p>	

<p>Midwest Tribal Energy Resources Association, Inc.</p>	<p>Community Change Grants Funding Awarded \$19,800,000, \$19,726,689 not utilized before cancellation</p> <p>This project will support energy efficiency and weatherization upgrades in homes to improve indoor air quality and lower energy costs and invest in leadership development training for Tribal Energy Champions to build their Tribes' capacity to access additional funding sources and implement projects to strengthen community resilience and reduce pollution.</p>
<p>Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians</p>	<p>Community Change Grants Funding Awarded \$20,000,000, \$19,989,800 not utilized before cancellation</p> <p>This project will retrofit and electrify homes and transform government facilities into community resilience hubs, in collaboration with federally recognized Tribes. The home building upgrades will include an energy and performance assessment to create a comprehensive plan for each property; necessary repairs for health, safety, and electrification (from roof repairs to electrical upgrades); building envelope improvements (insulation, ventilation, air sealing, etc.) to both address indoor air quality challenges and reduce the building's heating and cooling load; and installation of electric equipment for all major energy end uses. Additionally, the project will install portable air purifiers, dehumidifiers, and other equipment where needed and hire and train a specialist to oversee building performance improvement.</p>
<p>Prairie Island Indian Community</p>	<p>Environmental Justice Government to Government Grant Funding Awarded \$1,000,000, \$1,000,000 not utilized before cancellation</p> <p>The recipient will utilize contractors to perform on-reservation (and trust land), Tribal member-owned home energy audits with subsequent installation and/or renovation of those homes based on conclusions and recommendations from the audits. These upgrades, renovations, and/or installations will assist households to be more energy effective and efficient, thus reducing the cost of utility bills to allow Tribal members to allocate more financial resources to other priorities like food, healthcare, education, transportation, and personal spending, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions along with their related negative respiratory health impacts. The project will also overall support the tribe's goal of becoming a net zero carbon emitter, which directly reflects their cultural values of ecological stewardship of their ancestral lands and the economic, spiritual, and cultural well-being of their people.</p>
<p>Region 3</p>	

<p>National Indian Health Board</p>	<p>Environmental Justice Materials and Training Grant Funding Awarded \$4,750,000, \$250,000 not utilized before cancellation</p> <p>The recipient will serve as a national EJ TCTAC providing services related to environmental and energy justice at the Tribal level. Like all NIHB projects, the EJ TCTAC will cover the national geographic area and serve Tribes throughout the United States. NIHB will leverage the 2018-2019 environmental health discussion sessions and the 2021- 2022 regional environmental health summits hosted by NIHB and supported by CDC to address environmental justice concerns in American Indian and Alaska Native communities, such as the impacts of climate change; external pollutants in the air, land, and water; Superfund sites; solid waste disposal issues, and the transition to clean energy sources.</p>
<p>This is the lost revenue from Tribal air programs grants that were cancelled or terminated.</p>	<p>Total in lost revenue = \$68,809,569 in direct air quality program funding</p> <p>Indirect: \$10,394,507 (technical assistance). Clean energy grants and Solar for All (\$500M+, 85-90% of these awards were clawed back) and Clean Energy (46 Tribes had been awarded \$484 million in grants in 2024, most of which was later revoked.) Total = \$874 million although other calculations such as from Alliance for Tribal Clean Energy calculate it at \$1.5 billion in federal funding retraction.</p>

Key Takeaways

Tribal air programs have long been underfunded, with federal oversight agencies and Tribal organizations documenting persistent gaps between available funding and the resources needed to implement the Clean Air Act responsibilities and conduct comprehensive air monitoring (U.S. Government Accountability Office [GAO], 2020; NTAA, 2024). Although Tribes consistently demonstrate innovation and efficiency in stretching limited resources, many Tribal air programs have been forced to make difficult decisions due to insufficient and unstable funding (NTAA, 2024; GAO, 2020). This may have lasting negative impacts such as undermining local economies, worsening health and safety conditions, and creating instability, especially in rural areas closely tied to Tribal services (Brown, 2025; Associated Press, 2025; DiGangi, 2025).

Although the funding cuts throughout 2025 and beyond have been unprecedented, Tribes remain steadfast in improving air quality in their communities. For FY28, the recommendation request is the same as last year at \$94 million and is considerably less than what Tribes lost in awarded grant funding in 2025 that could have improved air quality in American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

Why Tribal Air Programs are Necessary

Health Impacts

AI/AN communities continue to face disproportionate health burdens driven by persistent socioeconomic inequities, limited access to healthcare, and elevated levels of environmental exposure (Indian Health Service, n.d.). These conditions are exacerbated by regulatory shifts at the federal level that increasingly minimize the health impacts of air pollution in policy and rulemaking processes (Bloomberg Law News, 2026; U.S. News, 2026). These trends underscore the critical need for strong Tribal Air Programs and increased, sustained funding.

Air-Quality-Driven Health Disparities

National datasets consistently demonstrate that AI/AN populations experience higher rates of chronic diseases (U.S. EPA, 2024a,b,c). Cancer incidence among AI/AN persons is among the highest of all racial and ethnic groups, and mortality rates remain significantly elevated compared to the U.S. population as a whole (American Cancer Society, 2025; U.S. EPA, 2024c). These disparities are further compounded by environmental exposures that disproportionately affect Tribal communities (U.S. EPA, 2024b,c).

Air pollution plays a critical role in shaping these health disparities. Exposure to particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and lead has been directly linked to the development or worsening of hypertension, cardiovascular disease, respiratory illnesses, and asthma (U.S. EPA, 2024a,b,c; American Lung Association, 2023). AI/AN communities experience particularly high rates of hypertension and childhood asthma (U.S. EPA, 2024a,b). In addition, Indigenous people diagnosed with lung cancer are less likely to receive early diagnoses, less likely to receive treatment, and less likely to survive compared to white populations (American Lung Association, 2023). These disproportionate health impacts contribute to a life expectancy that is almost 11 years less than the average life expectancy in the United States (U.S. EPA, 2024c).

Recent EPA Regulatory Actions that Downplay Health Impacts

Recent federal regulatory actions demonstrate a clear trend toward undervaluing or removing the health benefits of pollution from EPA decision-making. In January 2026, the EPA announced it would no longer calculate the economic value of human-health benefits when setting air pollution limits, instead quantifying only the compliance costs to industry (Bloomberg Law News, 2026; U.S. News, 2026). Health improvements- including avoided hospitalizations, reduced premature deaths, or decreased chronic disease burdens - would only be qualitatively described (Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, 2026).

In a January 15, 2026 revision to the New Source Performance Standards (NSPS) for stationary combustion turbines, EPA explicitly stated it would halt its longstanding practice of comparing emission-control costs with monetized avoided-health impacts, arguing that such benefits were too uncertain (Martel et al., 2026). This marked a departure from decades of regulatory precedent and sparked national criticism from health and academic institutions (Martel et al., 2026).

EPA has begun removing quantified health benefits from cost-benefit analyses related to PM_{2.5} and ozone- two pollutants with well-documented links to asthma, heart disease, and premature death (Cecot, 2026). Instead, EPA now quantifies economic costs while offering only qualitative descriptions of health benefits, despite strong scientific evidence showing substantial public-health gains from stricter standards (Cecot, 2026).

Implications for Tribal Communities

Because AI/AN communities already endure disproportionate exposure to air pollution— and because health impacts in AI/AN communities are often under-studied or under-reported— the removal or diminishing of monetized health considerations from EPA rulemaking is likely to have outsized adverse effects on Tribal Nations (Dizack et al., 2025; National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences [NIEHS], n.d.; Cecot, 2026). When health benefits are not quantified, Tribal impacts are effectively erased from federal analyses, resulting in weaker standards and less protective regulations (Bloomberg Law News, 2026; Martel et al., 2026).

This trend also complicates Tribal advocacy: without recognized or monetized health benefits, Tribes face greater challenges demonstrating the true cost of pollution to their communities,

lifeways, and cultural resources (Cecot, 2026; Martel et al., 2026).

The Need for Increased Funding



Photo courtesy of Carey McKelvey

Tribal air programs serve as the primary line of defense for protecting air quality in American Indian and Alaska Native communities. These programs monitor pollutants where federal or state stations do not exist. This Tribal-specific data is necessary to counteract incomplete federal analyses. Tribal Air Programs help support emergency and smoke-readiness planning, especially during wildfire-driven PM2.5 episodes, and educate communities

about exposure risks and air quality impacts. Finally, Tribal Air Programs represent Tribal needs in regulatory processes that are increasingly centered on economic costs rather than health outcomes. However, Tribal air programs often operate with insufficient funding, limited staff, and inadequate access to scientific tools. As federal regulatory frameworks shift away from fully accounting for health harms, Tribes will require expanded resources to conduct independent monitoring, produce health-impact assessments, and advocate effectively for protective standards.

Tribal Sovereignty and Self-Determination

Tribal Sovereignty is extremely important for all Tribes as it is based on the formal recognition that the Tribes existed prior to the establishment of the United States. Thus Tribes have an official government-to-government relationship with the United States. Within that relationship is the recognition that Tribes have the right and the authority to self-determination. Under the Clean Air Act (CAA), the Tribal Authority Rule formally recognizes Tribal Sovereignty and provides the mechanism for that sovereignty to be recognized, known as the Treatment As State (TAS). With TAS, Tribes are on the same level as State and Local Air Quality Programs for the implementation of various CAA programs.



Photo courtesy of Carey McKelvey

As sovereign entities, Native American Tribes retain sovereign powers over their members and their territory. Each Tribal government generally sets its own priorities and goals for its citizens and territory, including those for environmental protection. Tribal air programs are an important way Tribes assert their sovereignty, while addressing both environmental issues and interacting

with state, local, and federal governments. Each Tribe is unique and differs in leadership, governmental and economic infrastructure, and culture. The perception of encroachment on Tribal sovereignty is one of the most significant issues for Tribes today. The issues of Tribal treaty rights, resources, and boundaries are particularly important to Tribes. While environmental issues are of concern to most Tribes, they are also concerned with many other issues, such as poverty, unemployment, economic development, education, and health issues.

Tribal air programs, as part of broader environmental programs, are one mechanism by which Tribes assert their sovereignty. Tribal governments determine for themselves the level and scope of their implementation of CAA programs to protect the health of their citizens and culture. For instance, some Tribes are implementing permitting programs for sources in their jurisdiction, while others have Tribal Implementation Plans to attain and maintain the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Tribes may also provide education and outreach on indoor air quality and extreme weather resilience. Others may participate in federal rulemaking, State Implementation Plans/Federal Implementation Plans, or permit development, and participate in cross-jurisdictional partnerships. Each Tribe determines its own approach to protecting its citizens and environment.

2025 Support for Tribal Air Programs



Photo courtesy of Carey McKelvey

Tribal air programs, unlike the state programs, often have limited staff. Some programs have one staff member who covers multiple environmental programs, including air, water, solid waste, resilience, and others. While other programs are more mature and have taken on more active implementation of Tribal air programs, resources, time, and expertise are often limited. To help build that expertise and support Tribal Air Programs, EPA, ITEP, and

NTAA have partnered to provide policy, training, and technical expertise. The following is a summary of the support provided to Tribes.

NTAA Support for Tribal Air Programs



Photo courtesy of Carey McKelvey

As mentioned above, NTAA supports Tribes in understanding EPA and national policy, participating in rule and program development, and understanding emerging issues. In the last year, NTAA provided the following:

Policy Resource Kits (PRKs) and Comment Letters

NTAA's Policy Advisory Committee tracks important changes to national policy and rulemaking. This year, with the new Administration, there have been important changes in national policy, such as the Department of Energy Report on the impact of climate change, Council on Environmental Quality's repeal of NEPA guidance, and EPA reconsideration of the Endangerment finding and how EPA values public health and welfare in its rulemaking.

Because of these sweeping policy changes, NTAA has provided 18 Policy Resource Kits¹ or comment letters. The PRKs include comment letters to the appropriate Agencies with NTAA's comments and concerns, a template letter for Tribes to support their ability to comment on these rules and policy changes, and factsheets to help Tribes understand the implications of these actions. In addition, NTAA developed 5 comment letters for some actions without developing full PRKs.

Education and Outreach

Office Hours with the Policy Advisory Committee - Office Hours with the PAC provide an opportunity for Tribes and Tribal entities to engage in candid discussions with PAC members on federal air policy matters, including regulatory and deregulatory actions, litigation, and related developments. These meetings are not recorded, and participation is limited to Tribal representatives and PAC members. The meetings occur once a month.

Social media - This year, NTAA started two social media accounts on Facebook² and LinkedIn³ to communicate with the Tribes about events, upcoming trainings and webinars, funding opportunities, and air policy notifications - specifically deadlines for requesting government-to-government consultation, and deadlines for submitting comments on new air policy rulings.

Workgroups - NTAA has three working groups.

Alaska Workgroup - The NTAA Alaska Tribal Air Workgroup partners with EPA R10 Office, the Alaskan Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), the State of Alaska's Department of Environmental Conservation and others to advance air quality in Alaska. The meetings take place bi-monthly on the 4th Thursday of every month. On average there are roughly 26 attendees and anywhere from 2 - 4 presenters. The workgroup had the honor of welcoming guest speaker Rayna Paul who shared her personal experience of last year's typhoon that affected her Village and many other areas of Alaska.

1 <https://www.ntaatribalair.org/policy-resource-kits/>

2 <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61577885037993>

3 <https://www.linkedin.com/company/national-tribal-air-association>

Wildfire/Woodsmoke Workgroup - NTAA established the Wildfire/Wood Smoke Workgroup in May 2024 to share tools and resources regarding wildfire and wood smoke impacts on health, safety, and smoke communication and outreach in Tribal communities. The workgroup meets every other month and on average, there were 18 participants who joined the calls. Highlights included presenters from EPA's Office of Research and Development, an AirNow Tech Navigator Training, a presentation on the Yakama Nation's Slide Ranch Recovery, and a presentation from the Mille Lac Band of Ojibwe's partnership with the Minnesota Air Pollution Control Agency.

NTAA | EPA Air Policy Call - Joint call help by EPA and NTAA to highlight any rulings, changes, or important updates. May include presentations or speakers on related topics. The workgroup on average has roughly 32 people in attendance. One highlight of the workgroup was that Jill Buck from the Go Green Initiative presented on IAQ Grants and other great work involved with the grant.

Newsletters - NTAA produces a monthly newsletter highlighting EPA, ITEP, and other updates. Each newsletter includes a spotlight from one of NTAA's Executive Committee members, a feature article on air policy issues and the impacts on Tribes, and NTAA updates. The newsletter highlights Tribal programs, funding opportunities, and emerging issues.

Webinars - NTAA hosted two webinars 1) PFAS and 2) Tribal Reserved Rights Rule. The PFAS webinar, titled Clearing the Air: Understanding the Threat of PFAS in Tribal Communities, included speakers from NTAA's Policy Advisory Committee; Dr. David Gay, Coordinator of the National Atmospheric Deposition Program and the University of Wisconsin Madison, Kirsten Underwood, Aquatic Biologist for the Sipayik Environmental Department, and Chris Soctomah, fisheries biologist for the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Sipayik Environmental Department. There were 42 participants.

The Tribal Reserved Rights Rule was a partnership between NTAA and the National Tribal Water Council. The webinar included speakers from Earthjustice, the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, the National Tribal Water Council, and a speaker from NTAA's Policy Advisory Committee. There were 65 participants.

Technical Assistance and Training

Tribal Air Monitoring Support (TAMS) Center

Tribal Air Monitoring Support Center Collaboration and Technical Support Services Staff, TAMS Center

The TAMS Center is a collaboration between the Northern Arizona University (NAU) Institute



Photo courtesy of Carey McKelvey

for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP) and the USEPA National Radiation Field Operations Department (NRFOD) that provides technical support services to federally recognized Tribes nationwide. The current TAMS services include technical professional assistance (PA) in the general categories of project planning, equipment support, data management/reporting, data analysis, emissions inventory, online emission inventory courses, greenhouse gas

(GHG) emission inventories, quality assurance documentation, and equipment loans. The NAU ITEP side of the collaboration is primarily responsible for the one-on-one technical assistance and training, while the USEPA manages the equipment loan program and the Virgil Masayesva Environmental Learning Center (TAMS Center Training/Meeting Room).

TAMS Center Services

For Fiscal Year 2025, the Tribal Air Monitoring Support Center technical support services were used extensively. The TAMS Center continued to respond to increased air monitoring PA requests. 133 of the total support requests were reported to be long-term PA projects, which were

at least 8 hours in length and could be multiple weeks to months in length.

List of the TAMS Center Support Requests

- Under the various broad categories, specific support was identified and is listed below to provide additional detail.
- Data Management/Reporting: AQS (Air Quality System) support, National Emissions Inventory (NEI) support, Tribal Data Toolbox support, QREST (Quality Review and Exchange System for Tribes cloud database) support, calculations, spreadsheets, charts/graphs, reports, etc.
- Data Analysis: Designation Determinations, trends, data assessments, etc.
- EI Fundamentals/EI Advanced: Online emissions inventory training courses with significant one-on-one support.
- GHG Emissions Inventories: CPRG (Climate Pollution Reduction Grants) included greenhouse gas inventories. GHG emission inventories were different from the criteria pollutant emissions inventories and required different training/support.
- Emissions Inventory: General EI project support, TEISS software support, etc.
- QA Documentation: QAPP (quality assurance project plan) support, SOP (standard operating procedure) support, QMP (quality management plan) support, etc.
- Project Planning Support: General project or program planning, i.e., getting a new air monitoring project started and needing to understand all the potential steps, components, and concerns.
- Equipment Support: air monitoring equipment installation, operation, and troubleshooting assistance, calibration/audit equipment operation assistance, etc.
- Equipment Loans: Ambient air monitoring equipment (Federal Reference Method, Federal Equivalent Method, Non-FRM/FEM, and Sensors), indoor air quality diagnostic instruments, and calibration/audit standards are available for loans at no cost to the Tribes for up to one year in length.

TAMS Center In-Person Professional Assistance Services

Typically, the in-person PAs are the equipment support requests where the TAMS staff travel to the Tribes to install, provide training, and/or troubleshoot the air monitoring equipment. For these

PA projects, PA Reports are generated to document the request and all options to remedy the issue. The summary of one example is provided below. PA Reports that are approved to be shared by the Tribes will be posted on the TAMS webpage. A summary of a PA from 2025 is below.

Muscogee Nation Air Monitoring Station Professional Assistance (PA)

The Muscogee Nation submitted a PA request on January 30, 2025, to the TAMS Center. On May 7 - 8, 2025, an on-site PA was provided to evaluate the installation of a gaseous monitoring surveillance system within a mobile air monitoring station. The air station is equipped with one (1) Teledyne API (TAPI) T700 Dynamic Dilution Calibrator, T701 Zero Air Supply, two (2) EPA Protocol Reference Gases, one (1) T200 Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x = NO + NO₂) Analyzer, one (1) T100 Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂) Analyzer and an Agilaire 8872 data logger. A PA report was provided to the Tribe that focuses on the evaluation of the gaseous monitoring system to include the sampling intake manifold, inlet probe and Teflon sample lines to measure and record criteria air pollutant concentrations of NO_x and SO₂. The gaseous analyzers meet designated EPA approved equivalent methods for monitoring NO₂ and SO₂ in ambient air. The mobile air monitoring station is to provide baseline air quality data to support air quality advisories and management. The gaseous monitoring surveillance system was evaluated based on federal monitoring requirements (40CFR58, Appendix A), equipment user manuals and EPA's State or Local Air Monitoring Station (SLAMS) monitoring guidelines (EPA QA Handbook for Air Pollution Measurement Systems: Volume II)

Training Courses

ITEP offers air quality training courses under the American Indian Air Quality Training Program (AIAQTP) cooperative agreement. In FY2025, ITEP and TAMS offered ten air quality courses, with three of those courses hosted at the TAMS Virgil Masayesva Environmental Learning Center. The courses were a Fundamentals of Air Monitoring Course, a PM_{2.5} Monitoring Course, and an Education and Outreach Course. A fourth course, Data Management, was rescheduled as an online series provided over three consecutive weeks.

Open Office Hours

NAU ITEP TAMS Center staff provide Open Office Hour sessions on various specialized topics. The topics include Emissions Inventories, Oh QAPP/Yay Data, and TAMS Center Open Office Hours (air monitoring project focused). All open office hours are open forums where Tribal professionals can ask any questions with emphasis on the focused topics. TAMS staff also share information on specific topics when questions are not being posed. The various open office hours range in scheduling from being offered depending on course attendance to bimonthly to weekly.

In-person workshops and online training programs through ITEP help build Tribal capacity for monitoring and air quality planning.

NTAA FY25 Priorities

As an informational conduit, NTAA recognizes that all Tribes are unique with their own cultures, languages, and types of governance. In providing support for NTAA member Tribes, the organization strives to be mindful of differences in opinions and to continually encourage the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other federal agencies to recognize that each Tribe knows what is important for their own communities.

Common themes stand out in a few of the issues and needs that face Tribes throughout AI/AN communities. To support identifying priorities, NTAA acquires regular feedback by interacting with Tribes throughout the year. The following is information garnered from some of these interactions on nationally consistent priorities identified by Tribal Air Program staff.

Funding

Adequate and consistent funding is needed for AI/AN Air Quality Programs and emerging hazardous air pollutants.

State and Tribal Air Grants

In FY25, for the FY27 budget, the NTAA is maintaining the recommendation in STAG, reflecting the inflation from FY24 at \$94 million. This will assist Tribes to support the Agency's priority of empowering local decision making through cooperative federalism. The amount reflects the unmet need for fuller Tribal participation in implementing the CAA.

Energy Independence and Resilience

NTAA suggests emphasis be placed on funding availability to Tribes for additional funding sources that encourage energy growth and independence. NTAA requests EPA to fully embrace cooperative federalism by engaging Tribes in leasing, NEPA/EAs, permitting, policy development and enforcement of safe mining and oil and gas resource development.

State Indoor Radon Grants (SIRG)

NTAA requests larger set-asides and consistent outreach to the Tribes from region-to-region.

Diesel Emissions Reduction Act Grants (DERA)

The NTAA supports the on-going Tribal set-asides.

Policy and Regulation

Ambient Air Quality

Criteria Pollutants

Tribes monitor criteria pollutants to reduce risks to Tribal communities and individuals by providing site specific data. This promotes Tribal participation in the designation process and addresses ambient air quality and climate resilience for health and environmental impacts to AI/AN communities but also concerns for cultural and spiritual practices.

Permitting:

Tribes should be co-regulators in the permitting process
EPA must conduct consultation with Tribes throughout the development and issuance of any air permits.

Support for Tribes in Developing TIPs

Technical assistance should be made available to Tribe's to develop Tribal Implementation Plans (TIPs) which are crucial for Tribal sovereignty, enabling Tribes to set and enforce their own air quality standards under the Clean Air Act (CAA), rather than relying on federal plans.

Air Toxics

Air toxics, including pollutants from industrial operations, oil and gas

extraction, and wildfire smoke, severely impact Tribal ecosystems by contaminating natural resources, damaging vegetation, and disrupting traditional, subsistence-based lifestyles. Since Tribal communities maintain a close, interconnected relationship with their environment, they face a disproportionate burden from both environmental degradation and the resulting health impacts.

Emerging Pollutants - PFAS/PFOS and 6PPD/6PPD-Q

The NTAA is concerned that EPA's PFAS Strategy does little to expand the understanding of the impact of PFAS/PFOS through air media. The NTAA encourages more studies on the impact of PFAS/PFOS and 6PPD/6PPD-Q through air exposure and deposition, especially on and near American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

Indoor Air

Dedicated funding is needed for Tribal Indoor Air Programs to support activities such as training, monitoring, inspections, and remediation.

State Indoor Radon Grants (SIRG)

State Indoor Radon Grants (SIRG) funding is available to Tribes; however, the application process is burdensome and would be more efficient with a streamlined process.

Radiation

Plans for High Assay Low Enriched Uranium (HALU) Reactors and Fuel Cycle are a growing concern in AI/AN communities.

Consultation

NTAA encourages direct communications between the federal government and American Indian Tribal Governments and Alaskan Natives as interactions with NTAA does not substitute for Nation-to-Nation consultation. Adequate time, no less than 60 days,

should be allotted to American Indian Tribal Governments and Alaskan Natives respond to consultation requests.

CASE STUDIES

Air Quality Monitoring for Communities (Region Alaska/10)

By Rueben Cash



In 2022, Skagway Traditional Council (STC), the National Park Service (NPS) Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park (KLG0), and the NPS Air Resource Division (ARD) co-authored a grant proposal for the Air Quality Monitoring for Communities grant program, administered by the Environmental Protection Agency. The project was awarded in 2023 and helped to establish a comprehensive community air quality monitoring network consisting of 12 dispersed instrument stations in Skagway, AK, and a public-facing web portal where data is displayed in real time. Skagway's status as a major cruise ship destination and the associated potential pollution sources have driven several investigations into the impact of seasonal tourism on air quality. This project combines past efforts by NPS and STC and fosters an environment of cooperation.

The array leverages both federal equivalency method modules and sensor-based measurements, primarily consisting of 2B Technologies instruments, to deliver quality-assured data to the community through a user-friendly online dashboard. Parameters measured include particulate matter, ozone, CO/CO₂, NO/NO₂/NO_x, and meteorological data. The data stream is automatically screened for errors by contracted partners at Air Resource Specialists, who also host the website and provide technical oversight for the many components within the array. Staff have developed maintenance and field calibration protocols to ensure instruments operate in optimal condition, which has proven to be a challenge in the cold, harsh conditions typical of Skagway winters. The goal of the program is to produce a replicable community air monitoring system that can be deployed in various conditions and maintained by a small, competent field crew. Array data can be accessed at <https://skagwayaq.org/>



Figure 1: Tribal Community Center AQ Sync location



Figure 2: Water Department AQ Lite location



Figure 3: Collocation of 2B Technologies AQ Sync, AQ Lites, and PAMs



Figure 4: STC Farm PAM location



Figure 5: Colton Belisle repairing utility box component



Figure 6: JSP Soapy's PAM location



Figure 7: Maintenance Yard PAM location



Figure 8: Radio Tower PAM location

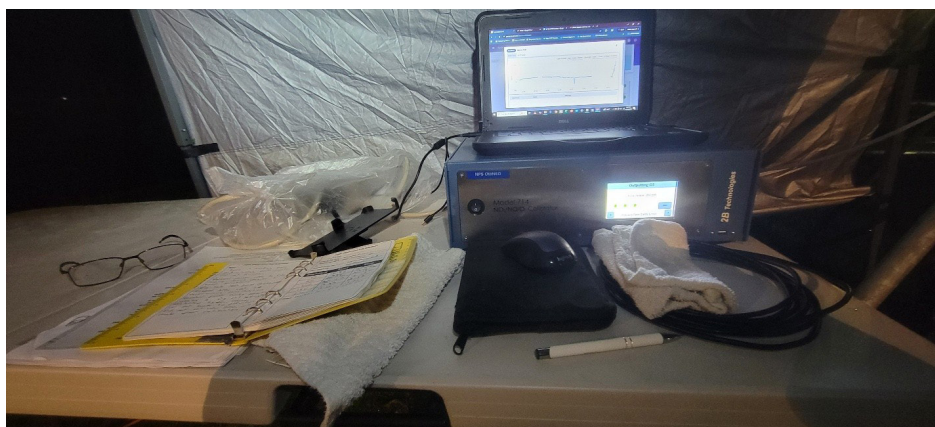


Figure 9: Calibrating AQ Sync ozone in rain and snow

Gila River Indian Community (Region 9)

By Ryan Eberle, P.E., Air Quality Program Manager



Are we there yet? Those of us with kids know that question all too well because kids have a relatively short attention span and lose focus quickly. As a kid, if it doesn't happen in a few minutes it feels like it takes forever.

The same could be said about work projects. It's easy to lose focus, energy, drive, or even hope when you run into roadblock after roadblock trying to see the project to completion. But there comes a point when all of the obstacles are in the rearview mirror and the end of the project is in sight...and in reach. The anticipation of arriving at the destination builds, energy is renewed, and hope is restored. The excitement is hard to contain.

The Gila River Indian Community's (GRIC) Air Quality Program (AQP) was last featured in the 2022 STAR, which focused on the regulatory air monitoring portion of the AQP (information in that article will not be repeated here). The AQP has also been working on several multi-year projects, including Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA), Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG), Volkswagen Settlement, emission inventory, use of new databases, rule revisions, and regulatory activities in general. Some projects have been completed and some are nearing completion. One or two projects are in that middle part where the view of the work that's been done is as endless as the view of the work left to do. These projects will be discussed later, but, first, let's provide some background on the Air Quality Program.

Air Quality Program

The most important asset of any organization are the employees. Without employees, work doesn't get done and projects are not completed. The AQP currently consists of seven positions that are funded by a mix of grants and tribal (GRIC) sources. Fortunately, the AQP has been blessed with several long-term employees who have provided consistency and continuity for long-term projects. However, the AQP has also not been immune to long-term vacancies in critical positions, which has limited productivity in certain areas as other staff have to shift work to cover the responsibilities of the vacant position. Five staff positions are primarily

dedicated to regulatory air monitoring activities and the work they do is routine but critical to the generation of quality, valid, and defensible data. One staff position is primarily dedicated to compliance (inspection) activities for regulated entities, and one staff position conducts permitting and manages contractors that are instrumental in assisting with the completion of projects. In addition to AQP staff, the AQP also receives project assistance from the Department of Environmental Quality's Outreach Specialist, Senior Planner, and Administrative staff.



Figure 1: Gila River Air Program Staff (L to R): Leroy Williams, Jay Johnson, Mariah Clark, Lorrie Yazzie, Ibitola Agangan, Ryan Eberle

DERA

GRIC received a DERA grant to replace three vehicles for the GRIC Department of Transportation – a loader, a grader, and a tractor truck. The first roadblock came in the form of a delay in the grant award of almost one year, which compressed the original schedule in the workplan. A one-year no-cost extension (NCE) had to be prepared and submitted to EPA. The second roadblock was that it had been a long time since GRIC DOT had procured a new piece of equipment and existing staff were relatively new to their positions and were unfamiliar with the procurement process. Additional assistance had to be provided to GRIC DOT staff to walk them through the procurement process. The third roadblock came in the form of manufacturer options. There is not one company that sells both heavy equipment (loaders and graders) and

on-road (tractor) trucks. Therefore, two procurement processes (Requests for Proposals, bid reviews and selections, and contracts) had to be completed – one for the heavy equipment and one for the tractor truck (and three contracts were actually put in-place since the lowest bidder was not the same for each piece of heavy equipment). Paperwork, contract nuances, and staff changes on the vendor’s end created a fourth, smaller roadblock. We are happy to report, though, that the project is completed and in the close-out stages.



Figure 2: DERA Grant Vehicle

CPRG

GRIC also received a CPRG planning grant to complete a Preliminary Climate Action Plan (PCAP) and a Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) in the hopes of also being awarded an implementation grant in the future. The first challenge with the CPRG grant included hiring the primary position funded by the grant and responsible for completing the workplan objectives (hiring in general for the AQP continues to be a challenge). It took one year to fill the position and it wasn’t filled until three months after the first deliverable (PCAP) was due. The second challenge was that EPA Region 9 is not currently granting no-cost extensions beyond the original project timeline...even if the original timeline was only three years (grants can usually be extended up to at least four years). Fortunately, some contractor assistance costs for all workplan deliverables were built into the original budget and can be leveraged for the completion of the final CCAP deliverable, but an informal budget modification still needed to be requested from EPA. Now that the right contractor is on board, this project has turned the corner and is on home stretch toward completion.

Emissions Inventory

GRIC's last complete criteria pollutant emissions inventory (EI) was for the 2007 calendar year. After completing the preliminary greenhouse gas (GHG) EI for the 2022 calendar year under the CPRG grant, the AQP was able to utilize several funding sources to complete a draft criteria pollutant EI also for the 2022 calendar year. Using the same year for both EIs allowed the AQP to reduce the resources required because several datasets were common to both (e.g., vehicle traffic, wastewater treatment, emergency generators, natural gas consumption, etc.). An added benefit to using common datasets for both EI types is increased quality assurance. The 2022 criteria pollutant EI also includes several emission source types that were not included in the 1997 EI such as biogenic emissions and windblown dust. The remaining hurdles include obtaining emission records from some regulated but unpermitted facilities and quantifying emergency generator emissions, but the EI finish line is in sight.

Rule Revisions

The GRIC Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) was approved in 2008. The challenge with rules is that they will never be perfect. Attempts to make rules less vague can make them overly wordy and complicated and the increased rule complexity can make it harder to understand for both the regulatory agency and the regulated entities. In the course of implementing the AQMP, the AQP had identified approximately 135 items in the AQMP that needed be addressed. These items were broadly separated into three categories – administrative (clarifications, typographical errors, and general updates), policy, and technical. The AQP then developed a rule revision tracking sheet that lists all of the revisions that are needed to the AQMP, including the location in the AQMP, topic, proposed change, and update status. This project was too complex to be handled internally, so the AQP needed to procure a contractor to assist with completion. There are still many challenges to overcome including a complete reformat so it fits into the current version of the GRIC Code.

Database Implementation

Probably the longest project undertaken by the AQP has been the Inventory Management Permitting And Compliance Tracker (IMPACT) database project. In 2015, the AQP received

an Exchange Network grant to work with Maricopa County Air Quality Department (MCAQD) and several other nearby air agencies to develop an emission inventory submittal tool for permitted facilities. Facilities would be able to log into EPA's Shared CROMERR Services portal, select their facility, be directed to the appropriate regulatory agencies database, and submit their EI. The permitting agencies would then be able to compile the EIs and submit to EPA's EIS database. An added feature was the ability to query each partner agency's facility permit information for planning purposes. After completion of the grant, MCAQD continued to develop additional features of IMPACT for permitting and compliance and enforcement. The AQP is able to take advantage of the updated features by paying the contractor to install the newest version of the open-source database. The biggest challenge to full implementation of the IMPACT software has taken almost two years to complete. MCAQD had developed a GIS-mapping tool interface in IMPACT for creating dust permits. Unfortunately, the code for the custom GIS tool was not available from MCAQD and the AQP had to hire a contractor to develop the GIS tool. Once development was complete, implementing the tool exposed the need to update GRIC's GIS software and navigate IT security issues. With most of those issues resolved, the capability of full implementation of the IMPACT database is right around the corner.

So...are we there yet? Not quite, but we are close. Just a couple more...months?...to go.



Figure 3

Radon Programs Toolbox– Sensors and Libraries (Region 8)

By Janice Archuleta

Use Sensors to Test for Radon but Be Cautious and Informed



Figure 1: Radon Monitor

Since the 1980's when radon was recognized as a risk to human health, mainly as lung cancer, industrious scientists have put forward a number of testing devices. The most common approved devices are charcoal radon kits or canisters, electret systems, and continuous ion detectors. More recently, consumer digital radon monitors have become popular. These are usually plug-in or battery operated radon devices which have a display for instantaneous radon levels and able to give other averages as well. (A digital device photo is displayed in this article but only as an example and not as a recommendation for this brand).

The Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors (CRCPD), a partnership of state and local government (including Tribes) dedicated to radiation protection, released a document on consumer digital radon monitors in 2025. Though these devices have not been approved for radon measurements, they are affordable and easy to use and most offer Bluetooth for connecting to smart devices. The digital monitors are beneficial because they do provide useful information real-time on a home's radon level, *but caution is warranted by the CRCPD*. The organization does make an appeal that the sensors are not to be confused with the approved devices and offer this advisory:

Consumer Digital Radon Monitors are NOT for testing during real estate transactions.

Consumer Digital Radon Monitors are NOT for making radon mitigation decisions.

The entire 2-page document can be found here:

<https://crcpd.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/25-4-Radon-Testing-with-CDRMs-Revised-1.pdf>

(Advisory: Radon Testing with Consumer Digital Radon Monitors)

Library or Loan Programs

These sensors are convenient and are a first measurement approach for the homeowner. For that reason, several states and local communities have a library program with the radon sensor devices. Like a book or a Play-Away, they can be checked out for a short period of time. With abbreviated instructions which indicate how to operate the radon sensor, and the best practices for radon measurements, a homeowner doesn't have to spend resources or a trip to the hardware store on obtaining radon results, only a simple trip to the local library.



Instructional Video

Scan this QR code for a brief overview of radon and an instructional video on this monitor.

Report Data

Scan this QR code to report your radon data to the Wyoming Radon Program.

En Español

Escanee este código QR para ver información sobre material del medidor de radón en español.

Wyoming Department of Health | PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION | WYOMING CANCER PROGRAM

For more information about radon in Wyoming, visit health.wyo.gov/radon or call 1.307.777.6015. Provided by funding from EPA grant K196847001.

Figure 2: Courtesy of Star Jones, Public Health Division, WY



Figure 3: Radon Library

Libraries have also been a distribution location where short-term radon kits can be picked up for home use, like the Nez Perce Tribe (NPT) has implemented with nine libraries since 2024.

<https://nezperce.org/uncategorized/radon-test-kits-available-for-free-at-public-libraries-on-the-nez-perce-reservation/>.

NPT is also currently piloting a radon digital device loan program with one library in partnership with the Idaho Department of Health & Welfare and plans to expand to all libraries on their Reservation.

For the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, I am planning to develop a loan program for radon sensors in the upcoming years, and if possible communicate with the local libraries for expansion to include sensor testing devices for radon.

There are a lot of resources available for radon programs and providing testing opportunities. For your Tribe and your community, the options for radon testing are what your program, as environmental professionals, choose and implement. And like any new program, nothing is perfect, however, if one home is tested for radon, then that is a start.

For additional information on radon and testing,

- The EPA contact is <https://www.epa.gov/radon/health-risk-radon>,
- The American Lung Association <https://www.lung.org/clean-air/indoor-air/indoor-air-pollutants/radon>,
- State radon programs have excellent information,
- ITEP's Indoor Air Program itep@nau.edu or Mansel.Nelson@nau.edu

Article Title: Revealing the Invisible: Santee Sioux Nation (Region 7)

By Jerome Proctor



Community Air Monitoring

The Santee Sioux Nation – descendants of the Mdewakantonwan, Wahpeton, Sisseton, and Wahpekute bands – has long been recognized as one of the “frontier guardians” of the Sioux Nation, also known as the Isanti Oyate. That commitment to caring for the land continues today through the Santee Office of Environmental Protection (OEP) community air monitoring project, with the goal of improving community health and wellness under the U.S. EPA Clean Air Act of 1963.

Located in northeast Nebraska along the Missouri River, the Santee Sioux Nation faces a range of environmental influences that shape local air quality. On the Santee reservation, air quality is shaped by a mix of agricultural activity, fossil fuel use, natural sources, climate patterns, and wildfire smoke; access to reliable, local air quality data is helping the community understand changing conditions and respond in ways that protect both health and the environment.

The U.S. EPA Air Quality Index (AQI) provides a clear framework for interpreting air quality data and understanding potential health impacts. However, that guidance is most effective when paired with localized, real-time monitoring that reflects conditions specific to the community. In 2024, Santee Environmental Coordinator Jerome Proctor received an IQAir AirVisual Outdoor Monitor. The monitor strengthens the Nation’s ability to track local air quality conditions, support environmental stewardship, and make air quality information accessible for everyday decisionmaking.

Santee Sioux Nation Air Quality Challenges

The program began reviewing historical and current air pollution data and trends on the Santee reservation. In 2023, during the summer, Santee experienced higher concentrations of

PM2.5 – particulate matter measuring 2.5 microns or less in diameter – and tropospheric ozone. A series of intense Canadian wildfires also contributed to poor air quality in the region.

To support consistent monitoring and long-term sustainability, the program established a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP):

- Collecting historical and real-time air quality and barometric data.
- Comparing and analyzing daily, monthly, and quarterly air quality, dominant pollutants, and environmental conditions.
- Reporting air quality conditions to the tribe, including tribal elders and students, regional tribal nations, U.S. EPA, and the global community.

The data collected by Santee Sioux Nation’s air quality monitoring station can be accessed on the Santee Sioux Nation website and through the AQI color-coded flag adjacent to the Santee Office of Environmental Protection.

These efforts raise environmental awareness and provide air pollution data for the tribal government and community, helping improve air quality understanding on the Santee reservation.

Improving Reliability in Challenging Weather Conditions

Maintaining reliable air quality monitoring in the Great Plains comes with unique logistical challenges. The program focused on ensuring that air quality monitoring could continue reliably in all conditions. In the Great Plains region of the United States – often referred to as “Tornado Alley” – severe winter weather at times made access to the original air monitoring site difficult. To address this challenge, the team relocated the Santee station to a location adjacent to the Santee Office of Environmental Protection.

With funding and technical guidance from the U.S. EPA, the project team completed

the Santee air quality monitoring station relocation within 30 days. The quality improvement reduced equipment downtime, lowered travel costs, and improved the reliability of air pollution data.

With standardized monitoring processes and tools in place, the program expanded efforts to ensure local air quality data is accessible and useful to the community. These activities include:

- Creating public awareness of outdoor air quality conditions on the Santee Sioux Nation website.
- Monthly, quarterly, and semi-annual air quality reporting to the community, tribal programs, tribal elders, and students.
- Implementation of the U.S. EPA AQI flag program, establishing environmental awareness and air quality literacy across the community.

The air quality monitoring process and tools support a proactive approach to the tribal community health and wellness. U.S. EPA AQI guidance helps people understand outdoor air quality conditions so they can continue to get plenty of physical activity, while protecting their health from poor air quality using the mobile app.

Seasonal Air Pollution Patterns and Guidance

From 2023 to 2025, data showed that particulate matter concentrations increased during the spring and summer months. This trend was driven in part by higher travel volumes, which led to increased vehicle exhaust. Seasonal events, such as Fourth of July fireworks, also contributed to short-term spikes in air pollution.

Weather conditions in the Great Plains can further amplify these seasonal air quality patterns. Hot, dry summer conditions can bring periods of low wind and stagnant air, which allow pollutants to build up rather than disperse. Moderate drought conditions may loosen dirt and soil, making particulate matter more likely to become airborne through wind, vehicle traffic, and everyday activity – contributing to higher PM_{2.5} levels.

Additional sources, including prescribed fires used for land management and smoke from Canadian wildfires, also affect air quality on the Santee reservation. Wildfire smoke can travel hundreds or even thousands of miles, creating hazy conditions and degrading air quality in the region.

Because air quality can change quickly during these seasonal conditions, the Santee community is encouraged to check the local Air Quality Index in the same way they check the temperature. This information helps individuals plan or adjust daily activities based on current air conditions.

From Data to Daily Decisions

Air quality data plays an important role in protecting community health—especially for those most vulnerable to poor air quality, including individuals with asthma, bronchitis, and other respiratory conditions. Wildfire smoke, agricultural activity, and seasonal allergens can all increase health risks during certain times of the year.

By combining real-time air pollutant data with weather conditions such as wind, temperature, and humidity, the Santee Sioux Nation can issue timely health advisories through the Santee Sioux website. These air quality advisories and recommendations provide guidance to community members on planning or modifying their outdoor activities.

The program also emphasizes community engagement by involving tribal elders and students in outreach and education efforts. Through this approach, the Santee Sioux Nation supports environmental awareness across generations and encourages community members to take an active role as environmental stewards.

The Takeaway

Through its outdoor air quality monitoring efforts, the Santee Sioux Nation is increasing awareness of air quality and communicating the impacts of air pollution on both health and the environment. With the addition of an IQAir AirVisual Outdoor monitor, the Santee Air Quality

Monitoring Program has improved its ability to monitor local environmental conditions, share information, and help the community make informed decisions on their outdoor activities.

These environmental strategies have also advanced tribal air quality science. The Santee Sioux Nation was recently selected as a monitoring site for the NASA Pandora Project. As part of NASA's Pandora Global Network (PGN) – a ground-based spectrometer system that uses ultraviolet light from the sun to measure atmospheric pollutants such as ozone (O₃), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), and formaldehyde (HCHO) – the program will collaborate with federal agencies to expand scientific understanding of air pollution.

In addition, the Santee Sioux Nation was chosen as a PFAS monitoring site, supporting research efforts to collect wet deposition samples and analyze per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances that pose risks to people and the environment.

Together, these initiatives reflect the Santee Sioux Nation's proactive, data-driven approach to protecting the land, strengthening environmental stewardship, and improving the long-term health and wellness of the Isanti Oyate people.

Pueblo of Santa Ana AQSync Sensor Monitoring (Region 6)

By Victor Lopez

The Pueblo of Santa Ana is located in northcentral New Mexico, EPA Region 6. Due to increased development surrounding the Pueblo and extreme weather events, the residents have had a growing concern of the possible impact to their air quality.

Our Air Quality Program recently added an “AQSync” sensor station to our monitoring network using CAA IRA Section 60105(c) funding. The sensor location is located in a residential area where all pollutant sources of public concern are less than 1 kilometer away; mainly highway activity and industrial exhaust stacks. This station collects real-time data on Particulate Matter (PM 1, 2.5, and 10), Ozone, and NOx levels.

This data is used to calculate a daily Air Quality Index (AQI) score of Santa Ana’s air quality; it is communicated to the public primarily through a flag viewable from the main road.

Before establishing the AQSync site, the AQI of Santa Ana was based off daily air reports of the nearby city of Albuquerque.

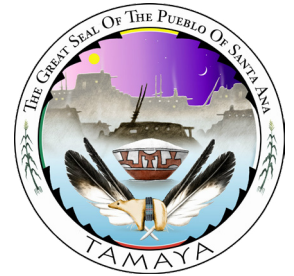


Figure 1: AQSync sensor station



Figure 2: Victor Lopez and Mike King

2B Technologies and the Tribal Air Monitoring Support (TAMS) Center were of great assistance in getting our equipment up and running. This is one of the first AQSync model stations that TAMS has worked with, so they have also been learning the specifics of this sensor type along with us.

Monthly results from the AQSync are compiled and made into an informational report distributed to the

community through the Tribal newsletter. The reports break down sensor readings into clear levels and scores to show how impacted the local air is from each pollutant type. Future plans would be the addition of a weather module to the AQSync station to evaluate pollutant levels in connection to weather conditions. Long-term goals for our program are to identify residential areas that may be more impacted by outdoor air quality, to analyze trends on indoor air quality, and to lay the foundation of planning and procedures to implement a federally equivalent method (FEM) regulatory air monitoring station in Santa Ana.



Figure 3; Santa Ana's Air Quality Index flag

Upper Mattaponi Tribal Air Monitoring Program: How it Started and How it has Grown Over The Years (Region 3)

By Johnathan Oxendine



Soon after the Upper Mattaponi Tribe (UMT) received federal recognition in 2018, Tribal citizens expressed concern about how local factories impacted air quality in the community. This concern spurred the Tribe's environmental department to research and apply for the EPA American Rescue Plan (ARP) grant to begin monitoring operations in the area.

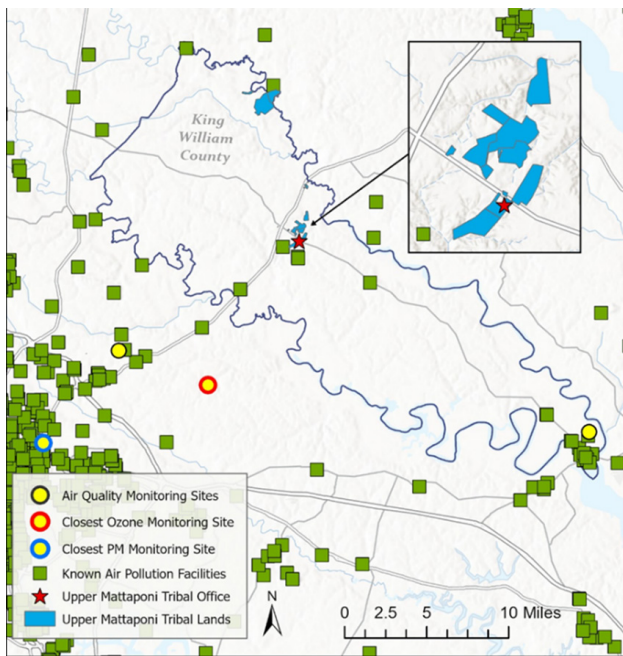


Figure 1: UMT Air Monitoring Sites

UMT obtained the ARP grant and began the monitoring program. The Tribe partnered with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to train Tribal scientists and build an ambient air monitoring shelter on Tribal grounds. Due to the geographic location of UMT, the shelter helps to fill a potential data gap. UMT resides in King William County, Virginia, where there are very few monitoring shelters. Considering the close proximity of Tribal grounds to air polluters, having a monitoring shelter on Tribal grounds gives the best accuracy for what Tribal citizens may be breathing and interacting with in their daily lives.

The Tribe worked with Wilbur Technical Services (WTS) to set up a monitoring shelter beside the main Tribal office, where staff measure Particulate Matter (PM) and Ozone (O₃). The Tribal scientists are being trained by partners at WTS and VADEQ to run the Teledyne machines and understand the data. A challenge in getting the shelter was considering which shelter the Tribe wanted. An initial thought was to get a small, standing shelter for the machines. This proved inefficient when considering the climate of King William, where hot, humid summers can negatively affect the monitors. However, obtaining a larger, walk-in

shelter was too expensive. Therefore, the staff decided to retrofit a small trailer, including climate control, and rolled it into the Tribal property right beside the main office! It seemed crude at first, but it was cost-efficient and has a firm place in the middle of Tribal lands.

The program is still young, so there isn't much to share beyond the establishment of the shelter. Nonetheless, staff are optimistic for the future of the monitoring efforts, where they have at least one more year of work through the ARP. When the grant runs out, staff plan to have a budget set up to properly maintain the operations needed, such as machine calibrations and spare parts.



Figure 3; UMT air monitoring station

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