



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Office of Tribal Relations

November 21, 2022

1400 Independence Ave SW

Ste. 501-A

Washington, D.C. 20250

Phone # 202-205-2249

**Subject:** Tribal Consultation Invitation on Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)  
Renewable Energy Infrastructure Funding & Related Energy/Electric Programs

Dear Tribal Leaders,

On behalf of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) you are cordially invited to a virtual Tribal consultation on **December 15, 2022, from 3:00pm – 5:00pm EST**. Through this consultation, USDA seeks your input on new funding authorities provided under the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (P.L. 117-169) for **renewable electric infrastructure, including for electric vehicle charging stations, and related energy and electric programs, including the traditional, existing USDA Rural Development (RD) electric and energy programs.**

**Background: Renewable Energy Infrastructure Programming**

The Inflation Reduction Act takes the most aggressive action on climate and clean energy in U.S. history. In August 2022, the White House released a series of fact sheets on the IRA including [How the Inflation Reduction Act Helps Tribal Communities](#). Under the IRA programs offered by USDA, Tribes, Tribal Enterprises, Tribal Utilities and with other, non-Tribal, applicants may be eligible for funding under the specific funding streams.

Examples of IRA Funding:

- **Section 22001:** Up to \$1 billion for RUS loans for renewable energy infrastructure. The Act allows the agency to forgive up to 50% of the loan amount. Eligible entities include electric service providers, including municipals, cooperatives, investor-owned and Tribal utilities. The Secretary may also prescribe criteria to waive the 50% limitation.
- **Section 22002:** Up to \$2.025 billion for the RBCS Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), with \$303 million set aside for underutilized technologies and technical assistance. This funding can be used by small businesses and agricultural producers to purchase electric vehicle equipment, e.g., charging equipment for a fleet of electric vehicles amongst other eligible REAP purposes (renewable energy projects and energy efficiency improvements).
- **Section 22003:** Up to \$500 million in RBCS grants for infrastructure improvements to blend, store or distribute biofuels. This includes installing, retrofitting or upgrading dispensers for ethanol at retail stations as well as home heating oil distribution centers.
- **Section 22004:** Up to \$9.7 billion for RUS to offer loans, grants, loan modifications, grants and other financial assistance to rural electric cooperatives to support the purchase of renewable energy systems, zero-emission systems and carbon capture systems. Funding also may be used to deploy these systems or to

make energy-efficiency improvements to generation and transmission systems of eligible entities. Grants may not exceed 25% of project costs.

### **Background: Electric Vehicle Charging Stations**

In December 2021, the Biden-Harris administration announced an [Electric Vehicle Action Plan](#) building on the Administration's ambitious target for the U.S. to hold 50 percent of electric vehicle sales share by 2030. Since then, the U.S. Department of Transportation released [Charging Forward: A Toolkit for Planning and Funding Rural Electric Mobility Infrastructure](#). Tribal nations are key anchor points whose inclusion will be vital for providing consistent charging stations connecting rural and urban communities, and these charging stations can provide economic returns for tribal economies through targeted stopping points at casinos, c-stores and other tribal and federal facilities. The increased availability of electric vehicles (including busses, vans, automobiles, etc.) will also provide diversified transportation for tribal citizens and their communities. Several RD programs, including REAP, the RUS Rural Energy Savings Program and the RUS infrastructure loan program may be used for electric vehicle charging station infrastructure.

### **Background: Related Energy/Electric Programs**

USDA offers a suite of energy and electric programs targeting Tribal nations and rural America. In addition to consulting on renewable energy and electric vehicle infrastructure, Tribal Leaders are encouraged to provide feedback on related RD electric and energy programs that may complement IRA funded programs and how they are meeting Tribal nation and community needs.

### **Registration:**

Tribal Caucus:

- **Date:** December 15, 2022
- **Time:** 2:00-3:00pm EST
- **Register at:** [https://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN\\_dYblofYFQqaB0iLGoW5tNQ](https://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_dYblofYFQqaB0iLGoW5tNQ)
- **Note:** Tribal caucus is an opportunity for Tribal leaders to discuss relevant consultation issues without federal policymakers online.

Tribal Consultation:

- **Date:** December 15, 2022
- **Time:** 3:00-5:00pm EST
- **Register at:** [https://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN\\_dYblofYFQqaB0iLGoW5tNQ](https://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_dYblofYFQqaB0iLGoW5tNQ)
- **Note:** Tribal Leaders registered for the caucus do not have to register again for the consultation.

### **Proxies:**

In the event you cannot attend and wish to send a proxy, please submit a proxy form to [aian@usda.gov](mailto:aian@usda.gov) by Friday, December 9, 2022.

To designate a proxy for this meeting, please copy the attached delegation form to Tribal letterhead. This delegation cannot be in perpetuity. You are also encouraged to bring program leadership and staff from your nation to the tribal consultation as observers.

**Written Comment:**

USDA encourages Tribal Leaders to submit written consultation remarks by email no later than January 15, 2023, at [aian@usda.gov](mailto:aian@usda.gov).

**Questions:**

Please contact [aian@usda.gov](mailto:aian@usda.gov) if you have any questions.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'H. Thompson', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Heather Dawn Thompson (*Cheyenne River Sioux*)  
Director, Office of Tribal Relations