NATIONAL TRIBAL AIR ASSOCIATION'S
R6 RTOC Report

January – March, 2021

National Tribal Air Association's (NTAA) Mission

The mission of the NTAA 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. This report covers NTAA's activities for January 2021 – March 2021. All the information below can be found on NTAA's website at www.ntaatribalair.org.

Policy Work

Work continues to produce the **2021 Status of Tribal Air Report** through work group calls hosted for participants from January-April on the first and third Tuesday of each month. NTAA has received highlights and stories that detail the Successes, Challenges, and Priorities/Needs of the Tribes in the region. The 2020 **Status of Tribal Air Report** was published and released in June of 2020, and the 2021 STAR will be released at the 2021 National Tribal Forum on Air Quality (NTFAQ). Virtual planning for the 2021 NTFAQ is currently in the works.

The NTAA was honored to be asked to provide information to the Biden/Harris transition team, so that they could better understand Tribal needs and priorities. The NTAA EC submitted a letter and held a meeting with the transition team in January 2021.

NTAA has prepared several publications, Policy Resource Kits (PRKs), or comment letters to assist Tribes to understand and comment on recent EPA or other federal agency actions that include the following for this reporting period:

All PRK's and fact sheets can be found on NTAA's Policy Response Kit webpage.

- On March 30, 2021, the NTAA EC submitted a letter to EPA's Office of International and Tribal Affairs requesting an extension to the 30-day period Tribes were offered to respond to EPA's Consultation Opportunity Improving EPA's Consultation with Tribes: Development of the U.S. EPA's Plan for Improving Implementation of EO 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments.

- The NTAA EC submitted a letter to EPA leadership on March 23rd requesting more information on EPA's plan to spend the $100 million allocated to EPA from the American Rescue Plan meant for Clean Air Act and Section 103 funding.

- NTAA has been working with EPA and NTAA leadership to conduct outreach to Tribes for Treatment as a State. Letters were sent to over 70 Tribes that maintain Treatment as a state status for water quality urging them to consider submitting TAS applications for air quality. As the next step of this outreach, NTAA will host an informational webinar next month to provide a venue to these tribes to learn more.

- **EPA's Indoor airPLUS Version 2.** Indoor airPLUS Version 2 revises specifications for the new construction market and expands project eligibility to include multifamily buildings of all heights. Approved Indoor airPLUS labeled homes and apartments provide peace of mind to home buyers and renters seeking to keep their family healthy. NTAA submitted a comment letter to EPA on March 17, 2021.

NTAA's Partnership Work

NTAA has been active in building partnerships with other organizations working to improve air quality.

- The EPA recently awarded the 2020 Clean Air Excellence Award to NTAA. The award ceremony took place on January 12, 2021. The awardees are selected by EPA's Clean Air Act Advisory Committee and recognizes and honors the outstanding efforts to achieve cleaner air. You can view the award here and the EPA news release here.

- The NTAA Executive Committee (EC) was not able to meet in person but held a virtual meeting in February 2021. During that call numerous EPA staffers and officials met with NTAA to discuss updates on Air Quality work in their respective regions and/or offices, including many of the newest EPA officials of the Biden/Harris administration.

- NTAA is partnering with the Moms Clean Air Force to create a fact sheet on how air pollution impacts Indigenous communities, and a draft is currently in the works. This fact sheet is set to publish in March of 2021.

- In early March, NTAA was invited to present on a webinar hosted by EPA's Office of Environmental Justice to highlight NTAA as an EPA partnership group. EPA's Office of International and Tribal Affairs also presented on that webinar.

- On March 22, NTAA leadership attended a meeting with the National Tribal Caucus to discuss greater cooperation between the NTC and Tribal Partnership Groups. NTAA will be providing the NTC budget recommendations for Tribal air programs from the NTAA STAR in May.

- In partnership, NTAA, the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals, and Tribal

Air Monitoring Support Center will be hosting the 2021 National Tribal Forum on Air Quality virtually from May 17 – 21, 2021.

- **IAQ Work Group:** The Indoor Air Quality Work Group (IAQ) WG meets monthly via teleconference on the third Thursday of every other month at 2pm ET to help improve IAQ in Indian country by developing policy actions on IAQ issues.
    - The NTAA IAQ Work Group will be working with EPA's Office of Radiation and Indoor Air to review and publish a national IAQ Resource Directory for Tribes.
    - The NTAA IAQ Work Group held three informational webinars on the *Overview of COVID in the Workplace and Funding for Tribes*. Overall, the webinar series was received very well and included over one hundred participants for each webinar from across the country. These webinars were recorded and posted on NTAA's IAQ page.

- **Wood Smoke Work Group:** The Wood Smoke Work Group meets every other month via teleconference on the third Thursday at 2pm ET to collaborate with Tribal, state, EPA, and other interested entities to address air quality impacts from residential wood/coal burning stove.
    - Region 7 Primary Representative Billie Toledo is the group lead along with Mariah Ashley, NTAA's Program Coordinator as co-lead. They provide updates from the national Residential Wood Smoke Working Group's led by EPA's Julia Ruiz and Dan Smith. They meet every month on the fourth Tuesday at 2pm ET.

- **Mobile Sources Work Group:** The Mobile Sources Work Group hosts monthly calls for Tribes on the first Thursday of each month at 2pm ET.
    - The Mobile Sources Work Group has most recently been discussing the Future of Transportation.
    - In April, the Work Group will hear a presentation from Angela Benedict on the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe's Adventures in EV Infrastructure, as well as from EPA's Lucita Valiere about the Tribal DERA RFP. That call will be held on April 1 at 2pm ET.

NTAA Resources / Information for Tribes

NTAA's website and logo are accessible at www.ntaatribalair.org. NTAA along with Shine Creative Industries of Flagstaff developed a mobile app that can be used on most platforms including Android and Apple App stores. The app is now live and downloadable and has been included on NTAA's website. You can download the app off of NTAA's home page.

NTAA EC members will now be providing monthly video updates that will be posted on NTAA home page as part of NTAA's Weekly Update. The first video was posted in mid-March and features NTAA EC member Bill Thompson of the Penobscot Indian Nation in Region 1. You can view the video here.

Regarding information for Tribes, NTAA frequently creates downloadable fact sheets regarding policy and proposed rules. They may be viewed on https://www.ntaatribalair.org/policy-resource-kits/.

VW Settlement

The Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP) holds monthly meetings of the VW Settlement Tribal Advisory Council. The purpose of the TAC is to advise the technical assistance provider (ITEP) on its outreach and training efforts to ensure that Indian Tribes are aware of the Indian Tribe Trust, and to provide a forum for Indian Tribes to raise general questions relating to the Indian Tribe Trust Agreement. You can learn more on ITEP's website here http://www7.nau.edu/itep/main/volkswagensettlement/**.** The application period to become a beneficiary of the VW Settlement has closed.

NTAA Membership

The NTAA family of member Tribes has grown to 153 federally recognized Principal Member Tribes across Indian Country. There are no dues or fees to join NTAA. To become a member, a Tribe needs to submit an application and a letter indicating Tribal leadership approves the application for membership. A membership application form and a template cover letter are available on NTAA's website at https://www.ntaatribalair.org/become-a-member/ or by contacting NTAA's Project Director, Andy Bessler at andy.bessler@nau.edu or 928.523.0526.

NTAA Region 6 Representative

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Vacant