

**DRAFT**

**Tribal Caucus of the EPA Region  
10 Tribal Operations Committee  
(RTOC)  
Priorities**

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**The Region 10 RTOC Tribal Caucus is seeking your comments on its revision of its Priorities document. Please review and provide any comment to the RTOC Policy Analyst, Rick Eichstaedt at [ricke@cforjustice.org](mailto:ricke@cforjustice.org)**

**Thanks for your interest and support of the Region 10 RTOC!**

The Tribal Caucus of the Region 10 RTOC will advocate for the following actions to strengthen tribal environmental programs and the health of the environment in areas depended upon by tribal communities:

### **Support Strategic Initiatives of the EPA Administrator and Region Administrator that Benefit Tribal Communities**

- Advocate for the implementation of the Administrator's and Regional Administrator's priorities for protection and enhancement of the tribal environment, including efforts to streamline the treatment in the same manner as a state process, ensure tribal consultation and the fulfillment of EPA's trust responsibility, address environmental justice, including tribal fish consumption rates, and efforts to address climate change.
- Advocate for sufficient funding and training for tribal program staff that assist in the implementation of tribal programs and grants.

### **Increasing the Level of Tribal Program Resources**

- Advocate for an EPA budget that includes an increase of funding and authority for EPA Region 10 and Tribes. EPA's Tribal set-aside should amount to 5% of EPA's total budget. Funding programs must meet the needs of Tribes of different sizes and facing different environmental issues, in alignment with EPA priorities. These programs should maximize flexibility, so that Tribes can address their own priority needs while ensuring accountability for positive results.
- Urge full support of RTOC and NTOC operations.

### **Increasing Flexibility of the Indian General Assistance Program**

- Advocate for the adoption of GAP policies to allow the greatest flexibility in their use. EPA should provide Tribes with the greatest measure of self-determination and flexibility in grants management to accomplish successful environmental programs while ensuring the integrity of resources.
- Advocate for the adoption of GAP policies that encourage the development of tribal environmental capacity and implementation of programs where necessary to address pressing environmental program and recognize the special circumstance facing Alaska Native Villages; and off reservation environmental hazards impacting tribes, as treaty resources are located off reservation on usual and accustomed area.

### **Increasing Meaningful Consultation, the Fulfillment of EPA's Trust Responsibility, and Protection of Treaty Rights**

- Advocate for the adoption and implementation of policies that recognize EPA's role in protecting both resources in tribal communities and treaty-reserved rights, fulfillment of EPA's trust responsibility, and increase meaningful government-to-government consultation.

- Urge EPA to provide technical science and policy support that allow incorporation of Traditional Ecological Knowledge in EPA's permitting process and in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental review process.
- Advocate for policies that ensure that all EPA decisions recognize the unique relationships between tribal communities and their environment, including recognizing impacts of polluting activities to traditional foods.

## **Protect the Tribal Environment and Health of Tribal Members**

The RTOC will advocate for EPA actions that protect the tribal environmental and health of tribal members, including policies and regulations that:

- **Protecting Tribal Waters**
  - Incorporate subsistence and treaty-resource consumption rates to ensure rates are actually protective of human health.
  - Increase oversight of state NPDES programs to ensure that tribal communities and resources are protected.
  - Identify options for increased opportunities for implementation of water programs in Alaska.
- **Protecting Air Resources**
  - Retain funding and support for tribal air programs that are effective at protecting tribal air resources.
  - Identify options for increased opportunities for implementation of air programs in Alaska.
- **Reacting and Addressing Climate Change**
  - Implement the full authority of EPA to regulate carbon pollution so we may avoid the worst effects of global warming.
  - Assist tribal governments with understand and mitigating impacts of climate change to tribal communities and resources.
- **Providing Tools for Solid Waste Management**
  - Enhance existing recycling and backhauling programs to address and remove solid waste and hazardous materials out of tribal communities.
- **Increasing Tribal Role in Environmental Cleanup**
  - Increase the role of Tribes in developing and reviewing remedies for clean-up of Superfund sites.
  - Increase the availability and training for Tribes to engage in emergency response and cleanup.