

Indian Country Priorities and Opportunities for the 2023 Farm Bill Title IX: Energy

Key Points and Recommendations

- Energy independence developed through renewable energy projects in Indian Country, would vastly reduce energy costs for Native agricultural producers and for Tribal communities in general.
- Indian Country has tremendous wind/solar potential, among other renewable energies
- This title provides funding/research support for alternative energy technology, production of renewable biomass for biofuels, education, research, financial assistance, and the manufacture and production of renewable energy.

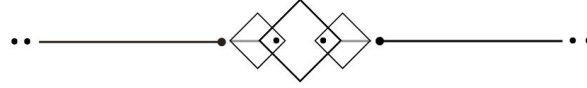
Background Information and Context

Creating more opportunities for Tribes to access Energy Title programs is critical. Today, agriculture relies on energy inputs like fertilizer, water, gasoline, and more.

Providing renewable energy for Indian Country's 80,000 farmers and ranchers will stabilize Tribal agricultural operations and help keep food prices from rising. Most programs in the Energy Title rely on discretionary funding, meaning they must seek annual funding through the appropriations process rather than receiving mandatory funding directly in the Farm Bill itself. This fact about discretionary funding is important with 14% of Indian Country's households lacking access to basic energy needs like electricity.

Opportunities for Indian Country in the Energy Title

- ***Establish Tribal Bio-based energy grants***
 - Establish a Tribal Bio-Based Energy Development Grant Program to stimulate energy infrastructure and economic development in Tribal communities and ensure access to low-cost, affordable energy.
 - Congress should add a new section to Title IX that would allocate funding for tribal Energy Bio-Based Energy Development Grants
- ***Develop Solar Energy Grant Programs***



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- Increase Tribal access to grants supporting solar power to provide incentives for Tribes and Native producers alike to utilize other forms of regenerative energy, like harnessing solar potential.
- ***Create Tribal set-asides in the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP)***
 - Develop a dedicated Tribal set-aside in REAP to ensure Tribes have access to funds (10% of authorized and appropriated funds for the REAP to be utilized by Tribal governments, Tribal entities, and / or individual Tribal members.
 - Waive match requirements for socially disadvantaged Tribal members.
- ***Ensuring Tribal eligibility in Energy Authorities***
 - Congress to codify policy that Tribal Corporations are eligible for Rural Development programs.
 - Further protection could be provided by additionally clarifying that Tribally chartered corporations are also eligible for RD programming alongside any other corporation.