



April 2023

FACT SHEET

Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Trust Services historic investment in Indian Country under Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)

President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), commonly referred to as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) provided a historic \$13 billion directly in Tribal communities across the country and makes Tribal communities eligible for billions more. These resources go to tackle the climate crisis, advance environmental justice, and invest in Tribal communities often left behind.

The Office of Trust Services (OTS) is providing \$2.966 billion in BIL funding directly to tribal communities and coordinate with other lead DOI programs on the release of an additional \$170.8M earmarked for ecosystem restoration projects, wildfire drought coordination, orphaned well site plugging, remediation and restoration on trust and restricted lands.



BIA Funding Purpose of Allocation

\$2.5 billion	Settlement of Indian Water Rights Claims
\$50M	Irrigation and Power Systems
\$200M	Safety of Dams
\$216M	Tribal Climate Resilience Programs

BIA portion of DOI Funds Purpose of Allocation

\$150M	Orphaned well site plugging, remediation, and restoration on trust and restricted land, coordination with BIA, Indian Energy Service Center
\$20.8M	FY 2022 and FY 2023 BIA designated funds for stewardship contracts, to prepare communities and ecosystems for the threat of wildfire drought, invasive species detection and prevention, and native vegetation restoration efforts

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BIL Tribal Consultation Sessions

We host consultations with Tribal nations to honor our nation-to nation relationship, to hear directly from Tribal leaders as we address the issues which impact American Indians and Alaska Natives. BIA is committed to a process that addresses Tribal needs and ensures we respect and take input to heart.

DOI received a \$466M investment for the Bureau of Indian Affairs for infrastructure projects and climate resiliency initiatives, as well as a



historic investment of \$2.5 billion to help the Department fulfill pre-existing settlements of Indian water rights claims. The Secretary made it a priority to garner input from Tribal leaders on the important opportunities and decisions through virtual tribal consultations sessions held January 26, 27, and 28, 2022. A close-out report of the session can be found at <https://www.bia.gov/tribal-consultation/bipartisan-infrastructure-law>. Photo is a tribal elder throwing wild rice seeding into a lake.

Orphaned Well Grants Tribal Consultation Session

The Department of the Interior, [Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance](#) is responsible for the distribution of funds and oversight of this program. The DOI sought feedback and recommendations from Tribal Leaders on a draft document titled “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Sec. 40601 Orphaned Well Program, Tribal Grant Guidance, Fiscal Year 2023”. DOI’s Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OPEC) and the BIA hosted virtual tribal consultation sessions on September 27 and 29, 2022, to receive input on the draft Tribal Grant guidance. The guidance is to be used in the administration and distribution of the first round of funding, with up to \$50M available for Tribal projects in FY 2023. Section 40601(d) of the BIL creates an orphaned well plugging, remediation, and reclamation grant program within the DOI to address orphaned

wells and well sites on Tribal lands. Tribal grants total \$150M. Orphaned well site plugging, remediation, and restoration on trust and restricted land will be managed in cooperation with the BIA, Indian Energy Service Center. See web site: <https://www.bia.gov/service/orphaned-wells>. Photo is an abandoned oil well.



Ecosystem Restoration

The IJA provided the Department with \$905M for Ecosystem Restoration and Resilience funding, of which \$464.6M was made available to the bureaus. Of this amount, the Bureau of Indian Affairs will receive approximately \$30M over five years for implementation of stewardship contracts, ecosystem restoration projects, invasive species detection and prevention, and native vegetation restoration efforts.

Projects funded will aid in restoration of ecological health on Indian lands by improving forest health and reducing the risk of resource loss to environmental factors such as insects, disease, and wildfire. The existing Invasive Species grant program will be enhanced to benefit restoration of important habitats.

Funds may be used for activities to restore, prepare, or adapt recreation sites on Federal lands, including Indian Forest lands or rangelands. The investment will also provide for adaptation/plant ecologists to provide regional technical expertise to support ecological restoration efforts on Indian lands at various USGS Climate Adaptation Science Center (CASC) regions.



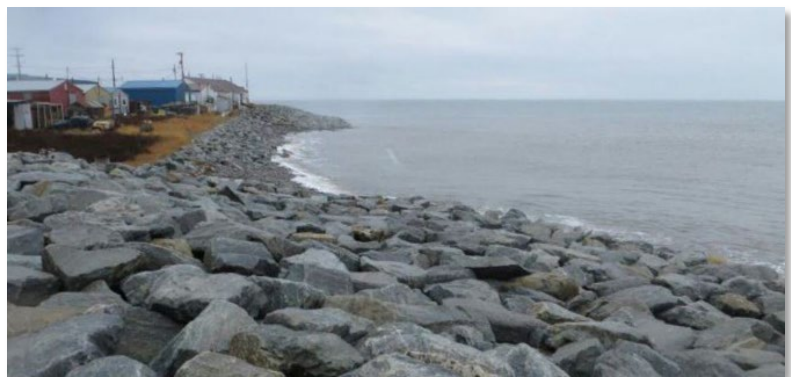
Tribal Climate Resilience

The \$20.8M in BIL resources designated for Climate Resilience Projects will support Tribes and Tribal organizations in adaptation planning, climate implementation actions, ocean and coastal management planning, capacity building, relocation, managed retreat, and protect-in-place planning for climate risks.

In Fiscal Year 2022, 124 Tribal Climate Resilience Awards were granted to 76 Tribes and 8 Tribal Organizations.

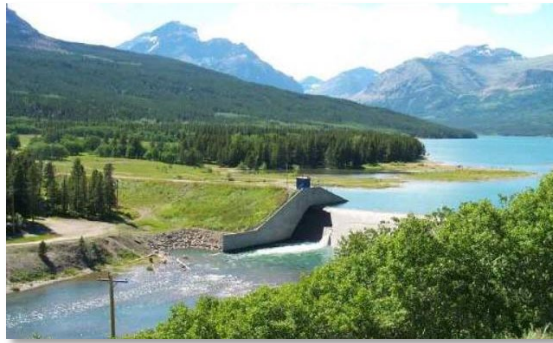
The activity was initially funded from \$20 million of the BIL and \$25 million from FY 2022 annual appropriations allowing Tribal communities to identify and address priorities based on the

unique needs and location of each Tribe. The FY 2023 awards include new categories to support implementation of climate adaptation strategies, and implementation of community relocation, managed retreat, or protect-in-place actions.



Water and Power

Projects funded through BIL include \$2.5 billion to implement the [Indian Water Rights Settlement Completion Fund](#) to help deliver long-promised water resources to Tribes and a foundation for future economic development for entire communities dependent on common water resources. There are [34 congressionally enacted Indian Water Rights Settlements](#) as of November 15, 2021, when BIL was signed. Settlement of Indian water rights disputes



breaks down barriers and helps create conditions that improve water resources management by providing certainty as to the rights of all water users who are parties to the disputes.

\$250M for Tribal dams and water will address irrigation, power systems, dam safety and water sanitation. Photo is of the Lower Two Medicine Dam on the Blackfoot reservation.

Wildfire Fire Mitigation and Prevention

The initial distribution of the BIL funding will invest across all DOI bureaus and offices. The legislation includes \$1.5 billion for DOI to invest in preparedness, fuels management, post-fire restoration, and fire science. See <https://www.doi.gov/priorities/investing-americas-infrastructure/wildland-fire>.

The BIL legislation establishes the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission which will play a key role in recommending ways that federal agencies can better prevent, mitigate, suppress, and manage wildland fires. It will also recommend policies and strategies on how to restore the lands affected by wildfire.

Along with 11 federal members, the commission will be co-chaired by DOI, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) leadership. Commission members represent federal agencies, Tribes, state and local municipalities, and private entities.

The BIA share of funds will be used for fuels treatment, post-fire recovery and rehabilitation, wildland urban interface (WUI) improvement, wildfire prevention measures, wildfire preparedness, and road and fire line construction and repair.



OTS BIL Project Managers

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Interactive Map of BIL Projects

Visit the [BIA BIL Project Interactive Map](#) to a full list of FY 2022 projects by Tribe and geographic location. Simply click on any icon on the map and you will be directed to a description of the project and funded amount. A sample of BIL categories and projects funded are listed below.



Economic Restoration

Citizen Potawatomi Nation, Oklahoma, \$249,427

Project funding to eradicate Red Cedar (an invasive species) from Tribal lands. Red cedars sprout and grow aggressively, are highly flammable and consume large amounts of ground water. This species crowds out other more useful plant species, trees, or grasses because they grow very thick and will completely cover or shade the ground.



Red cedar tree branches



Dam Safety

Crow Reservation, Montana, \$2M

Design of the Willow Creek Dam. Dam rehabilitation will address concerns related to the embankment, spillway and outlet works resulting in improved safety to an estimated population at risk (PAR) of more than 2,600 people and improve operability. Investment is expected to reduce dam safety risk to populations living, working, and/or recreating downstream of the dam, while promoting the long term-continued access to the beneficial use of the water stored by the dam.



Willow Creek Dam and bridge over service spillway at the dam crest



BIA Water Settlement

Blackfeet Tribe, Montana, \$56,444

BIA Water Rights Settlement Act. This project will plan, design and construct facilities to supply domestic water and support irrigation-including the developing new water infrastructure on the Blackfeet Reservation. At full build out the Blackfeet Regional Water System will serve an estimated 25,000 reservation residents in the communities of Browning, Heart Butte, Babb, East Glacier, and Blackfoot, as well as rural farms and ranches.



Blackfeet welcome sign



Irrigation

Yakama Reservation, Washington, \$3.74M

The Wapato Irrigation Project provides irrigation water to over 135,500 acres with an estimated direct harvest benefit of \$560 million. Ensures long term functionality of diversion structure which is the single point of water diversion for the Project and is central to the Tribe and water users farming/growing success. Improves fish passage for salmon, steelhead, and pacific lamprey.



Wapato Diversion Dam on the Yakima River



Power

San Carlos Irrigation Project (SCIP), \$1M

SCIP power utility provides electricity to San Carlos Indian Reservation, Gila River Indian Reservation, and to areas in Arizona outside the reservation boundaries. This substation has old equipment that needs to be replaced and relocated. Repairs and upgrades to substations will increase the reliability of the electrical distribution system and reduce the risk of failure to deliver power to SCIP's customers.



Casa Grande Substation



**Tribal
Climate
Resilience**

Pala Band of Mission Indians in Calif., \$358,160

The Planet Pala Information Campaign for Climate Resilience is a hands-on climate adaptation and hazard mitigation program that addresses vulnerabilities identified in the Tribe's Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and Hazard Mitigation Plan. The award support climate adaptation strategies to plan around natural and cultural resources, regenerative agriculture and food sovereignty, and other priority areas identified in existing plans.



Pala Band Environmental Division logo for Climate Resilience Project