

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 20, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Vice Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Energy and Water Development
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Vice Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Energy and Water Development
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairwoman Mikulski, Chairman Alexander, and Vice Chairman Feinstein:

As appropriations legislation for FY2016 continues to advance, we respectfully request that you work with us to fund the Tribal Indian Energy Loan Guarantee Program (TIELGP) within the Department of Energy (DOE) at a level of \$11 million. We believe TIELGP is an important program because it will help tribes finance projects to increase all forms of electricity generation on tribal lands. Such projects will not only improve tribes' access to reliable and resilient energy, but also stimulate local economies, create high-quality jobs, and increase the standard of living for many tribal members.

There is significant potential for energy development on tribal lands. Developing these energy resources would help tribes bring power to the most remote parts of Indian Country. Such projects would spur the creation of high-quality jobs, which are sorely needed on Indian reservations where unemployment is far above the national rate. Economic development is key to creating prosperity in Indian Country, and the energy sector offers a great opportunity for such development.

Many energy resources on tribal lands remain undeveloped because tribes face significant challenges in securing sufficient financing for energy projects. TIELGP, authorized by the Energy Policy Act of 2005, would help address these challenges. This program would allow the DOE to guarantee up to 90 percent of the principal and interest of a loan issued to an Indian tribe for energy development. For electricity generation projects, the program would encourage borrowers to cooperate with private entities such as utilities. Such engagement would leverage not only the necessary private investment but also the expertise of entities that have vast experience in energy development projects.

Despite being authorized in 2005, TIELGP has never been funded. Moreover, the FY2016 Energy and Water Development (EWD) Appropriations Act reported by the Appropriations Committee did not include the President's request of \$11 million for this important program. Funds would be used for credit subsidy costs, which would support approximately \$45 million-\$90 million in guaranteed loans. Given the untapped potential for energy development on tribal lands, DOE expects that it would receive more than sufficient interest from potential borrowers to deploy this loan guarantee authority.

Indian energy projects will help bring power to the most remote parts of Indian Country and drive the creation of high-quality jobs, improving the standard of living for many tribal communities. Given these substantial benefits, we believe that supporting energy development projects on tribal lands should be a top economic development priority in Indian Country as Congress appropriates funding for FY2016. Therefore, we want to work with you to include funding for TIELGP in the FY2016 EWD Appropriations bill.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter, and please do not hesitate contact Blaise Sheridan in Sen. Franken's office at 202-224-5641 if you have any questions.

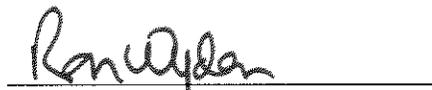
Sincerely,



Al Franken
United States Senator



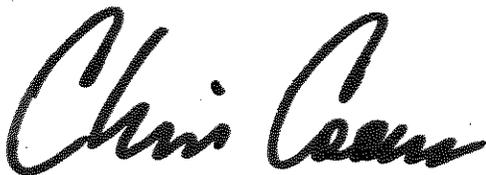
John Barrasso
United States Senator



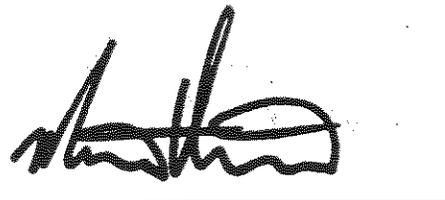
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Chris Coons
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator