



## NATIONAL TRIBAL WATER COUNCIL FY19-20 Program Priorities

### NTWC Mission

To advocate for the best interests of federally-recognized Indian and Alaska Native Tribes, and Tribally-authorized organizations, in matters pertaining to water. To advocate for the health and sustainability of clean and safe water, and for the productive use of water for the health and well-being of Indian Country, Indian communities, Alaska Native Tribes and Alaska Native Villages.

### Who We Are

The National Tribal Water Council (Council) is a technical and scientific body created to assist the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), federally recognized Indian Tribes, Alaska Native Tribes, and associated tribal communities and tribal organizations, with research and information for decision-making regarding water issues and water-related concerns that impact Indian and Alaska Native tribal members, residents of Alaska Native Villages and Indian Country in the United States. The Council is not a policy-making body and its input is not a substitute for government-to-government consultation.

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### FY 19-20 NTWC Priorities

- 1 F Improve outreach and capacity building.**  
Coordinate and conduct water-related webinars and trainings to build tribal water program capacity. Develop and provide relevant water-related articles, traditional ecological and environmental knowledge-based information that is accessible on the NTWC website.
- 2 F Develop guidance documents.**  
Develop a Tribal Water Quality Standards (WQS) Guidance (WQS Guidance) document that incorporates both western science and traditional ecological knowledge. Tribes can use this WQS Guidance to model or adopt standards under their own tribal authority or code. The Council will work in collaboration with EPA and other regulatory agencies as they update Guidance documents such as CWA 401 certification.
- 3 F Continue to develop Comment Letters and/or Policy Response Kits in response to proposed EPA actions.**  
Develop Comment Letters or Policy Response Kits (PRKs) in response to proposed regulatory actions that impact tribal sovereignty and rights. Provide information and outreach to tribes on proposed regulatory actions through the PRKs, related studies and webinars.

#### **4 F Improve access to safe drinking water, sanitation, wastewater systems, and water quantity.**

Educate federal agencies on needs for funding specifically for tribes to develop water infrastructure, improve tribal water utility systems, and train personnel on safe water operations. Develop process to obtain access to water data in order to maintain adequate and relevant information on tribal water issues.

#### **5 F Examine Policy for potential ambiguities.**

Review proposed new and/or updated regulations and provide feedback to reduce policy loopholes, especially relating to mining issues. Participate in consultation opportunities, such as webinars, teleconference calls, and meetings to convey tribal issues and concerns.

#### **6 F Work to breakdown EPA stove piping.**

Urge EPA and its various programs to coordinate their individual authorities to develop holistic ecosystem wide approaches and solutions; many water issues involve multi-media solutions. For example, Office of Water and CERCLA programs can coordinate their efforts to best meet the needs and resolve environmental problems. Develop opportunities to discuss tribal concerns and questions with high level staff through conference calls or in-person meetings.

#### **7 F Enhance coordination with tribal entities and organizations.**

Increase collaboration and coordination with other tribal entities and organizations (e.g., National Tribal Caucus (NTC), National Tribal Operations Committee (NTOC), Regional Tribal Operations Committees (RTOCs), etc.) by attending their meetings and inviting other tribal entities to participate in NTWC in-person meetings or calls.

#### **8 F Provide information and resources on climate change and how it impacts tribes.**

Provide and distribute information and resources on climate change impacts, such as climate change adaptation plans with an emphasis on water issues. Identify and share examples of how climate change has significantly impacted tribal water issues.

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##### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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