

Tribal Statements of Support for TERRA Act Introduction

April 2024

NCAI – 3/20/2024

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) applauds Representative Derek Kilmer for his leadership and vision in introducing The Tribal Environmental Resiliency Resources Act [TERRA]. The proposed legislation, which includes the establishment of a federal relocation coordination program under the Department of the Interior, demonstrates a commitment to addressing the unique needs of Tribal communities facing the urgent threats posed by climate change. By creating a dedicated program to support environmental and disaster prevention, mitigation, and relief efforts for environmentally vulnerable Tribal communities, TERRA represents a significant step forward in ensuring the resilience and well-being of Tribal Nations in the face of climate change. NCAI calls upon all members of Congress to prioritize the needs of Indigenous Peoples in addressing the climate crisis and expedite passage of TERRA.

- Larry Wright, Jr., Executive Director, National Congress of American Indians

NIHB – 3/25/2024

Due to the increase in natural disasters and fluctuating environment, Tribal homelands and traditional ways of life are in jeopardy. The ongoing environmental devastation Tribal communities face leaves them with difficult decisions, including to relocate their people. The National Indian Health Board is proud to support the Tribal Environmental Resiliency Resources Act (TERRA Act) which ensures federal funding designed to support Tribal disaster preparedness and emergency planning is centralized and reaches Indian Country in an equitable and efficient manner.

- National Indian Health Board

Shoalwater – 3/25/2024 ([see support letter](#))

The Shoalwater Bay Tribe welcomes the introduction of the Tribal Environmental Resiliency Resources Act (TERRA Act) and commends Representative Derek Kilmer for his leadership and dedication to this essential legislation. The Tribe's lands along the Washington coast are nearly at sea level, rapidly succumbing to erosion and rising waters; our community is a single tsunami event away from disappearing.

For Tribes like ours, the TERRA Act means survival—more than that, survival on our own terms as we move our community to higher ground. We implore Congress to pass the TERRA Act to assist Shoalwater and other Tribes in overcoming the present and future dangers of climate change.

- Quintin Swanson, Tribal Chairman, Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe

ANHB – 3/28/2024

The Alaska Native Health Board (ANHB) commends the introduction of the Tribal Environmental Resiliency Resources Act (TERRA). The health and wellness of Tribal communities is intrinsically tied to the environment. As the statewide voice on Alaska Native health, ANHB acutely understands how climate change disproportionately affects Alaska Tribes, many of which are already facing the extreme scenario of relocating their communities. The TERRA Act fills essential gaps by providing a way to coordinate these complex community-driven relocation projects, as well as other Tribal climate resiliency efforts at all levels, while centering Tribal self-determination. ANHB calls on Congress to prioritize these urgent concerns and pass the TERRA Act to support the environmental resiliency of all Alaska Native and American Indian people.

- Alberta Unok, President/CEO, Alaska Native Health Board

USET SPF – 3/28/2024

The United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund supports the introduction of the Tribal Environmental Resiliency Resources Act. As the effects of climate change intensify, many of our Tribal Nations have been forced to contend with increasing occurrences of natural disasters, along with destruction of our environments and properties. In addition, Tribal Nations located in coastal areas, including USET SPF Member Tribal Nations, are most at risk to impacts from sea level rise. Frustratingly, there are precious few federal resources dedicated to long-term Tribal climate change planning, adaptation, and mitigation.

We have called upon Congress to create a comprehensive federal program to coordinate Tribal environmental resiliency efforts and ensure that this program would assist Tribal Nations in community-driven relocation, climate adaptation planning, and environmental mitigation efforts. Like the “477 Program” established by P.L. 102-477, the Tribal Environmental Resiliency Resources Act would effectively combine and streamline federal funds from various sources into one single plan so that Tribal Nations can better prevent, prepare for, and respond to natural and environmental disasters. It would also streamline and expedite federal agency processes tied to actions covered by a plan, such as trust land acquisition.

We fully support efforts that increase Tribal Nation access to federal funding and programs in a manner that increases our ability to exercise our sovereignty and determine the best way to utilize these funds for our communities. Our Tribal Leaders expect Congress to uphold its trust and treaty obligations by enacting this and other bills to support our efforts to protect our homelands and cultural lifeways.

- United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereign Protection Fund

DOI Self-Governance Tribes – 3/28/2024

Tribes involved in the Department of the Interior’s (DOI) Self-Governance program strongly support the introduction of the Tribal Environmental Resiliency Resources Act (TERRA Act). By

improving access to federal resources for Tribal Nations to protect our citizens, homelands, and ways of life, the TERRA Act recognizes that Tribal Nations are at the forefront of climate adaptation efforts and are best positioned to determine the needs of our own communities. Self-Governance Tribes celebrate the TERRA Act as a legislative model for promoting Tribal self-governance and carrying out the federal government's trust relationship with Tribal Nations.

- W. Ron Allen, Tribal Chairman, DOI Self-Governance Advisory Committee (SGAC)
-

Passamaquoddy – 3/28/2024

The Pleasant Point Tribal Government of the Passamaquoddy Tribe (Tribe) celebrates the introduction of the Tribal Environmental Resiliency Resources Act (TERRA Act). As a coastal Tribe and traditional saltwater fishing community in Maine, our lands, our traditional foods, sacred sites, and cultural practices are uniquely vulnerable to phenomena caused by or related to climate change, such as hurricanes, erosion, and rising sea levels. The TERRA Act represents an innovative solution to improve access to federal resources while ensuring Tribes are able to determine how they will be used. The Tribe urges Congress to prioritize the passage of this critical legislation that will better position our Tribe and others to protect our citizens and ways of life.

- Amkuwiposohehs “Pos” Bassett, Chief, Pleasant Point Tribal Government, Passamaquoddy Tribe
-

ATNI – 3/31/2024

The Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) proudly supports the Tribal Environmental Resiliency Resources Act (TERRA Act) and applauds its introduction. Tribes throughout Indian Country, including ATNI member Tribes in Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Nevada, Northern California, and Alaska, are confronting the impacts of climate change without a roadmap. ATNI has developed its own Climate Resiliency Program to address this gap and promote the goals of protecting Tribal health, safety, and welfare, and preserving Tribal cultural and natural resources. The TERRA Act builds upon these efforts by providing a federal navigational tool and a path to comprehensive climate solutions Tribes can customize to their communities and implement themselves.

- Leonard Forsman, Chairman, Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians



SHOALWATER BAY INDIAN TRIBE

P.O. Box 130 • Tokeland, Washington 98590
Telephone (360) 267-6766 • FAX (360) 267-6778

Representative Derek Kilmer
6th District
1226 Longworth House
Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

3/25/24

Dear Representative Kilmer:

The Shoalwater Bay Tribe welcomes the introduction of the Tribal Environmental Resiliency Resources Act (TERRA Act) and commends Representative Derek Kilmer for his leadership and dedication to this essential legislation. The Tribe's lands along the Washington coast are nearly at sea level, rapidly succumbing to erosion and rising waters; our community is a single tsunami event away from disappearing.

For Tribes like ours, the TERRA Act means survival—more than that, survival on our own terms as we move our community to higher ground. We implore Congress to pass the TERRA Act to assist Shoalwater and other Tribes in overcoming the present and future dangers of climate change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Quintin Swanson".

Quintin Swanson
Tribal Chairman
Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe