



The TERRA Act

A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR TRIBAL NATURAL DISASTER RESILIENCE

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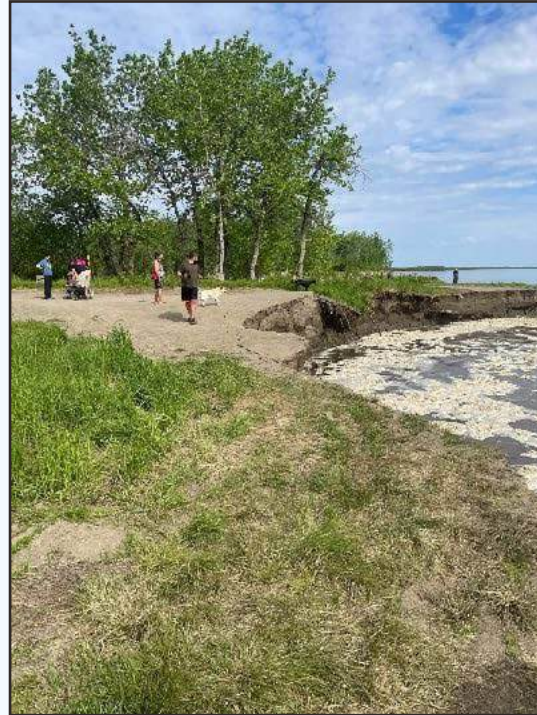
01. Environmental Challenges Faced by Akiak Native Community

A New Threat: Spring Melt / High Water Riverine Erosion Event – Akiak Managed Retreat Project



On May 18 and 19, 2019, the Kuskokwim River eroded 50 to 75 feet of riverbank, along 1,200 feet of riverfront. Until this event, erosion only occurred during fall storm events.

A New Threat: Spring Melt / High Water Riverine Erosion Event (May 18/19, 2019)



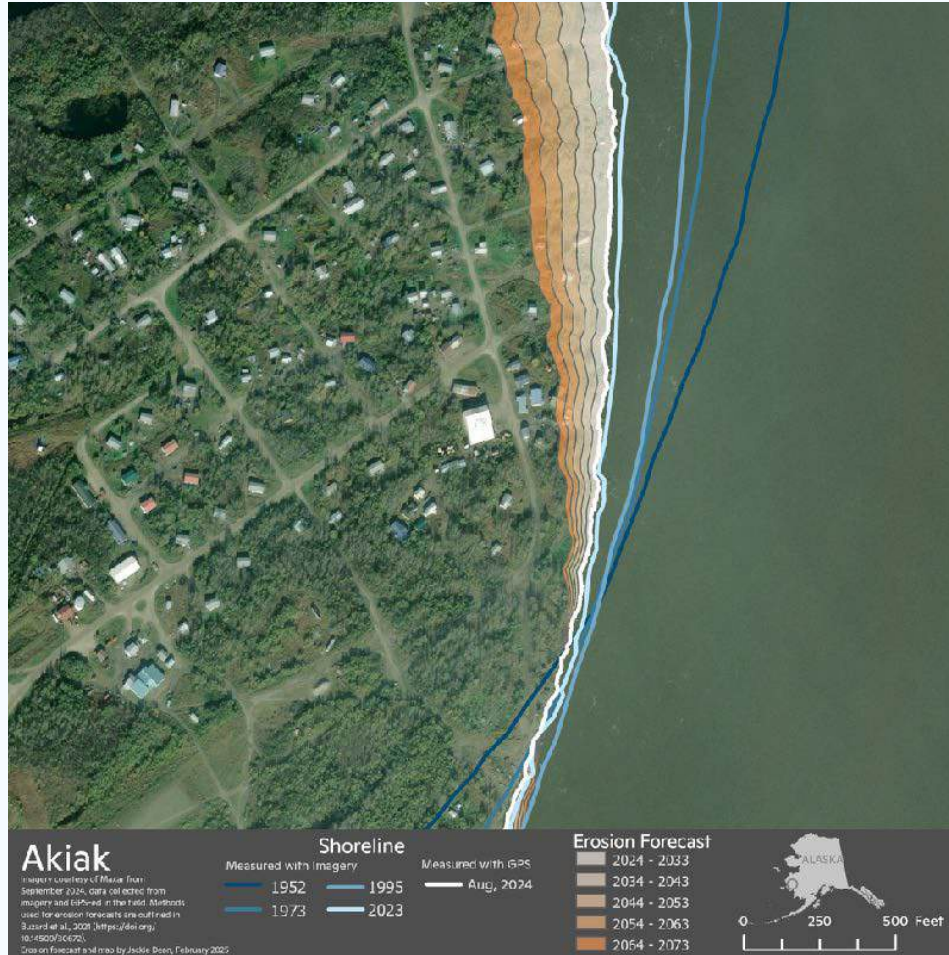
Likely Reason for Kuskokwim River Changes:

60-foot deep river channel is in front of the village



Kuskokwim River Minor Channel
Has been growing in volume.
Also direction of fall storm winds
which can cause wave erosion

Kuskokwim River Main
Channel
> 60 feet deep, less than
120 feet from shore



Two Forms of Riverine Erosion:

- Fall time storms (historically)
- Spring time erosion (recent)

Akiak Managed Retreat (From 2020 to 2026)

Relocate 8 homes, demolish 3 structures, build a 32-lot housing subdivision on safe ground, and more...



02.

**Environmental
Challenges
Faced by
Shoalwater Bay**

Background on Shoalwater Bay

- Our community is located on Washington State's Pacific Coast, on the north shore of Willapa Bay
- The reservation lies at sea-level, which makes it incredibly vulnerable to coastal erosion and sea-level rise brought on by climate change



Coastal Erosion & Tsunami Threat

»» A single tsunami could destroy the community

»» The Reservation has lost roughly 100-130 feet of coastline per year over the last century

These threats require urgent solutions:

- »»
- short-term: protect our existing community
 - long term: relocate the entire community



Short Term Solution: Protecting Tokeland Road

Immediate need

Berms protect our community from relentless coastal erosion. The one protecting our road remains in dire need of repair.

Why it matters

If the berm fails, and Tokeland Road floods, the community could be cut off from essential services.



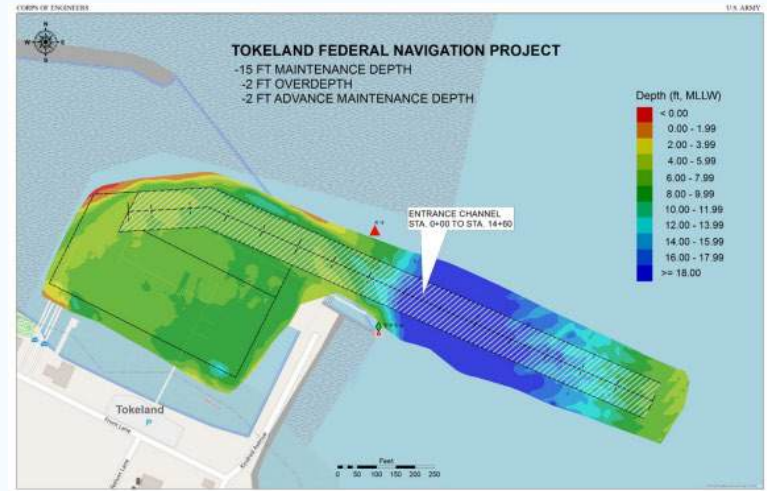
Source: Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe

Dredging the Tokeland Marina

Sediment accumulation has made parts of the marina dangerously shallow and impassable at low tide. This threatens our economic activities.

Within hours of testifying on the situation in front of Congress, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers told Tribes they would secure the dredging permit

**The Power of
advocacy!**



Source: US Army Corps of Engineers

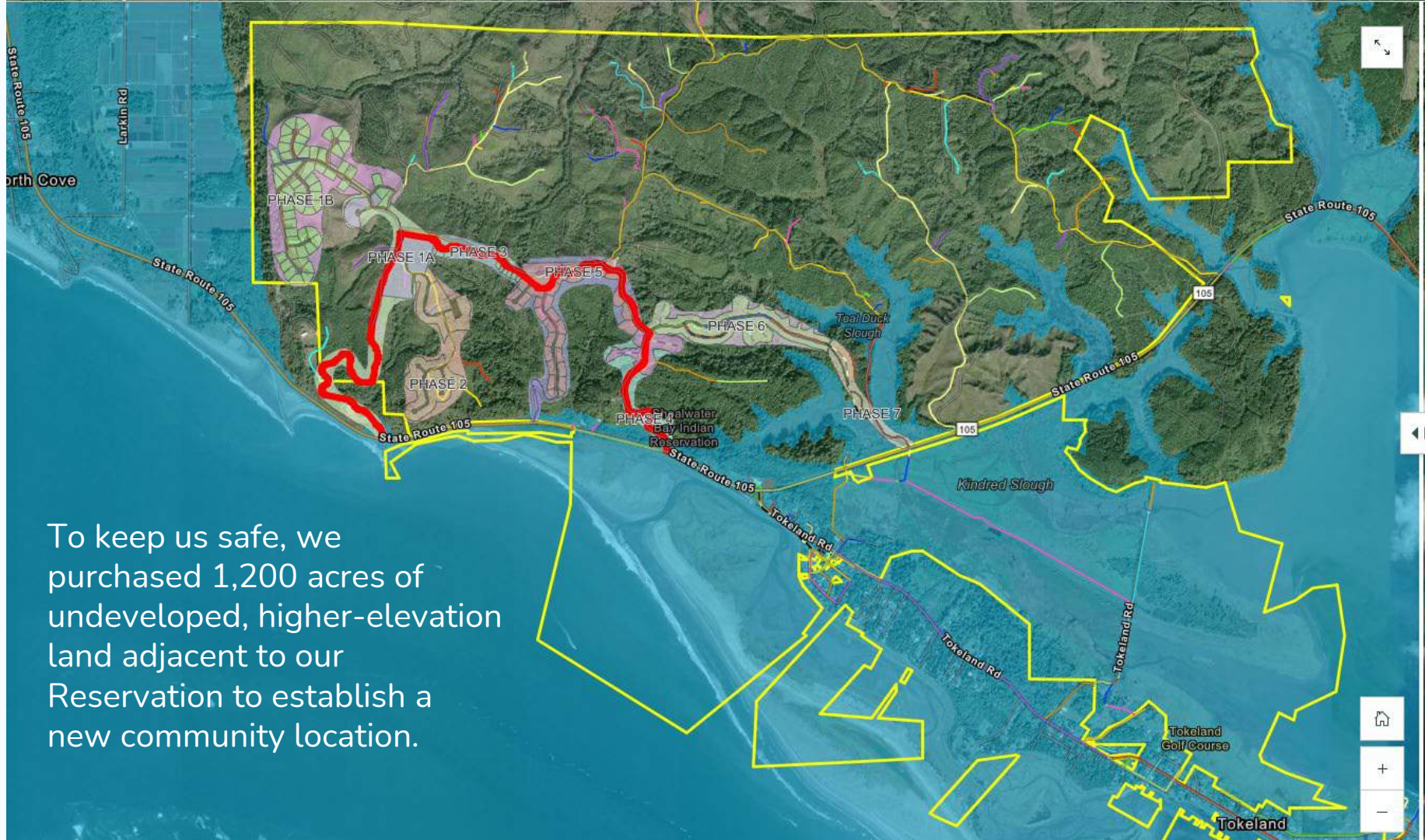


Our community and the surrounding area will soon be entirely underwater.



Our community and the surrounding area will soon be entirely underwater.

To keep us safe, we purchased 1,200 acres of undeveloped, higher-elevation land adjacent to our Reservation to establish a new community location.



Long-Term Solution: Relocation

This is a massive relocation project to move uphill.

SAFETY

TIMELINES

Aligning agencies' timing
for funding

BUREACRACY

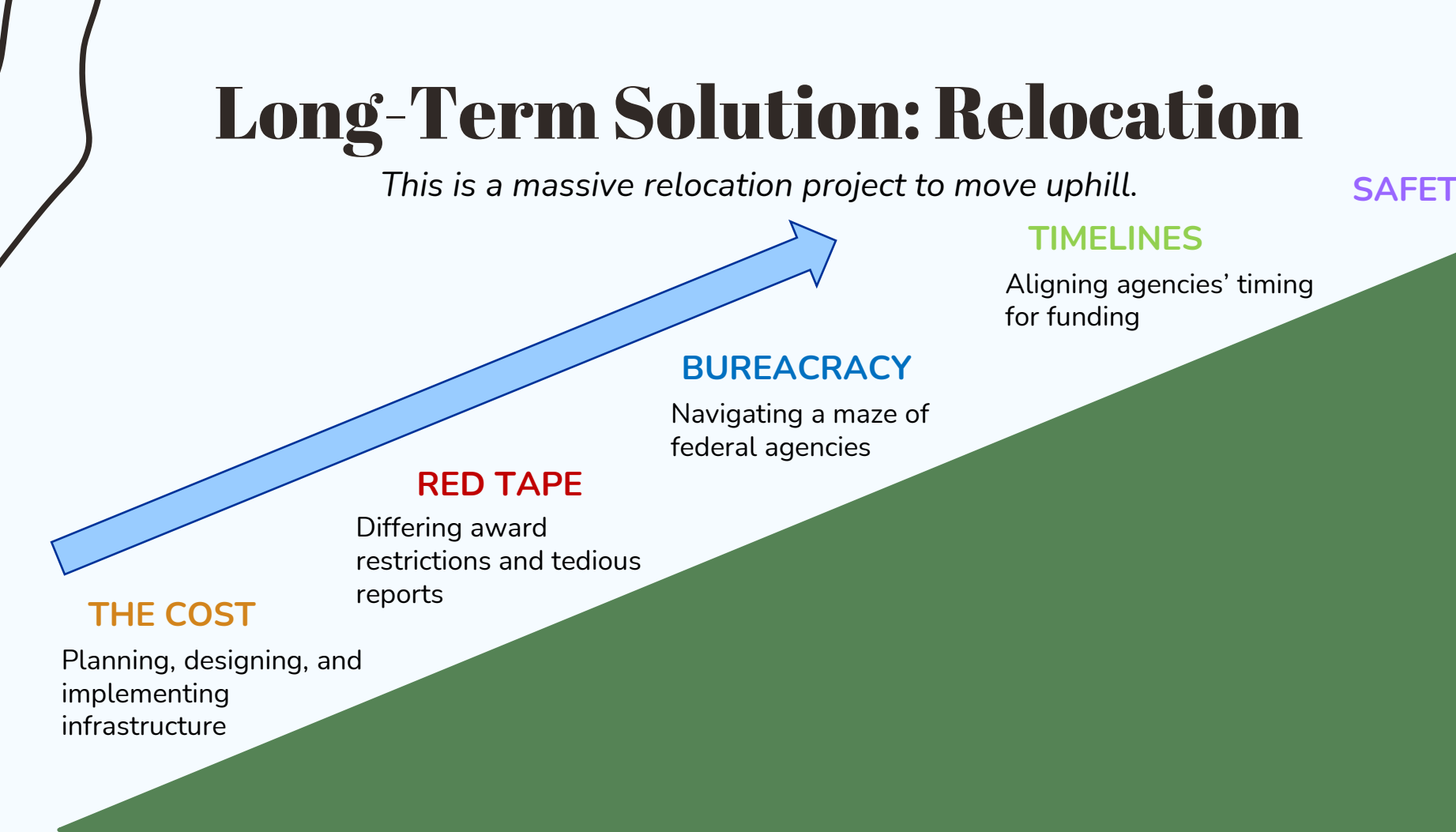
Navigating a maze of
federal agencies

RED TAPE

Differing award
restrictions and tedious
reports

THE COST

Planning, designing, and
implementing
infrastructure



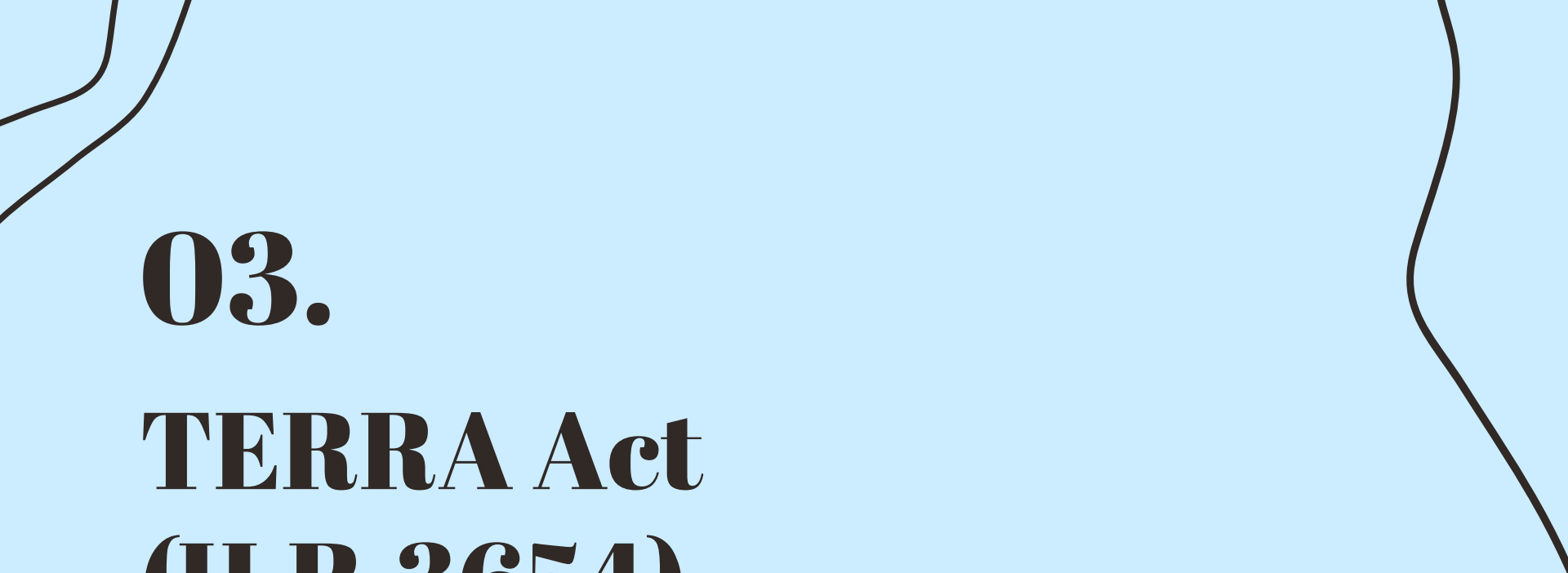
Barriers to Relocation

Without relocation, our Reservation faces the risk of destruction by a tsunami or vanishing beneath ocean waters.

We received funding from DOT for roads and HUD for housing

But HUD funding came first and DOT was delayed

We couldn't use the HUD money because roads must come before houses



03.

**TERRA Act
(H.R.3654)**

The Problems TERRA Addresses

Natural Disaster Threats &
Community Led Relocation Projects



Hurricanes/
Typhoons



Floods



Droughts



Wildfires



Severe
Storms



Tsunamis



Extreme
temperatures

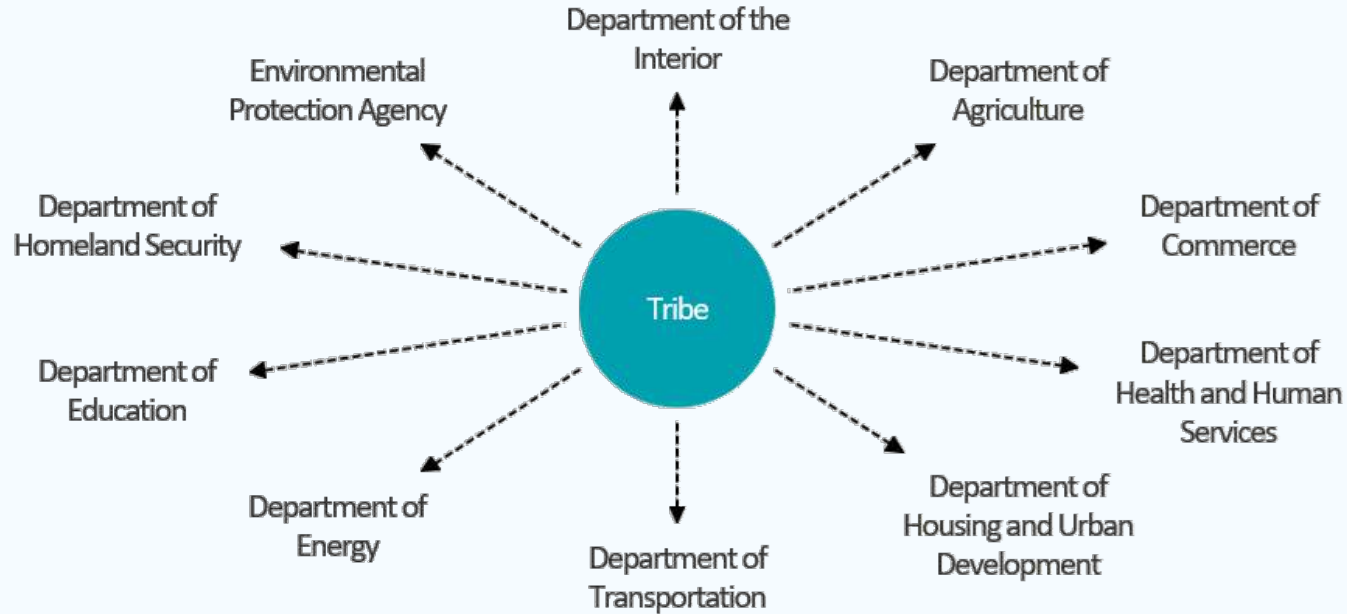


Erosion



Earthquakes

Siloed Federal Funds



Trying to Build an Emergency Evacuation Shelter?



Trying to Relocate an Entire Village to Safe Ground?



The Federal Quagmire

1

Shelter & Facilities

- FEMA
- HUD
- BIA

2

Medical & Public Health

- IHS
- ASPR
- HRSA

3

Command & Communication

- FEMA
- NTIA
- USDA

4

Search & Rescue

- DHS
- Coast Guard
- FEMA

7

Finding Safe Ground & Federal Land Exchanges

- NPS
- BLM
- FWS

5

Transportation & Evacuation

- DOT
- FAA
- FEMA

6

Infrastructure & Utilities

- EPA
- IHS
- HUD

The Federal Quagmire

1

Shelter & Food

- FEMA
- HUD
- BIA

3

Command & Control

- FEMA
- NTIA
- USDA

5

Transportation & Evacuation

- DOT
- FAA
- FEMA

6

Infrastructure & Utilities

- EPA
- IHS
- HUD

TERRA streamlines this process, allowing Tribes to work directly with one agency to find all the necessary funds: [The Department of the Interior](#).

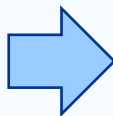
Finding Safe Ground & Federal Land Exchanges

- NPS
- BLM
- FWS

TERRA In Action

Current System

- Search across agencies
- Separate applications
- Mismatched timelines
- Duplicative reporting
- Rigid restrictions
- Delayed implementation
- How to navigate federal land exchanges



With a TERRA Plan

- DOI helps identify resources
- Coordinated applications
- Consolidated funding stream
- One annual report
- Waivers where appropriate
- Expedited reviews
- DOI can expedite federal land exchanges to Tribes.

Solution - the TERRA Act

One Annual Report

Covering all federal
funding received

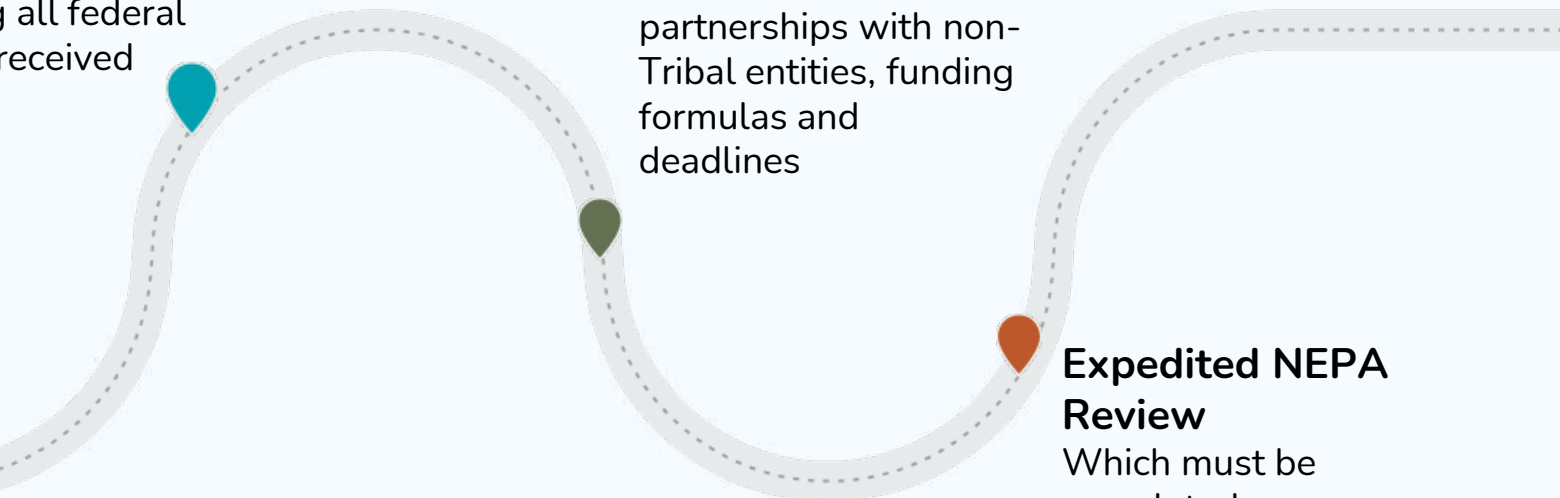
Waived Program Restrictions

Such as cost-shares,
partnerships with non-
Tribal entities, funding
formulas and
deadlines

Expedited NEPA Review

Which must be
completed on an
efficient and expedited
basis

Funding Awarded



Legislative Status and Momentum



May 29, 2025

H.R.3654
introduced in the
House



Sept. 9, 2025

House Natural
Resources
Subcommittee hearing
held



May 5-6, 2026

SCIA field hearings
on Tribal relocation,
recovery, and
resilience



Now

Continuing push for
Senate Republican co-
sponsor and broader
Tribal support

SCIA Field Hearings

In May 2026, the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs created a fresh hearing record on Tribal disaster response, recovery, resilience, and relocation.

May 5, Anchorage Roundtable

Kipnuk and Kwigillingok leaders described Typhoon Halong impacts, challenges with federal disaster response and recovery programs, and community-driven strategies for resilience and relocation. **In February 2026, 90% of the Kipnuk Tribal members voted to relocate to safe ground. In 2023, after Typhoon Merbok, Kwigillingok voted to relocate. After Halong, they still want to relocate, more than ever.**



SCIA Field Hearings

May 6, Bethel Field Hearing

Tribal leaders, regional organizations, and federal and state partners focused on improving coordination, strengthening funding pathways, and advancing Tribal self-determination in emergency preparedness and recovery.



SCIA Field Hearing Highlights

“We cannot keep responding to Arctic typhoons and other disasters with a patchwork system and expect it to work.”

- Thaddeus Tikiun, Jr. (Association of Village Council Presidents)

“It is neither efficient nor humane to repeatedly spend federal dollars rebuilding in locations that are becoming uninhabitable.”

-Andrew Guy (Calista Corporation)

“The primary challenge we see in Alaska is not a lack of commitment or effort ... but a lack of communication and coordination.”

- Natasha Singh (Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium)

“Our lands have been forever changed by these disasters... We are no longer safe there.”

- Rayna Paul (Native Village of Kipnuk)

04.

**The Fixing
Emergency
Management for
Americans
(FEMA) Act of
2025 (H.R. 4669)**

FEMA Reform

- NCAI is considering a resolution in support of **amending the FEMA Act (H.R. 4669)**, which is currently under consideration this Congress, to allow Tribal organizations, in partnership with Tribes, to better access and implement FEMA funds.
- Currently, tribal organizations can only represent a single Tribe to FEMA (or submit only one grant for one Tribe at a time). This is not how BIA, HUD and IHS operate with tribal organizations.
- This will help small Tribes in particular work together on natural disaster response.
- We ask you to support this resolution.





05.

**How Tribes
Can Advocate**

Demonstrate Broad Tribal Support and Keep Pressure on Congress!

1. Send letters of support

Use template letters to ask your delegation to cosponsor and support passage of the TERRA Act.

2. Pass a resolution

Use the template resolution to formally express support and identify the disaster threats facing your community.

3. Share examples

Tell Congress how natural disasters affect your people, lands, infrastructure, and cultural lifeways, and where federal programs have fallen short.

06.

Discussion



**What are the natural disasters
are affecting your community
now or in the near future?**



**What are the challenges
you face working with
federal agencies (FEMA,
HUD, USDA, IHS, etc.)?**



Thank you!

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