



Tribal Economic Impacts of the Farm Bill

(Excerpt from NAFOA Press Release from December 13, 2018, <https://nafoa.org/broadcasts/tribal-economic-impacts-of-the-farm-bill>)

On December 12, Congress passed the Farm Bill, a large and complex piece of legislation renewed by Congress approximately every five years that shapes federal food and agricultural policy. This iteration of the Farm Bill, which was passed after months of back and forth negotiations, contains a historic number of tribal provisions, including several that support Indian Country economic development.

The Farm Bill contains a number of provisions and programs that promote tribal agriculture and agribusiness, as well as infrastructure and economic development. While the bill supports the ability of tribes to serve as economic drivers in their regions, it also promotes much-needed food access and tribal government parity when it comes to hemp production, trade, and access to local markets.

Key tribal economic development provisions from the Farm Bill are below:

- **Hemp Production:** Legalizes industrial hemp farming and authorizes new tribal plans to self-regulate, develop, and expand hemp production; provides technical assistance to tribes in developing plans; and requires that states permit a tribe to transport hemp across a state so long as the hemp is lawfully produced under a tribal plan.
- **Refinancing Authority:** Provides refinancing authority for some Rural Development programs currently within the Substantially Underserved Trust Areas (SUTA) designation.
- **Broadband:** Provides for tribal priority, inclusion, and access to broadband programs, including the Community Connect program, to build infrastructure and economic development opportunities in Indian Country.
- **Federal Investments:** Codifies and expands Tribal Promise Zone program authority in order to bring greater focus to federal investments in tribal communities in ways that stimulate local economic development.
- **Traditional Foods in Local Markets:** Includes tribal eligibility for the Local Agriculture Market program to help tribes grow, process, and market Native foods.
- **Trade:** Provides for increased support to include tribes in international U.S. trade delegations.
- **Micro-Loans:** Authorizes and makes tribes eligible for micro-loans for local foods in food insecure areas.
- **Businesses and Infrastructure:** Creates a Tribal Technical Assistance Office within Rural Development to support tribal governments applying for programs to build businesses and infrastructure.
- **Policy:** Establishes a Tribal Advisory Council to the U.S. Department of Agriculture to advise the Secretary on tribal issues and policies.

Native American Agriculture Fund Debuts Website, Seeks Public Feedback on Priorities & Funding Activities

(Excerpt from article posted by Native Business Magazine, Dec 13, 2018, <https://www.nativebusinessmag.com/native-american-agriculture-fund-debuts-website-seeks-public-feedback-on-priorities-funding-activities/>)

The largest U.S. nonprofit serving Native American farmers and ranchers has launched its website—the first step to begin soliciting public feedback, which will inform its priorities and future funding activities. The Native American Agriculture Fund (NAAF) was established to distribute \$266 million from the landmark *Keepseagle v. Vilsack* case. NAAF plans to begin its first round of

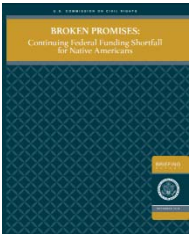
grantmaking in 2019. In accordance with the terms of the settlement agreement, NAAF must distribute its funds within a period of 20 years.

Those interested in receiving the latest news from NAAF may sign up for the organization's e-newsletter or follow NAAF on Twitter and Facebook. NAAF will also conduct a series of listening sessions beginning in 2019 within Native communities around the United States and is committed to transparent and regular communication about its grants process, financial reports, and distribution of funds.

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Releases Report:

Broken Promises: Continuing Federal Funding Shortfall for Native Americans

(Excerpt from Press Release from December 20, 2018, <https://www.usccr.gov/press/2018/12-20-PR-Broken-Promises.pdf>)



The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released its report, *Broken Promises: Continuing Federal Funding Shortfall for Native Americans*. The Commission majority found that the federal government is not meeting its trust responsibilities, and that budgets and spending of federal agencies sponsoring Native American and Native Hawaiian programs, including the Departments of Health and Human Services, Interior, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, and Education, are inadequate.

Prompted by concerns raised by Native American communities and Members of Congress, *Broken Promises* updates the 2003 report, *A Quiet Crisis: Federal Funding and Unmet Needs in Indian Country*, which similarly evaluated expenditures of federal agencies on Native American programs. *Broken Promises*, based on expert and public input, and extensive research and analysis, offers actionable recommendations to the President, Congress, and agencies to meet the federal government's trust obligations.

Chair Catherine E. Lhamon said, "The harrowing inequities documented in this report, across every issue area the Commission examined, cry out for immediate federal action to ensure Native Americans live, work, and learn with the same expectations for opportunity and equality to which all other Americans have access."

Key findings from the Commission majority include:

- Federal programs designed to support the social and economic wellbeing of Native Americans remain chronically underfunded and sometimes inefficiently structured, which leaves many basic needs in the Native American community unmet and contributes to the inequities observed in Native American communities.
- Unequal treatment of tribal governments and lack of full recognition of their sovereign status by state and federal governments, laws, and policies diminish tribal self-determination and negatively impact health, criminal justice, education, housing and economic outcomes.
- For example, Native Americans have 1.6 times the infant mortality rate of non-Hispanic whites and the life expectancy for Native peoples is 5.5 years less than the national average.
- In the areas of public safety and justice, also for example: in 2017, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) estimated it funded only 21 percent of law enforcement, 49 percent of detention center, and 3 percent of tribal court needs.
- During the last 15 years, most federal funding for Native American programs has remained stagnant; yet even when federal funding for Native American programs has increased, these levels have not kept pace with declines in real spending power.
- The federal government has failed to keep accurate, consistent, and comprehensive records of federal spending on Native American programs, making monitoring of federal spending to meet its trust responsibility difficult.

Key recommendations from the Commission majority include:

- The United States expects all nations to live up to their treaty obligations; it should live up to its own.
- Congress should honor the federal government's trust obligations and pass a spending package to fully address unmet needs, targeting the most critical needs for immediate investment. This spending package should also address the funding necessary for the buildout of unmet essential utilities and core infrastructure needs in Indian Country such as electricity, water, telecommunications, and roads.

- The federal government should provide steady, equitable, and non-discretionary funding directly to tribal nations to support the public safety, health care, education, housing, and economic development of Native tribes and people. It should also provide sufficient funding, training, tools, and resources to tribal nations to provide their citizens the opportunity to exercise self-government and self-determination.
- The Commission also reversed its previous opposition to federal recognition of Native Hawaiians. Congress should pass legislation facilitating the reorganization of a Native Hawaiian governing entity and to confirm the special political and legal relationship between the United States and such an entity.

NEWS

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❖ Indian Country

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[Native Network CEO Discusses Microsoft Partnership to Deliver Broadband to Rural Communities](#)

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❖ USET

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[Seminole Tribe loses appeal in long-running taxation dispute](#)

[Aquinnah Wampanoag Tribe aims to open casino in the summer](#)

[Mohegan Gaming Inks Partnership With Paramount Pictures](#)

[Passamaquoddy in Maine Plan Hydrogen-Powered Data Center](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

[IEDC 2019 Leadership Summit](#)

Ft. Lauderdale, FL
January 27-29, 2019

[2019 State of Native Nations](#)

Washington, DC
February 11, 2019

USET SPF Impact Week
Crystal City, VA
March 3-7, 2019

2nd Annual All Roads Lead to Chaco Conference
Kinder, Louisiana
March 13-15, 2019

The Reservation Economic Summit (RES) Las Vegas, NV March 25-28, 2019	National American Indigenous Business Leaders (AIBL) 25 th Annual Leadership Conference Beaverton, OR March 28-30, 2019
NAFOA 37th Annual Conference Portland, OR April 15-16, 2019	NCAI Mid Year Conference & Marketplace Reno, NV June 23-26, 2019

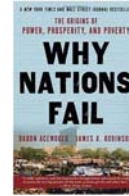


Quote of the Month

*“A journey of a thousand miles
must begin with a single step.”*

- Chinese Proverb

Book of the Month



*“Why Nations Fail: The
Origins of Power, Prosperity,
and Poverty” by Daron
Acemoglu and James A.
Robinson*