



U.S. DEPARTMENT
of **ENERGY**

Hydrocarbons and
Geothermal Energy Office



SUMMARY REPORT

FOSSIL ENERGY TRIBAL WORKING GROUP

SUMMER MEETING 2026

July 8, 2026

Virtual Meeting

**Convened with support from the United States Energy
Association (USEA)**

BACKGROUND – FOSSIL ENERGY TRIBAL WORKING GROUP

The Fossil Energy Tribal Working Group (FETWG) is a collaborative partnership between the U.S. Department of Energy's Hydrocarbons and Geothermal Energy Office (DOE-HGEO) and Tribal Leaders. Its mission is to provide Tribal perspective and strategic guidance to unleash the full potential of tribal fossil energy production; streamline coal, oil, and natural gas resource development; and assert energy sovereignty to drive reliable baseload power, strengthen grid reliability, and secure American Energy Dominance.

The Federal Government has a treaty and trust responsibility to protect Tribal sovereignty and to revitalize Tribal communities, including through economic and energy development. Ensuring Tribal access to funding and incentive opportunities requires sufficient outreach and coordination. As such, the Fossil Energy Tribal Working Group was formally established in Fall 2024 to provide a portion of this outreach and coordination. The purpose of the Tribal Working Group is two-fold:

1. Accelerate the Tribes' development of their vast energy resources and potential to contribute to American Energy Dominance
2. Empower the Tribes with fossil energy resources to gain full access to available funding and incentive opportunities.

To achieve these goals, the Working Group provides input, local knowledge, and expertise to the Federal Government on the best ways to assist Tribes' fossil energy development efforts, as well as the utilization of their natural resources.

THE FOSSIL ENERGY TRIBAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

FETWG meetings, organized with assistance from the United States Energy Association (USEA) and funding provided by the U.S. Department of Energy's Hydrocarbons and Geothermal Energy Office (DOE-HGEO), are a regular venue for dialogue with tribes on energy opportunities, options, and collaboration.

This meeting, held virtually on July 8, 2026, followed the Working Group's spring meeting in Washington, D.C. (March 17–18, 2026). It was originally planned to be hosted in person by the Crow Nation, but logistics required shifting to a virtual format to maintain momentum between in-person sessions. The Working Group's charter calls for three to four meetings per year; the group has settled on three annual meetings — spring (Washington, D.C.), summer, and fall — to manage travel costs, with at least one meeting per year in Washington, D.C. to facilitate engagement with DOE and Congressional leadership.

The meeting was convened by Co-Chairs William D. "Bill" McCabe (Navajo Nation) and Curt Coccodrilli, Acting Assistant Secretary (DOE-HGEO), who opened the session with a welcome, acknowledgements of Tribal and DOE leadership, an invocation delivered by Talee Redcorn (Osage Nation), and introductions. Both co-chairs underscored the goal of maintaining the Working Group's momentum between in-person meetings and continuing Tribal access to DOE's technical and financial resources, including the Energy Dominance Fund (EDF).

Eight tribes were represented on the call: Crow Nation; Fort Peck Assiniboine & Sioux Tribes; Hopi Tribe; Iñupiat Community of the Arctic Slope; Kiowa; Navajo Nation; Osage Nation; Southern Ute Indian Tribe; and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. Federal participants included the DOE Hydrocarbons and Geothermal Energy Office (HGEO), the DOE Office of Indian Energy (DOE-IE), DOE's Energy Dominance Financing program (EDF), and the Department of the Interior. Meeting facilitation and logistics support was provided by the United States Energy Association (USEA).

KEY ACTIONABLE ITEMS

While the meeting concluded with a commitment from Tribes to continue submitting written priority letters to DOE, the following action items emerged from the discussion:

- Tribes that have not yet submitted a written priorities letter to send it in time to be addressed by the September meeting; DOE cannot act without knowing what specific issues each tribe wants addressed.
- HGEO to finalize a mapping of answers to the pore-space and resource-rights questions raised in the three tribal letters received to date, targeted for the September meeting.
- Acting A/S Coccodrilli/HGEO to circulate the National Petroleum Council (NPC) meeting calendar.
- DOE to bring representatives from Oil & Gas, Geothermal, and NETL to the September meeting, alongside a planned "Coal Center of Excellence" highlight and a \$170 million geothermal NOFO update.
- Acting A/S Coccodrilli to introduce the Osage Nation (and other interested tribes) to EOR expert Undersecretary of Energy Kyle Haustveit.
- DOI's Indian Energy Service Center to explore reassessing historical core/mineral data for interested tribes; Ken Bellmard to have Interior's service center follow up directly with Crow Nation (CJ Stewart) on an updated minerals assessment (Crow's last dates to 1974).
- Acting A/S Coccodrilli to engage both USDA and SBA on how their financing and technical assistance programs can complement EDF/DOE resources, with a goal of actionable deliverables by September; to confirm whether the historical DOE–USDA MOU remains in effect.
- EDF to continue evaluating options to serve smaller-dollar project needs (e.g., via Native CDFIs) and a programmatic approach to Alaska Native tribal energy affordability.
- Office of Indian Energy to continue coordinating September meeting timing with FETWG to avoid conflicting with the ICEWIG in-person meeting, and to incorporate more geothermal content.
- Streamline BIA and interagency permitting processes; continue building out the Energy Service Center and additional permitting staff (dozens of related USAJobs postings now open).
- Advance the Tribal Project Finance Training Program, which has been tentatively approved with funding on the way.
- Continue work on enabling tribal resource assets (proven reserves, royalty streams) to serve as collateral for federal and private financing.
- Advance federal coordination on port development for coal exports (Oakland Terminal, Longview, and other West Coast opportunities) given continued interest from Asian markets.
- Address grid access constraints and continue produced-water reuse efforts (including a focus on removing produced water from the Permian Basin for reuse), in coordination with the Office of Electricity.
- Support CO₂ EOR feasibility studies and source identification for tribes with EOR potential, including the Osage Nation's work identifying ~100 million recoverable barrels.
- Expand DOE geothermal resource mapping on tribal lands and continue inviting geothermal presentations to future FETWG meetings.
- Watch for the announcement of a National Tribal Energy Summit ("Tribal Forum") planned for San Diego, and its potential co-location with a FETWG/ICEWIG meeting.
- Continue DOE outreach to additional tribes for potential FETWG participation, including Wind River, the Ute Indian Tribe, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, and various Pueblos.

It was agreed that the next FETWG meeting will be held in September, in Golden, CO, hosted by the Colorado School of Mines, and is expected to coincide with the Office of Indian Energy's next in-person ICEWIG meeting.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

VIRTUAL SESSION — JULY 8, 2026

The session focused on a DOE program update roundtable followed by open discussion; Tribal representatives shared the current state of their energy resources, priorities, and open questions. Discussions underscored the scale of tribal fossil and geothermal resources, structural and regulatory barriers to development, and opportunities for stronger federal-tribal collaboration.

Key Takeaways from the Discussions

- **Working Group Leadership Comments -- Bill McCabe & Curt Coccodrilli**

Co-Chair Bill McCabe (Navajo Nation) framed the purpose of the meeting as maintaining the Working Group's momentum between the March D.C. meeting and the September Denver meeting and stressed the importance of using this forum to interact directly with DOE technical and financial counterparts to maximize the value of tribal energy resources.

Co-Chair A/S Curt Coccodrilli (DOE-HGEO) reviewed the requests submitted by the three responding tribes and reported ongoing efforts to meet with the Department of the Interior, having already met with Crow Nation and NTEC. He committed that DOE will not operate in silos on tribal issues "under our watch" and positioned HGEO as a one-stop shop connecting tribes to relevant funding opportunity announcements (FOAs) and the \$20 billion EDF tribal set-aside.

A/S Coccodrilli called the July 21 National Coal Council meeting a highlight, describing the administration's coal and extraction policy as "remarkable" and citing the recent Oakland coal terminal announcement as addressing most Powder River Basin and Utah coal export needs, with continued interest in additional West Coast opportunities including Longview.

A/S Coccodrilli closed the meeting by expressing a goal of growing FETWG to include additional tribes (citing ongoing outreach to Wind River, the Ute Indian Tribe, the Muscogee Nation, and various Pueblos) and committing to a robust September meeting in Denver capable of answering the group's open questions.

- **Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs -- David Conrad & Dr. Tommy Jones**

The current \$50 million funding opportunity (NOFO) for planning or deploying small- or large-scale tribal energy projects closes July 24. A follow-on NOFO focused specifically on technical assistance is planned, and lab-based technical assistance has expanded from 1 to 8 national labs, to be rolled out over the summer.

The Office of Electricity has a separate tribal transmission FOA and microgrid FOA open, and free engineering/technical assistance remains available, including a partnership with the Department of Commerce on community law/business development.

The office's first in-person Indian Country Energy/Infrastructure Working Group meeting (ICEWIG) under the current administration was held in May in Oklahoma, focused on transmission coordination and helping member tribes connect directly with FERC. Fractionalization and the probate process were cited as continuing sources of delay for tribes.

ICEWIG's next in-person meeting is expected in September, likely the same week as the FETWG Golden meeting; the office is coordinating to avoid a scheduling conflict and plans to incorporate more geothermal content. A Tribal Energy Innovator Fellowship opportunity (DOE-funded for up to two years) remains open for tribes wanting dedicated staff support.

A National Tribal Energy Summit ("Tribal Forum") is in the planning stages, with San Diego identified as the location, offering a potential opportunity for the various tribal working groups to meet jointly.

- **Energy Dominance Financing (EDF) -- Sebastian Jano**

The \$20 billion EDF solicitation is being widened to expand exposure, including for potential acquisitions, while DOE works through concerns about program abuse (e.g., a tribe brought into a project structure for an out-of-state development) and how to define "measurable tribal benefit."

EDF is in active discussions on a range of projects, including oil & gas opportunities and a growing pipeline of data-center opportunities large enough to quickly deploy meaningful portions of the fund; tribes interested in data centers were encouraged to also engage the Office of Indian Energy given increased coordination between the two offices.

Current terms: Treasury plus 3/8, with a maximum spread of 200 basis points over Treasuries, and a 30-year maximum loan term. Compared with the Title 17 program, EDF can operate with less federal government involvement and is not subject to Davis-Bacon wage requirements. Office of Indian Energy NOFO funding can be used to cover pre-application costs for EDF financing.

EDF is working to make the \$20 billion accessible across a full range of project sizes -- for example, exploring whether financing can be "parked" with Native CDFIs to reach smaller-dollar needs -- and is exploring a programmatic approach to improving affordable energy access for Alaska Native tribes, noting this cannot be solved at the \$1–2 million project level alone.

USDA Rural Development, including the Rural Utilities Service (RUS), was flagged as a complementary funding source; a detailed DOE–USDA MOU from the first Trump administration may still be in effect and will be confirmed. Sebastian Jano advocated for aligning EDF's 30-year term with USDA's comparable 50-year term so tribes are not left comparing inconsistent terms across federal programs.

- **Coal Program Update -- Sarah Forbes, DOE Office of Coal**

Roughly \$1 billion has been invested in the existing coal fleet and related infrastructure through several funding mechanisms, spread across 31 projects, aimed at extending the life of the coal fleet and modernizing coal plants. Two awards were made for new coal plants, one reported in Alaska and one in West Virginia.

Program priorities include restoring coal as "the cornerstone of America's energy mix," stabilizing and modernizing existing mines and plants, improving efficiency, and expanding coal exports to markets including Vietnam, the Philippines, Japan, Korea, and India. NETL's Coal Center of Excellence is planned to be highlighted at the September meeting, along with continued discussion of Crow and Navajo coal interests -- identified as the tribes with the strongest current interest in coal.

- **Osage Nation -- Talee Redcorn & Paul Revard**

Roughly 96% of Osage revenue comes from conventional oil & gas. The tribe is on "the back end of the decline curve" across the reservation, with production down significantly from historical levels, though revisiting older areas is showing early success. Enhanced oil recovery has reportedly already brought production up to roughly half of current reservation barrels, and Osage is now focused heavily on CO₂-based EOR.

A study conducted roughly five years ago identified nearly 100 million barrels of EOR recovery potential from legacy oilfields on the reservation. A follow-on DOE grant, conducted with Argonne National Laboratory, studied potential CO₂ sources within a 200-mile radius and assessed CO₂ quality, capture cost, and transport infrastructure. Osage has applied for a further DOE grant to fund a pre-FEED analysis and is working to select 6–7 target oilfields.

Osage wants to move beyond its current royalty structure toward a larger revenue share via a tribally operated business model, though environmental and 25 CFR Part 226 regulations were cited as making direct operation difficult. A/S Coccodrilli offered to connect Osage with EOR expert and Undersecretary of Energy Kyle Haustveit, and Bill McCabe offered Navajo's own oil & gas operational experience to collaborate outside of DOE-led activities.

On geothermal, Osage reported having targeted a well for a DOE grant, pulling back due to seismicity issues, then securing a follow-on grant to further study the opportunity; Osage also received a DOE grid grant and is exploring geothermal energy storage.

- **Crow Nation -- CJ Stewart**

Stewart raised that coal was underdiscussed at the prior FETWG meeting's agenda and asked what would be on the September agenda for coal; co-chairs confirmed coal remains a continuing priority topic.

Crow is seeking an updated minerals assessment building on a 1974 assessment, after finding the reservation may hold roughly 100 times more oil than that historical estimate -- heavy crude, with nearby refineries built specifically to process it. Crow's prior DOI contact is no longer available; Ken Bellmard committed to having Interior's service center follow up directly with Crow Nation.

- **Southern Ute Indian Tribe -- Graham Stahnke**

Southern Ute is actively working on shale development and will serve as a joint NEPA lead on a related review, along with coalbed methane and geothermal items, and continues to work on streamlining permitting on tribal land.

The tribe signed a Tribal Energy Resource Agreement (TERA) a few months ago, taking back certain functions from the BIA, and offered to share the agreement with other interested tribes. It noted a TERA does not currently allow a tribe to assume "inherent federal functions," that this may be revisited to add functions currently held by BLM, and that the tribe has had to supplement TERA funding itself given funding sustainability challenges.

- **Iñupiat Community of the Arctic Slope (ICAS) -- Doreen Lovett**

ICAS reported on a regional tri-lateral group with neighboring corporations and tribes and on multiple trips to Washington, D.C. related to budget reconciliation. The group opposes offshore development but supports onshore development. Of the region's eight villages, only two currently have access to natural gas, with the remaining six relying on diesel.

- **Navajo Nation -- Bill McCabe**

Navajo has ongoing coal operations, though only about 1/5 of previously active sites remain engaged, and expressed interest in coal gasification and liquefaction at scale. The Greater Aneth oil field was cited at roughly 1.5 billion barrels of original oil in place, with an estimated 7–20 years of remaining production.

Navajo also holds an undeveloped helium resource (roughly 5–10% helium content) flagged as a possible near-term option to help address a Navajo funding gap driven by heavy reliance on hydrocarbon revenue. On data centers, water availability was cited as the key constraint for Navajo and other Southwest tribes, though mitigations may make projects viable.

- **Department of the Interior – Deputy Assistant Secretary Kennis Bellmard**

DAS Bellmard cited Southern Ute's TERA as an example prompting other tribes to inquire about their own TERA initiatives, and noted the current administration holds different views than prior administrations on inherent federal functions.

On Osage's Part 226 concerns, DAS Bellmard expressed strong interest in engaging further once the outcome of Osage Minerals Council elections is known. He reported active work on the tribal probate backlog aided by new software tools, Secretarial approval to open new oil & gas permitting and realty positions (with dozens of openings posted on USAJobs), and ongoing engagement with BLM on permitting tools aimed at reducing friction across oil & gas, minerals, and coal.

In addition to these topics, tribes were reminded to submit an actionable list of priorities to DOE following the meeting; only three of the invited tribes had done so as of this meeting, with the letters concentrated on pore-space and resource-rights questions. HGEO will use these lists to target follow-up assistance within its authority. It was agreed that the next FETWG meeting will be hosted by the Colorado School of Mines in Golden, CO in September, alongside continued planning for at least one annual FETWG meeting in Washington, D.C. to facilitate engagement with DOE and Congressional leadership.

MEETING AGENDA

12:00 PM– 1:00 PM | DOE Address to Tribes

- **William D. McCabe**, Co-chair, Fossil Energy Tribal Working Group (FETWG)
- **Curt Coccodrilli**, Acting Assistant Secretary, Hydrocarbon and Geothermal Energy Office (HGEO)
- **David Conrad and Dr. Thomas Jones**, Office of Indian Energy
- **Kennis Bellmard**, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Economic Development, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM | Tribal DOE Discussion

- **Open Discussion**

2:00 PM – 2:30 PM | Update on Energy Dominance Finance

- **Sebastian Jano**, Senior Investment Officer, Office of Energy Dominance Financing (EDF) Overview

3:00 PM | Adjourn