

2/17/2003

Subject: Indian energy opportunities

### **Bingaman re-introduces bipartisan Indian energy bill**

The original draft of this bill was the result of over 3 years of bipartisan efforts by the Inter-Tribal Energy Network. An outpouring of Tribal support to your respective congressional delegations would help move this important intertribal agenda. The Intertribal Council On Utility Policy has promoted the renewable energy items in this legislation as an important opportunity for American Indian Tribes to achieve sustainable homeland economic development based upon renewable energy.

The renewable energy resources of wind, solar, biomass, geothermal on tribal lands are tremendous. If developed with care for the protection of sacred sites, cultural resources and environmental justice concerns, Indian peoples can make a significant contribution to energy independence and real national homeland security, as well as reducing the global threat of global climate change through the reduction of CO2 emissions. The wind energy potential on just the Rosebud and Pine Ridge reservations alone, for example, are more than enough to meet the Kyoto emission reduction targets for all of North America!!

American Indian Tribes and Nations could produce renewable energy in the rural areas and, in partnership with cities across the country that have pledged to reduce emissions through energy efficiency and the use of renewables, Indians and urbanites could together reduce our reliance on foreign energy supplies, reduce the long term threat of global warming, and reduce the short term threats of political instability based upon this country's dependence on foreign energy.

Now that the appropriations bill has been completed for 2003, the U.S. Department of Energy is expected to announce within the next two weeks their solicitation for Tribal renewable energy grants, which in total, may have up to \$8.3 million available this year.

Please pass this on to inform your Tribal leadership of these opportunities, and encourage their support of Tribal renewable energy projects.

Bob Gough, Secretary  
Intertribal Council On Utility Policy (COUP)

**MARK THE DATES:** The Rosebud Sioux Tribe is celebrating the dedication of its first 750 kW utility scale wind turbine on April 9th with a "Kick the Tires"

Tribal wind energy workshop and April 10th with the Wind Turbine Dedication at the Rosebud Casino and Hotel complex on the Rosebud Indian Reservation, in South Dakota, near Valentine, Nebraska.

All are welcome to celebrate the beginning of the Intertribal Council On Utility Policy's 21st century Tribal economic development plan for Project WindShed: Wind energy for Sustainable Homeland Economic Development.

## **Bingaman Plan Would Boost Energy Development on Indian Lands**

Sen. Jeff Bingaman, ranking Democrat on the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee, today renewed his effort to focus more attention on developing energy resources on Indian lands by introducing a bipartisan measure meant to spur energy production in Indian Country.

Bingaman first introduced Indian energy legislation in December 2001, and it was adopted last year as part of his comprehensive energy plan. That larger bill bogged down in a House-Senate conference and never become law. But Bingaman reintroduced his bill this year because he expects the Senate to take up energy legislation in the coming months.

Energy production on tribal lands holds great promise. It is my belief that we can help meet our future energy needs by tapping into those resources. At the same time, such a move would provide new economic development opportunities in Indian Country, where jobs are scarce," Bingaman said.

To help Indian tribes tap into energy resources, Bingaman's legislation would establish a "Comprehensive Indian Energy Program" at the U.S. Department of Energy to assist tribes in developing their energy resources with grants and loans. The legislation would also cut red tape imposed by the federal government on Indian tribes that seek to lease land and rights-of-way for energy production and transmission. And it would provide incentives for the development of renewable energy on Indian lands. According to the Department of the Interior, only a quarter of the oil resources and less than a fifth of the natural gas resources on tribal lands have been developed. The Bureau of Indian Affairs estimates there are almost 90 Indian reservations with energy resource potential, including oil and gas, coal and coalbed methane, wind and geothermal.

At the same time, 14.2 percent of all Native American homes on reservations have no access to electricity, compared to just 1.4 percent of all U.S. households.

The problem is even more acute on the Navajo Reservation, where 37 percent of homes don't have electricity. In addition, Indian households spend four percent of their income on electricity, twice the average for all U.S. households; this in spite of higher rates of unemployment and poverty in Indian Country.

Senators Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-CO) and Daniel Inouye(D-HI) are co-sponsors of Bingaman's measure. The two senators lead the Senate Indian Affairs Committee.

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