



THE NATIONAL TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

In October 2022, the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) established the National Tribal Engagement Program (NTEP), which advances the bureau's commitment to fulfill its trust relationship with Federally Recognized Indian Tribes, including the responsibility to consult with Tribes on a government-to-government basis whenever BSEE plans or has actions with Tribal implications. NTEP also furthers the bureau's fulfillment of its statutory relationship with Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) Corporations and its trust relationship with the sovereign Native Hawaiian Community.

Although the areas of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) where BSEE has regulatory authority are off the coast and submerged, BSEE's OCS activities can nevertheless affect people and ecosystems landward of the OCS, including many members of Tribal Nations, Alaska Natives, and the Native Hawaiians who live near and use areas where BSEE activities are proposed and conducted.

It is important to note that the ancestors of today's Tribes and Alaska Natives lived on and exercised stewardship over vast areas of the now-submerged OCS before sea level rise at the end of the last ice age, and that bureau activities could impact connections to their ancestral lands. Those lands and waters contain cultural and natural resources of significance and value to Tribes, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, including sacred religious sites, burial sites, ancient submerged



landforms, archaeological sites, wildlife, and sources of traditional Indigenous foods and medicines. In addition, many of those lands and waters lie within areas where Tribal Nations have retained the right to hunt, fish, and observe cultural traditions pursuant to ratified treaties and agreements with the United States.

To ensure we honor Tribal, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian sovereignty and include their voices in policy deliberations and decision-making, BSEE will engage and consult with Tribes, ANCSA Corporations, and the Native Hawaiian Community prior to federal actions.

Gaining knowledge of how bureau activities may affect Indigenous traditional ways, trust resources, and self-governance is critical to BSEE's decision-making to upholding trust responsibilities.



We must ensure that Tribes have a seat at the table for every decision that impacts them and their communities. From clean energy projects and economic development to addressing past injustices against Tribal communities, the Biden-Harris administration is committed to fulfilling federal trust and treaty responsibilities to Tribal Nations and working for Indian Country.”

***— Interior Secretary
Deb Haaland***



STRENGTHENING ENGAGEMENT

Some of BSEE's recent efforts to strengthen Tribal engagement include:

- Staffing NTEP with a National Tribal Liaison Officer, Tribal Coordinator, and four Regional Tribal Liaisons.
- Developing a new bureau policy for Tribal engagement and bureau instructional memorandum for Tribal engagement for renewable energy activities.
- Holding government-to-government consultations with Tribes on BSEE rulemaking activities.
- Hosting a Director's Tribal Roundtable.

ALASKA REGION

The Alaska Region oversees more than one billion acres on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) and more than 6,000 miles of coastline -- more coastline than in the rest of the United States combined. Alaska has 227 federally recognized Native entities and 12 ANCSA regions.

The region encompasses the Arctic Ocean, the Beaufort Sea and the Northern Pacific Ocean. The primary interests for drilling activities are currently in the Arctic Ocean's Beaufort Sea and Cook Inlet, off Southcentral Alaska. Since 1980, there have been 36 wells drilled in federal waters off the Beaufort Sea offshore Alaska, including as recently as 2015.

BSEE Alaska Region responsibilities often overlap with the responsibilities and regulations of other federal and state agencies. The bureau works closely with these partners to ensure we approach this shared regulatory space in an efficient and consistent manner.

Committed to maintaining open and transparent communications, the Alaska Region regularly engages Alaska Native organizations, Tribal Governments, and communities, keeping them apprised of general offshore activities, and facilitating communication with BSEE senior leaders. These important conversations emphasize trust, respect, and shared responsibility as part of a deliberative process to promote effective collaboration and informed decision-making.



The Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, established in 2011, is a U.S. Department of the Interior agency. BSEE promotes worker safety, environmental protection and conservation of resources through regulatory oversight and enforcement of the offshore energy industry on the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf.