



GAO Review of Federal Agencies' Tribal Consultation Practices

Background

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) is a legislative branch agency that conducts nonpartisan, independent research for the U.S. Congress. GAO is currently reviewing federal agencies' tribal consultation practices at the request of former or current ranking members of the following committees, as well as 22 other minority members of the House:

Federal Agencies in GAO's Review:

U.S. Department of Agriculture

- U.S. Forest Service
- Rural Development

Department of Commerce

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- National Telecommunications and Information Administration

Department of Defense

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Department of Energy

Environmental Protection Agency

Department of Homeland Security

- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- U.S. Coast Guard

Department of Housing and Urban Development

Department of the Interior

- Bureau of Land Management
- National Park Service
- Bureau of Reclamation
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

Department of Transportation

- Federal Highways Administration
- Federal Aviation Administration
- Federal Railroad Administration
- Federal Transit Administration

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Federal Communications Commission

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

- House Committee on Natural Resources (Raúl Grijalva)
- House Subcommittee on Indian, Insular, and Alaska Native Affairs (Raul Ruiz and Norma Torres)
- Senate Committee on Indian Affairs (Tom Udall)
- Senate Budget Committee (Bernie Sanders)

GAO will issue a publicly available report to Congress with possible recommendations for federal actions. Research methods include interviews with tribes and tribal organizations to learn about their consultation experiences with the federal agencies listed to the left.

GAO Review Objectives

1. To examine the tribal consultation policies of selected federal agencies with a role in infrastructure and the mechanisms these agencies use to implement their policies; and
2. To determine what challenges, if any, tribes and selected agencies face during the tribal consultation process for infrastructure projects and the extent to which these agencies have taken steps to address any identified challenges.

Topics for Discussion

GAO is interested in obtaining perspectives from tribal officials as they relate to the above research objectives. GAO would like to hear from you regarding any of the following topics:

1. How do you define "consultation"? How do you define "meaningful consultation"?
2. What positive experiences, if any, have you had with specific federal agencies regarding infrastructure projects, and what factors may have contributed to those experiences?
3. What negative experiences, if any, have you had with specific federal agencies regarding infrastructure projects, and what factors may have contributed to those experiences?
4. What challenges or barriers, if any, has your tribe experienced in consultations with federal agencies?

Contact Us to Share Your Views: We sincerely appreciate any input that you provide to us. We will be available for one-on-one interviews during the NATHPO Conference on August 8, 9, and 10. To schedule a time to speak with us, please e-mail GAO-tribal-consultation-team@gao.gov or contact Vince Whalen, Analyst (202-512-6774); Kelsey Kennedy, Analyst (202-512-7760); or Analyst-in-Charge Swati Thomas (202-512-3723).