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## Indian and Alaska Natives Support Plan to Increase Energy Production, Job Creation, on Tribal Lands

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the Subcommittee on Indians and Alaska Native Affairs held a [legislative hearing](#) on [H.R. 3973](#), the Native American Energy Act that promotes and encourages increased energy production on tribal lands by reducing government barriers and streamlining burdensome procedures.

The Native American Energy Act addresses specific concerns from various Indian Country leaders about getting approval from the Secretary of the Interior for energy development. Unfortunately, bureaucratic and legal barriers have limited the ability of tribal governments and Alaska Native Corporations to promote job creation and economic growth by developing their own resources.

*“For too long, the Federal Government has stood in the way of Native Americans looking to develop their lands for energy production,” said Subcommittee Chairman Don Young (AK-At-large). “My bill will give America’s tribes and Alaska Natives what they are seeking—more control over their own lands and less intrusion from the Federal Government. The Native American Energy Act will reduce the number of burdensome regulations while also streamlining the process they have to go through in order to develop their lands. This is a win-win piece of legislation that will give Indian tribes and Alaska Natives exactly what they are seeking—more control over their lands in order to be more self-sufficient.”*

*“The Native American Energy Act contains common sense measures to streamline and promote Native American energy and other natural resources development. This bill is a result of intensive consultation with tribes across the country that is involved in energy exploration, development, and production,” said Rep. Paul Gosar (AZ-01). “It contains measures that tribes requested of the Committee, rooted in the principle of increasing Native Americans’ control over their lands’ resources. These tribes know best, because they must live with the status quo that is stifling their economic prosperity.”*

At the hearing, Indian and Alaska Native leaders expressed support for the Native American Energy Act.

[Wilson Groen](#), President and CEO of Navajo Nation Oil and Gas Production acknowledged the problems facing Indian Country, “as the Subcommittee knows, there is a long list of impediments to energy resource development on Indian lands.” Groen went on to explain that Navajo Nation, “fully supports the objectives of the bill, namely to eliminate or reduce

*undue Federal interference in tribal energy resource development, strengthen tribal self determination, and boost energy resource production on Indian lands... [The] "Native American Energy Act" will facilitate that growth and encourage Navajo self-determination by removing federal delays and unnecessary obstacles from the process."*

[Tara Sweeney](#), Senior Vice President of Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, thanked the Committee for, *"Recognizing that the responsible development of Indian energy resources both serves the national interest and allows Indian tribes to pursue greater economic development and self-sufficiency."* Specifically she commented that, *"the legislation strikes an appropriate balance in terms of the risks and costs of Indian energy projects by removing incentives for filing meritless challenges designed simply to delay those projects, while preserving the right to bring meritorious challenges."* Finally, Sweeney reminded the Committee that, *"our community survival depends on continued energy production from our region...without development in our region our communities will not survive."*

[The Honorable James M. "Mike" Olguin](#), Vice Chairman, Southern Ute Indian Tribal Council, reminded the Committee that, *"For decades our tribal leaders have...urged you to change existing laws so that tribes would have the legal power to use their lands as they see fit, free from the bureaucratic delays and interference..."* Olguin said that, *"The proposed Native American Energy Act is a positive step forward in our longstanding effort to level the playing field when it comes to Indian energy development..."* and, *"will help implement our longstanding goal of self determination, and we thank you for introducing it."*

[Irene C. Cuch, Chairwoman](#), Ute Tribal Business Committee of the Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation said that, *"the oil and gas permitting process is a bureaucratic maze of federal agencies, and that it takes 49 steps to obtain one permit [and] about 48 Applications for Permits to Drill (APD) are approved each year for oil and gas operations on the Reservation."* She estimated that, *"450 APDs will be needed each year as we expand operations."* and that the Indian Energy Development Offices proposed in the bill would, *"bring all of the agencies into the same room and would streamline processing."*

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