RecommendationsRecommendationsRegional Transmission Taskforce

Recommendations for Consideration for the 2026 Report

Tribal Sovereignty, Resource Protection and Economic Opportunity

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My recommendation is not that Tribes must choose between protecting their resources and pursuing economic development. Nevada should help create the conditions for Tribes to do both on their own terms. That means involving Tribes before decisions are made.

1. Establish early and adequately funded Tribal participation by establishing communication protocols from the Governor's Office of Energy to the Nevada Department of Native American Affairs. This includes inviting affected Tribes into discussions before selecting energy routes, substations, and development areas.
2. Provide funding for independent legal, engineering, environmental, cultural resources, and financial review.
3. Establish reasonable review periods for Tribal Governments.
4. Make water protection part of the transmission-enabled development decisions, such as a water impact screening process for major transmission projects, energy generation, or large load developments they intend to serve. Considerations regarding water should include:
    a. Construction, dust control, operational needs.
    b. Proposed water sources needed and analysis of how much is needed.
    c. Potential effects on groundwater, springs, wetlands, surface water, and culturally important plants.
    d. The cumulative effects on multiple resources within the same water basin or geographic area.
    e. Drought conditions and long-term water availability.
    f. Alternatives that reduce water demand.
    g. Monitoring and public involvement where appropriate, and identifying corrective action alternatives.
5. Fund Tribal cultural surveys and monitoring.
6. Identify new energy projects that will benefit Tribes.

7. Develop stop work protocols if projects will negatively impact Tribes.
8. Require restoration plans and financial assurance for decommissioning, and identify who will be responsible.
9. Development of Tribal energy workforce in collaboration with Nevada Department of Native American Affairs, the Governor's Office of Economic Development and interested Tribal Governments. Including:
    a. A directory of Tribal enterprises and qualified contractors.
    b. Opportunities in surveying, construction, environmental and cultural monitoring, restoration, security, logistics, operations and maintenance.
10. Establish an opt-in Tribal energy project readiness program that can help tribes move from an idea to an independently evaluated project; make existing programs more accessible to Tribes:
    a. Eligible assistance can include:
        i. Tribal energy and economic development planning
        ii. Resource and site assessment
        iii. Water and cultural resource screening
        iv. Interconnection feasibility
        v. Business plans and financial modeling
        vi. Independent negotiation support
        vii. Grant and financing application preparation
11. Nevada must advocate for meaningful Tribal participation in the regional planning and governance forums.

Tribes should be included in the RTCTF report to the Governor because regional transmission and energy decisions can directly affect Tribal sovereignty, lands, cultural resources, water, public safety, energy affordability, and economic development. Meaningful, early engagement will improve project planning, reduce avoidable conflict and delay, protect irreplaceable cultural and natural resources, and create opportunities for Tribes to participate in and benefit from Nevada's energy future, before routes, investments, and schedules become difficult to change.

Note: These are only recommendations; they do not constitute consent from individual Tribes.