


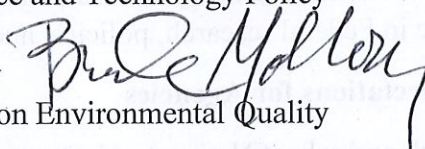


EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY
COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
WASHINGTON, D.C.



November 30, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: Arati Prabhakar, 
Assistant to the President and Director
Office of Science and Technology Policy
Brenda Mallory, 
Chair, Council on Environmental Quality

SUBJECT: Implementation of Guidance for Federal Departments and Agencies on
Indigenous Knowledge

In furtherance of the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to building a new era of Nation-to-Nation engagement with Tribes and advancing equity and opportunity for Tribal Nations and Indigenous People, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) are pleased to deliver the attached Guidance for Federal Departments and Agencies on Indigenous Knowledge (Guidance). This Guidance applies to all executive branch agencies as they carry out their responsibilities under their organic acts and enabling legislation, the National Environmental Policy Act, and other laws.

Responsive to requests from Tribal leaders for Agency guidance around Indigenous Knowledge, in November 2021, OSTP and CEQ issued a Memorandum recognizing Indigenous Knowledge as one of the many important bodies of knowledge that contributes to the scientific, technical, social, and economic advancements of the United States and to our collective understanding of the natural world. The Memorandum also committed to a process for development of this Guidance.

Founded on the understanding that multiple ways of knowing or lines of evidence can make for better-informed decision making, this Guidance is offered to support Federal departments and agencies (Agencies) in recognizing and including Indigenous Knowledge in research, policy, and other decision making. It is intended to promote and enable a government-wide effort to improve the recognition and inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge in such processes. Developed in consultation with Tribal Nations, alongside our agency partners, Indigenous communities, and

the American public, this Guidance will have an immediate impact and will foster inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge in Agency decisions well into the future.

The National Science and Technology Council Subcommittee on Indigenous Knowledge

With this Memorandum, OSTP and CEQ announce the establishment of a Subcommittee on Indigenous Knowledge (Subcommittee) under the Committee on the Environment, Natural Resources, and Sustainability of the National Science and Technology Council. The Subcommittee will be comprised of agency representatives with relevant expertise or roles that intersect with Indigenous Knowledge and serve as a community of practice to foster continued coordination and shared learning across agencies and with Tribes and Indigenous People to meaningfully implement this Guidance and identify and help to address cross-cutting agency challenges. In coordination with the White House Council on Native American Affairs, the Subcommittee will assist Agencies in implementing this Guidance and better recognizing and including Indigenous Knowledge in Federal research, policies, and decision making.

Guidance Implementation Expectations for Agencies

In addition to regular, meaningful, and robust Nation-to-Nation consultation, the U.S. Government can fulfill its trust responsibilities to Tribal Nations, recognize Tribal sovereignty and self-governance, and honor its commitment to strengthening relations with Indigenous Peoples by including Indigenous Knowledge in Federal decision making.

The Administration calls for Agencies' commitment to the goals identified in this Guidance. Agencies are encouraged to pursue and promote inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge in Federal scientific and policy decisions consistent with this Guidance, including Tribal consultation action plans developed pursuant to the Presidential Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships. In furtherance of this goal, Agencies are asked to provide the Subcommittee with a progress report within 180 days of release of this memorandum on steps taken to implement this Guidance. Agencies should submit their progress reports to ITEK@ostp.eop.gov.

In coordination with the White House Council on Native American Affairs, the Director of OSTP and Chair of CEQ will convene periodic leadership meetings of Agencies to assess and advance progress on implementation of this Guidance.

As we move forward together in the pursuit of greater recognition and inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge in Federal decision making, we thank Agencies and their dedicated public servants for their valued contributions to these vital efforts and we thank Tribal leaders, knowledge holders, and members of the public who provided input into this process. We are confident that together, we will elevate Indigenous Knowledge in Federal decision making to the collective benefit of all people and our planet.