



## Federal Investment in Energy and Environmental Infrastructure Benefit Tribes in All 50 States

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### I. Summary

The federal government has an Indian trust responsibility, a legal obligation, under which the United States “has charged itself with moral obligations of the highest responsibility and trust” toward Indian tribes (*Seminole Nation v. United States*, 1942). The federal Indian trust responsibility is a legally enforceable fiduciary obligation on the part of the United States to protect tribal treaty rights, lands, assets, and resources, as well as a duty to carry out the mandates of federal law with respect to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and villages.

In 2024, \$4 billion went to Tribes via 468 federal programs for affordable housing, active transportation, energy grid infrastructure, zero emission technologies, and repair of Indian schools. Communities across the country, in total, benefited from \$230 billion in federal investments in safe, clean, and affordable options for housing, energy, and transportation infrastructure.

Federal funding supports critical infrastructure and environmental protections, including for energy, clean drinking water, schools, transit, food security and farming, and affordable housing in communities across the nation—collectively referred to as “energy and environmental infrastructure” or “energy and environment” investment or spending in this analysis. That federal funding is delivered through grants and loans to local governments, states, Tribes, and small businesses. This research looks at spending patterns from 2010-2024<sup>1</sup> from 468 energy and environment programs, showing how federal spending is critical to Tribal, local, and state economies, and how the distribution of those funds matters. The analysis used the USA Spending database<sup>2</sup> from the US Treasury to identify federal grants to federally-recognized Tribes, Alaska Native villages, non-federally recognized Tribes, Tribal designated organizations

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<sup>1</sup> All dollar amounts are expressed in 2024 constant dollars using the GDP implicit price deflator to account for inflation. U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. 2025. “Table 1.1.7. Percent Change From Preceding Period in Prices for Gross Domestic Product”. Accessed at <https://www.bea.gov/data/prices-inflation/gdp-price-deflator>.

<sup>2</sup> USA Spending. 2024. Accessed at [https://www.usaspending.gov/explorer/budget\\_function](https://www.usaspending.gov/explorer/budget_function).

and colleges, and inter-governmental organizations that include Tribes (collectively referred to as “Tribes” in this report). The key findings<sup>3</sup> from this initial analysis include:

- The Inflation Reduction Act doubled the energy and environment funding amounts to Tribes from \$1.51 billion in 2022 (0.9% of the total) to \$3.94 billion in 2024 (1.7% of the total).
- Yet, even though the dollar amounts increased significantly, 1.7% is still proportionally less than the 2.9% of the US population identified as American Indian or or Alaska Native alone or in combination with other races in the 2020 US Census.
- Significant investment in Tribes often means important investment in surrounding rural and urban communities where Native people live.
- In 2024, 17 programs that are invested in Tribes are now identified for cuts in H.R. 1 (the One Big Beautiful Bill Act).<sup>4</sup> Those programs accounted for \$1.4 billion of 2024 spending to Tribes (or 35.4%). Not all of that funding would be cut, but a lot of it could be, especially programs given funding boosts by the Inflation Reduction Act.

On request, the same methodology presented here could be applied to each state, federal spending program, or to help answer questions about the patterns of spending over time, as well as the potential implications of changes in spending. If there are questions or requests for additional analysis, please contact Bobby Cochran at [jcochran@pdx.edu](mailto:jcochran@pdx.edu).

## **II. The federal government has made substantial investments with Tribes for clean energy, transportation, clean water, and environmental infrastructure.**

Federal energy and environmental infrastructure programs invested \$20.14 billion in Tribes across the country from 2010 to 2024, with investment amounts increasing annually from \$894.62 million in 2010 to \$3.94 billion in 2024 (see Figure 1). This may seem like a lot of money, but the federal government obligated \$9.7 trillion in 2024 in total for all types of grants.<sup>5</sup> The \$4 billion to Tribes for energy and environment represents just 0.04% of all federal grant spending obligations for that year.

Programs funded land management, transit, schools, renewable energy, affordable housing, clean drinking water, sustainable farming, and community development. Larger increases in investments in this period are tied to particular Congressional Acts, including:

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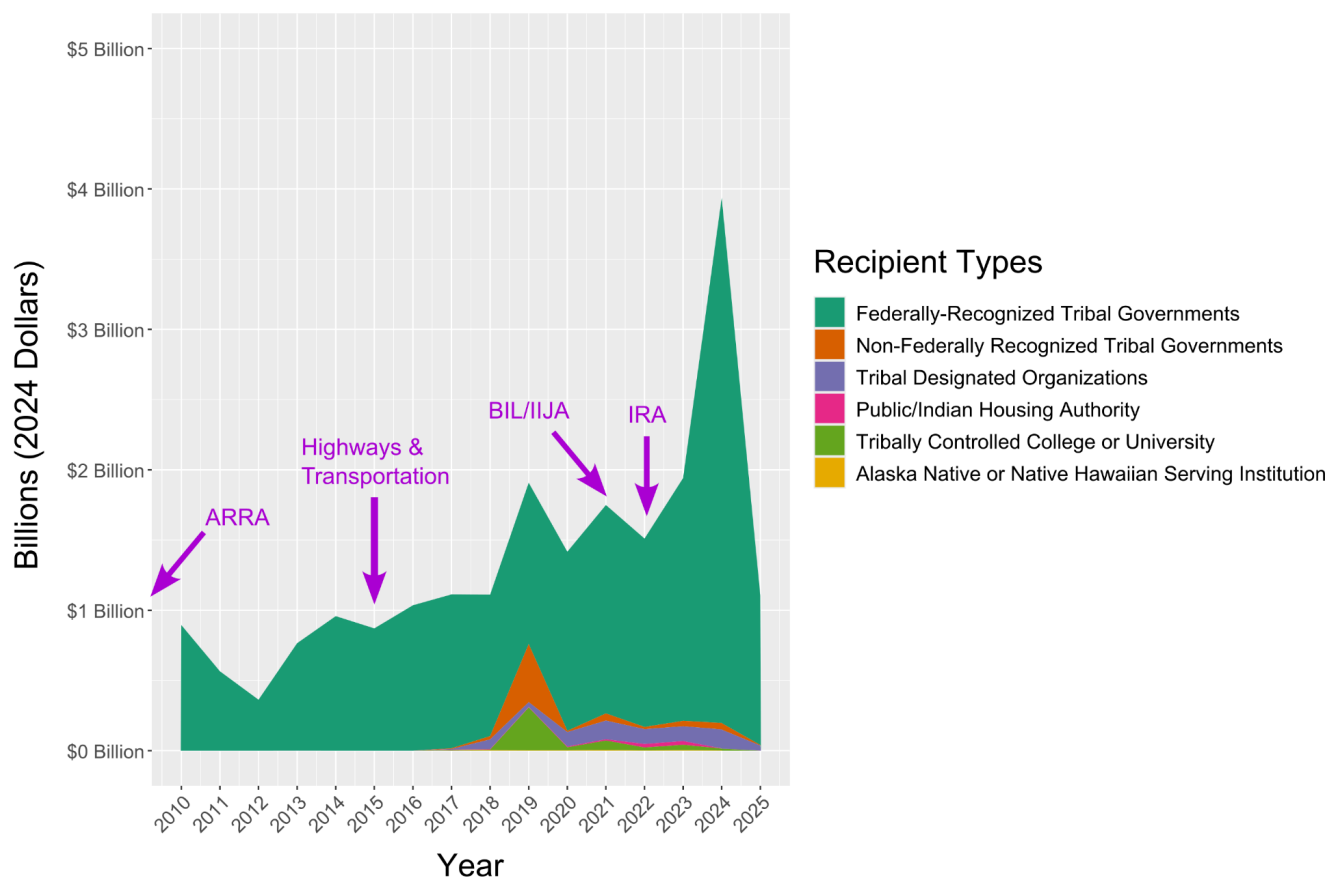
<sup>3</sup> Other analyses have looked specifically at Department of Energy investments and sourced information from news announcements. Our analysis looks only at US Treasury records of obligated funds, but across a number of federal agencies. Inconsistent findings are likely due to different methods and sources of federal spending data. We can provide our full methodology on request.

<sup>4</sup> Lea, J. (2025). What is Getting Cut? Climate Program Portal, Atlas Public Policy. Accessed at <https://climateprogramportal.org/2025/07/02/what-is-getting-cut/>.

<sup>5</sup> USA Spending. 2024.

- the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) of 2009, designed as stimulus following the 2008 housing and financial crisis<sup>6</sup>;
- the Highway and Transportation Funding Act of 2015<sup>7</sup>;
- the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (BIL/IJA)<sup>8</sup>; and
- the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA).<sup>9</sup>

**Figure 1. Federal energy and environment spending to Tribes and Tribal organizations (2010-2025)**



*Note: FY2025 is partial year data for 6 months (October 2024 to April 2025)*

The analysis presented here examined 468 federal grant and loan programs identified by agencies as important to addressing the climate crisis and ensuring the health of the American

<sup>6</sup> United States, Congress. Public Law 111-5, American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. govinfo.gov, 2009. U.S. Government Printing Office, <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/PLAW-111publ5>.

<sup>7</sup> United States, Congress. Public Law 114-21, Highway and Transportation Funding Act of 2015. govinfo.gov, 2015. U.S. Government Printing Office, <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/PLAW-114publ21>.

<sup>8</sup> United States, Congress. Public Law 117-58, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. govinfo.gov, 2021. U.S. Government Printing Office, <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/PLAW-117publ58>.

<sup>9</sup> United States, Congress. Public Law 117-169, Inflation Reduction Act. govinfo.gov, 2022. U.S. Government Printing Office, <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/PLAW-117publ169>.

people and the environment.<sup>10 11</sup> The spending data is from the US Department of Treasury's [USA Spending database](#).<sup>12</sup> USA Spending was established in response to the 2014 Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (DATA Act) to provide better visibility into federal financial data and spending. Patterns in this federal spending were investigated to understand what proportion of federal spending was obligated to Tribes and Native-led organizations.

This analysis does not identify certain patterns or explain why they exist. It is intended to support a conversation about how federal spending is critical to Tribal, local, and state economies, and how the distribution of those funds matters.

### **III. Between 2010 and 2024, \$20.14 billion was invested in energy and environment programs to Tribes. The total annual amount to Tribes increased from \$894.62 million in 2010 (0.5% of total) to \$3.93 billion in 2024 (1.7% of total).**

Some Tribes received more federal money than others. Ten Tribes received more than \$200 million over the 14 years where there was USA Spending data (see Appendix A for a list of Tribes receiving more than \$100 million). The Tribes who received the most investment included:

- The Navajo Nation (\$821 million)
- Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (\$673 million)
- Confederated Tribes of Warm Spring Reservation of Oregon (\$368 million)
- Cherokee Nation (\$342 million)

As mentioned in the summary, 17 programs that are invested in Tribes are now identified for cuts in H.R. 1. Those programs accounted for \$1.4 billion of 2024 spending to Tribes.

USA Spending has Tribal names listed in multiple variations. For example, the Navajo Nation may have received grants to Tribally-designated organizations or other entities not easily identified by their name alone. Therefore, the dollar amounts above and in Appendix A likely underestimate the total grants to each of these ten Tribes.

#### **Investment in Pacific Northwest Tribes and Alaska Native Villages**

Of the \$20.14 billion that went to Tribes nationally between 2010 and 2024, \$5.17 Billion

<sup>10</sup> Executive Order 14008. January 27, 2021. Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad. Accessed at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/02/01/2021-02177/tackling-the-climate-crisis-at-home-and-abroad>.

<sup>11</sup> Executive Order 14096. April 21, 2023. Revitalizing Our Nation's Commitment to Environmental Justice for All. Accessed at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/04/26/2023-08955/revitalizing-our-nations-commitment-to-environmental-justice-for-all>.

<sup>12</sup> USA Spending. 2024.

went to Tribes and Alaska Native Villages in:

- Oregon (\$690.76 Million)
- Washington (\$1.81 Billion)
- Idaho (\$304.56 Million), and
- Alaska (\$2.37 Billion).

Of the \$1.19 billion allocated to Northwest Tribes in FY24, more than half (\$530.64 Million) is at risk of being cut as part of budget reductions from the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

#### **IV. Departments of Interior, Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and the Environmental Protection Agency invested the most in Tribes**

Between 2010 and 2024, four agencies accounted for the majority (or 83.4%) of federal investment in Tribes (see Table 1). Interior programs, where most Tribally-focused programs sit, invested the most.

**Table 1. Investment in Tribes by Agency between FY2010-2024**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Total Spending</b>
Department of the Interior <sup>13</sup>	\$7,956,312,460
Department of Transportation	\$3,806,781,099
Department of Housing and Urban Development	\$2,732,010,321
Environmental Protection Agency	\$2,293,529,582
Department of Health and Human Services	\$957,166,069
Department of Energy	\$910,497,752
Department of Agriculture	\$905,360,168
Department of Commerce	\$386,970,151
Department of Homeland Security	\$59,060,485
Department of Labor	\$57,409,751
Corporation for National and Community Service	\$38,358,808

<sup>13</sup> The Highway Planning and Construction program funds are granted to Tribes from both Interior and Transportation (see Table 2), which is partly why Interior awards so much more than Transportation.

Denali Commission	\$26,192,850
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	\$3,216,071
National Science Foundation	\$2,549,342
Appalachian Regional Commission	\$959,397
Department of Defense	\$0

**Table 2. Programs with the most energy and environment spending (2010-2024) to Tribes**

Program	Total Spending
Highway Planning and Construction (Dept. of Transportation)	\$5,311,643,961
Indian Housing Block Grants (Dept. of Housing and Urban Development)	\$1,686,839,901
Forestry on Indian Lands (Dept. of the Interior)	\$1,047,505,848
Indian Environmental General Assistance Program (Env. Protection Agency)	\$888,556,218
Indian Community Development Block Grant Program (Dept. of Housing and Urban Development)	\$862,272,442
Low-Income Home Energy Assistance (Dept. of Health and Human Services)	\$844,674,983
Replacement and Repair of Indian Schools (Dept. of the Interior)	\$740,768,598
Bureau of Indian Affairs Facilities Operations and Maintenance (Dept. of the Interior)	\$652,131,862
Formula Grants for Rural Areas and Tribal Transit Program (Dept. of Transportation)	\$646,746,173
Federal Transit Capital Investment Grants (Dept. of Transportation)	\$592,058,946

## V. County and Congressional district-level money to Tribes

Tribal investments tended to go toward counties (see Table 3 and Figure 2) and congressional districts (see Table 4 and Figure 3) with reservations and/or Tribal headquarters, which was also correlated with higher Native American and Alaska Native populations and Tribally owned lands.

In 2024, several large grants connected to the Inflation Reduction Act significantly increased funding to Tribes in particular counties.

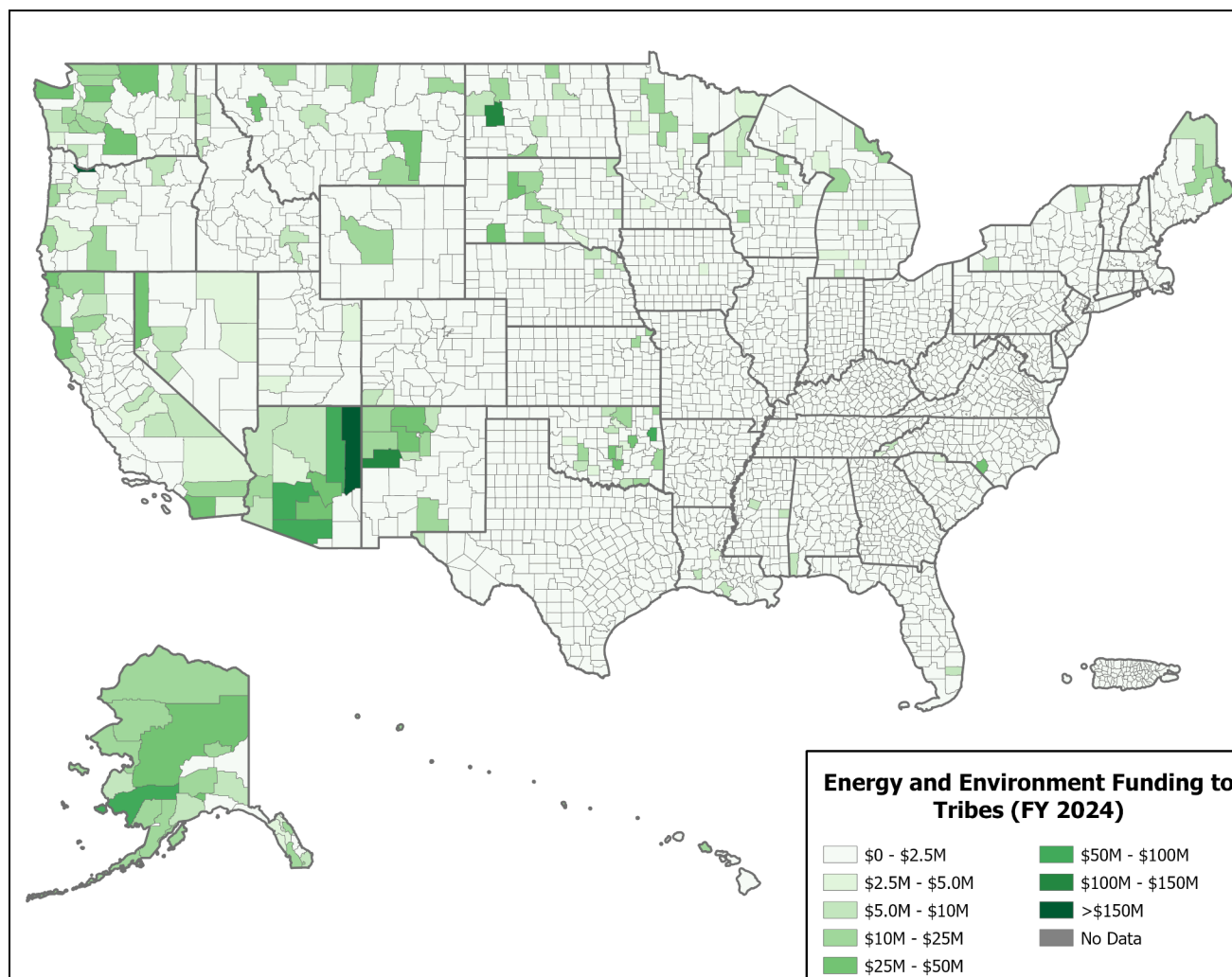
**Table 3. Counties with the most federal investment to Tribes in 2024.**

County and State	FY 24 Spending	County and State	FY 24 Spending
Multnomah County, OR <sup>14</sup>	\$250.0 million	Navajo County, AZ	\$88.3 million
Apache County, AZ	\$238.1 million	Bethel Census Area, AK	\$78.6 million
Dunn County, ND	\$135.8 million	Maricopa County, AZ	\$64.5 million
Cibola County, NM	\$101.6 million	Pima County, AZ	\$52.1 million
Cherokee County, OK	\$93.4 million	Anchorage Municipality, AK	\$48.0 million

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<sup>14</sup> Single fiscal year totals can be dominated by individual large grants. The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs received a \$250 million dollar grant in conjunction with Portland General Electric for Grid Resilience and Energy Transmission with the place of grant performance noted as Multnomah County, even though Warm Springs government headquarters is further east.

**Figure 2. Federal investment in energy and environmental infrastructure by county in 2024**

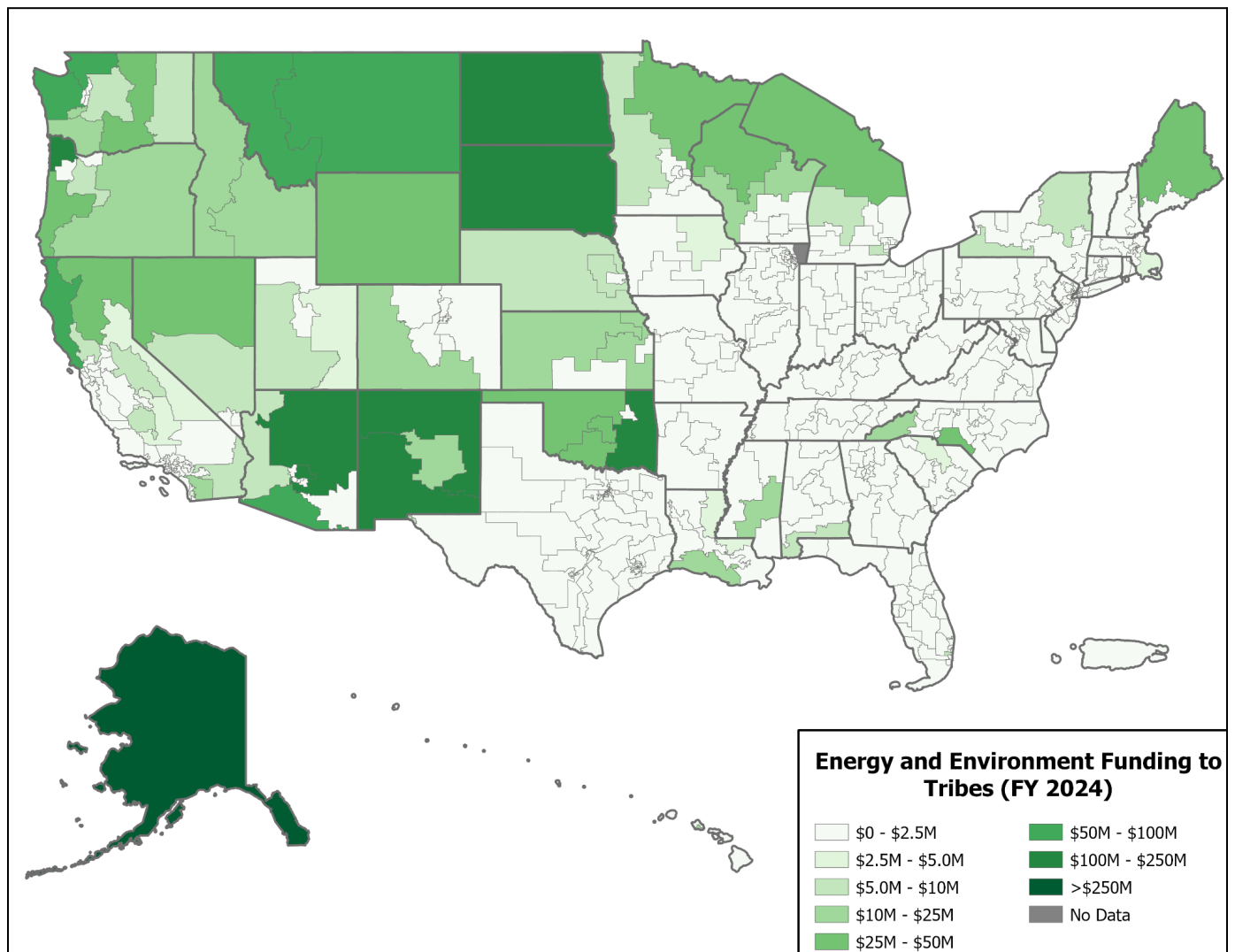


**Table 4. Congressional districts with the most total federal energy and environment investment in 2024 to Tribes**

Congressional District (Party)	FY 24 Spending	Congressional District (Party)	FY 24 Spending
1: AK-00 (R)	\$537.9 million	6: SD-00 (R)	\$169.4 million
2: OR-01 (D)	\$250.0 million	7: NM-02 (D)	\$119.2 million
3: ND-00 (R)	\$209.6 million	8: AZ-02 (R)	\$108.9 million
4: AZ-01 (R)	\$209.1 million	9: NM-03 (D)	\$108.5 million
5: OK-02 (R)	\$175.4 million	10: MT-02 (R)	\$85.5 million



**Figure 3. Total federal energy and environment investment in Tribes by congressional district in 2024**



\*Puerto Rico does not have a congressional district, but the map reflects the total FY 2024 investment for the entire territory.

## **VI. Conclusions and next steps**

This analysis demonstrates the breadth and extent of federal environment and energy spending to Tribes across the United States. Future research could investigate particular federal funding programs and how funds reach the communities who need the investment most. Future work might also inform how congressional infrastructure bills are structured, and how funding reaches local areas to meet the priorities envisioned by Congress and the federal government.

## Appendix A

Tribes, and Tribally-designated organizations, that received more than \$100 million in federal funding within FY2010-2024. USA Spending has Tribal names listed in multiple variations. For example, the Navajo Nation may have received grants to Tribally-designated organizations or other entities not easily identified by their name alone. Therefore, the dollar amounts in Appendix A likely underestimate the total grants to each of these tribes.

Recipient Name	Spending (FY2010-24)
NAVAJO NATION TRIBAL GOVERNMENT	\$ 831,282,845
CONFEDERATED SALISH & KOOTENAI TRIBES	\$ 673,240,226
CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF WARM SPRINGS RESERVATION OF OREGON	\$ 368,849,270
CHEROKEE NATION	\$ 342,569,427
CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF COLVILLE RESERVATION	\$ 260,220,703
CONFEDERATED TRIBES AND BANDS OF THE YAKAMA NATION	\$ 254,708,817
CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA	\$ 239,778,707
SAN DIEGO ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS	\$ 221,209,491
MUSCOGEE CREEK NATION	\$ 214,357,631
GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY	\$ 212,697,060
TURTLE MOUNTAIN BAND OF CHIPPEWA INDIANS	\$ 190,510,541
NAVAJO HOUSING AUTHORITY	\$ 185,744,815
THREE AFFILIATED TRIBES	\$ 180,437,830
CHICKASAW NATION	\$ 179,329,964
DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS	\$ 164,388,177
ROSEBUD SIOUX TRIBE	\$ 162,842,169
OGLALA SIOUX TRIBE OF PINE RIDGE INDIAN RESERVATION	\$ 157,443,584
NAVAJO AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS INDUSTRY	\$ 156,038,838

NAVAJO NATION TRIBAL GOVERNMENT, THE	\$ 148,476,880
NATIVE VILLAGE OF EYAK	\$ 145,635,208
WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE TRIBE	\$ 142,596,378
SAN CARLOS APACHE TRIBAL COUNCIL	\$ 140,906,888
QUAPAW NATION	\$ 140,078,785
CROW TRIBE OF INDIANS	\$ 127,926,744
ASSOCIATION OF VILLAGE COUNCIL PRESIDENTS	\$ 125,875,971
CENTRAL PUGET SOUND REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY	\$ 123,133,990
DENA NENA HENASH	\$ 119,434,649
BLACKFEET TRIBE OF THE BLACKFEET INDIAN RESERVATION	\$ 117,881,425
FORT PECK ASSINIBOINE & SIOUX TRIBES	\$ 115,191,019
HOPI TRIBE	\$ 112,429,677
UTAH TRANSIT AUTHORITY	\$ 112,000,000
NORTHWEST INDIAN FISHERIES COMMISSION	\$ 108,065,784
CHEYENNE RIVER SIOUX TRIBE	\$ 106,857,895
COLORADO RIVER INDIAN TRIBES	\$ 103,825,333
METROPOLITAN COUNCIL MINNESOTA	\$ 102,094,538
NAVAJO TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY	\$ 101,563,077
LUKACHUKAI COMMUNITY SCHOOL	\$ 101,081,385
SHOSHONE BANNOCK TRIBES	\$ 101,029,802
NEZ PERCE TRIBE	\$ 100,512,270

## Appendix B

Federal award spending by Tribal organization type (FY2010-2024). All totals are in 2024 dollars.

<b>Tribal Organization Type</b>	<b>Total 2013</b>	<b>Total 2017</b>	<b>Total 2022</b>	<b>Total 2024</b>	<b>Total (2010-24)</b>	<b>Percent (2010-24)</b>
Federally Recognized Tribes	\$765.1 million	\$1.10 billion	\$1.34 billion	\$3.74 billion	\$19.42 billion	88.1%
Non-Federally Recognized Tribes	\$0	\$5.3 million	\$15.4 million	\$46.0 million	\$1.02 billion	4.6%
Tribally-Controlled Colleges and Universities	\$0	\$4.9 million	\$21.5 million	\$14.0 million	\$785.2 million	3.6%
Tribal Designated Organizations	\$395,881	\$4.1 million	\$106.2 million	\$135.4 million	\$725.1 million	3.3%
Public/Indian Housing Authority	\$0	\$3.2 million	\$24.6 million	\$664,176	\$77.0 million	0.3%
Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions	\$0	\$272,453	\$1.5 million	\$1.7 million	\$21.6 million	0.1%