

Congressional Briefing on Climate-Forced Displacement Experienced by Indigenous Tribes

Congressional Policy Recommendations for Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change on Indigenous Communities

1. Congress should increase funding to relevant federal programs and create more programs that specifically target the needs and vulnerabilities of frontline communities facing displacement
2. Federal funds should be made more directly accessible to the Indigenous communities that need them. Congress should do this by:
 - a. Making funding for Indigenous communities more flexible and not requiring federal recognition
 - b. Prioritizing resources for BIPOC communities with 501(c)(3) organizations that are planning for adaptation and climate resilience
 - c. Designating funds for Indigenous adaptation and relocation
3. Congress should amend the Stafford Act:
 - a. The act does not adequately take into consideration slow, ongoing climate-induced environmental changes, such as sea-level rise and permafrost thaw, as major disasters, although they are some of the key drivers of environmental change, causing flooding and forcing many frontline communities to consider relocation
 - b. Sea level rise, permafrost melt, and other types of slow, ongoing climate change events should be able to receive Presidential Disaster Declarations. This would require FEMA to respond effectively to communities facing these disasters
 - c. Address racial disparities with respect to FEMA funding
4. Congress and the executive should work with community-led coalitions, organizations, and groups to establish a multidisciplinary, multijurisdictional working group to guide the federal government in developing the institutional capability required to assist communities.
5. Congress should create a new cabinet-level position focused on climate-induced resettlement, drawing on the historical experience of the former U.S. Resettlement Administration.
6. Congress should support policies addressing global damage and loss at COP27.