Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today announced that the Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development has awarded $3.7 million to tribes that are developing renewable energy resources for their communities. Access to these resources will allow these communities to develop jobs and additional economic opportunities on their reservations, while decreasing their reliance on fossil fuels.

“This President has made the development of renewable energy in America one of his highest priorities,” Salazar said. “Many tribes are in a unique position to benefit greatly from a variety of renewable energy sources and the Department is committed to helping these communities to achieve this goal.”

The Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development, in partnership with the Office of Trust Services in the Bureau of Indian Affairs, has identified 13 tribes that have significant potential for quickly developing biomass, geothermal, or hydroelectric energy on their reservations. The tribes, resources and award amounts are listed in the attached table.

Salazar noted that tribal communities have shown exceptional interest in renewable energy development.

“This attests to the tribes’ desire to use their available energy resources for the benefit of its members,” he said. “It also indicates the willingness of tribes to help America reduce our dependence on foreign energy resources through domestic production.”

In addition to gaining access to the energy itself, all of these projects would also provide job opportunities for reservation residents. “The Department’s Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development is working hand-in-hand with tribes to provide technical assistance for energy, mineral, and economic development on reservations,” said Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Larry EchoHawk. “The Office is using innovative and collaborative approaches to improve economic opportunities for the tribes, including renewable energy development, and to help promote new jobs, new businesses, and new capital on tribal lands.”

The proposed projects were identified by the individual tribes, which developed comprehensive proposals that were evaluated by the Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development under a competitive process. The Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development is in the Office of the Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs. Its mission is to foster stronger American Indian and Alaska Native communities by helping federally recognized tribes with employment and workforce training programs; helping tribes develop their renewable and non-renewable energy and mineral resources; and increasing access to capital for tribal and individual American Indian- and Alaska Native-owned businesses. For more information about IEED programs and services, visit http://www.indianaffairs.gov/IEED.

Renewable Energy Projects and Funding Received

Geothermal (6)

- Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California - $350,000
- Benton Paiute Tribe - $350,000 • Cedarville Rancheria - $300,000
- Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe - $350,000
- Rosebud Sioux Tribe - $150,000
- Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe - $750,000

Biomass (4)

- Colville Confederated Tribes - $200,000
- Fond du Lac Reservation - $250,000
- Oneida Nation - $250,000
- Ho-Chunk Nation - $150,000

Hydroelectric (3)

- Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) of the Flathead Reservation - $260,000
- Cherokee Nation - $150,000
- Crow Tribe - Apsáalooke Nation - $200,000
