Economic Development Subcommittee Report to the Full TIBC Body

Meeting held November 18, 2026

Executive Summary

The Economic Development Subcommittee identified policy, financing, technical-assistance, and project-development barriers affecting economic activity in Indian Country. The subcommittee recommends gathering direct input from tribes, expanding practical business support, improving access to capital and federal programs, and examining regulatory processes that delay development. The following items are presented for discussion, direction, and follow-up by the full TIBC body.

Priority Items for Report-Out

1. Tribal Survey and Needs Assessment

Finalize the economic development survey, distribute it first to TIBC members and then to all tribes, and use the responses to identify regional technical-assistance and resource needs. Proposed additions include business-plan assistance, financial education and planning, family tax preparation, workforce training, lender and investor education on Tribal law, and broader coverage of agriculture-related sectors such as fisheries and timber.

2. Business Development and Access to Capital

- Engage Community Development Financial Institutions and Native CDFIs to provide technical assistance and improve access to capital.
- Identify funding to help Tribal entrepreneurs prepare viable business plans and financing packages.
- Assess incubator funding opportunities and report findings at the next meeting.
- Explore renewed grant support for Tribal Uniform Commercial Code development, secured-transactions systems, and recording capacity.
- Continue engagement on the Access to Capital Clearinghouse for Native American Affairs.

3. Federal Programs, Funding, and Outreach

- Clarify the status and availability of Native Act economic development and tourism funding, including eligibility and award pathways.
- Identify available Tribal and Native Hawaiian technical-assistance programs.
- Develop a coordinated marketing and outreach approach for Office of Indian Economic Development programs, application processes, and Bureau of Indian Affairs points of contact.
- Prepare and distribute a BIA project-development checklist.

4. Regulatory and Project-Development Barriers

- Review options to streamline the fee-to-trust process so that it supports, rather than delays, business development.
- Examine state and local taxation burdens, including reported double or triple taxation, and identify potential legislative or administrative responses.
- Clarify Tribal Historic Preservation Officer due-diligence requirements before ground is broken on new projects.
- Consider whether the Indian Trader regulatory framework should be updated.
- Evaluate the viability of connecting economic development initiatives with essential services, including healthcare.

5. Governance and Consumer Protection

- Address TIBC vacancies formally at the March meeting.
- Develop and distribute a resource identifying predatory businesses and common scams targeting tribes and Tribal members.

Requested Direction and Next Steps

1. Approve distribution of the revised survey to TIBC members and tribes.
2. Confirm priority topics for technical assistance and assign leads for outreach to CDFIs, OIED, BIA, and other relevant partners.
3. Request updates on Native Act funding, incubator funding, UCC assistance, and available technical-assistance programs.
4. Direct further review of fee-to-trust delays, taxation barriers, project due diligence, and relevant federal regulations.
5. Schedule progress reports for the next TIBC meeting and formal action on vacancies for the March meeting.

Overall objective: Establish a coordinated, tribe-informed work plan that improves access to capital, practical technical assistance, federal resources, and more efficient development processes across Indian Country.