

**National Telecommunication and Information Administration
Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth
Tribal Connectivity and Nation to Nation Coordination Division**

IJA TBCP Tribal Consultation

Moderator: Adam Geisler

January 14, 2022

Carole Garner

0:10

Hello, everyone, and welcome. Before we begin, we did want to let you know that due to the format of our webinar, we have a very short portion of the program that you will not be able to hear if you're on a phone dial-in audio. This is our welcome from Secretary Raimondo and it lasts approximately three minutes. So, if you're not able to hear during that time, rest assured it is because it is recorded content, and the rest of the program is live. Thank you so much, and we'll begin.

Adam Geisler

0:54

All right. Well, thank you, Carole, for that. Miiyuyum (hello) my name is Adam Geisler.

1:00

Good morning or good afternoon, no matter where you reside here in our great country, and I want to welcome you. My name is Adam Geisler. I'm an enrolled member and citizen of the La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians and have recently taken on a new role here at NTIA as the division chief, the Division of Tribal Connectivity and Nation-to-Nation coordination within the Office of Connectivity and Growth here at NTIA.

1:26

Before we get started, I did want to just spend a moment to quickly cover the agenda for today and highlight that today's consultation session is meant to engage tribal leaders in a government to government dialogue and get your thoughts, meaning you, tribal leaders, on how we should proceed with additional funding made available through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which has also been referred to as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law or the bill.

1:56

The advent of the IJA, excuse me. So today we will be covering welcoming remarks and an invocation followed by the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program application round one update. We will then jump into a quick topic on encouraging tribes to apply for all broadband funding. Followed by an overview of the amendments that are part of the IJA new legislation, excuse me, little tongue tied there. And the amendments that have now been part of the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program. And then lastly, we're going to jump into the meat of the conversation here today, which is the tribal leader consultation on the additional money for the IJA.

2:44

The advent of the IJJA, or the bill, is a historic investment that is made that has many moving parts, which will work towards addressing the needs of unserved communities across the country, including tribal nations. And I can confidently say that at all levels within the US Department of Commerce, we are focused and working hard to meet this historic moment and opportunity.

3:08

The Department of Commerce takes interactions with tribal nations seriously, especially when the programs that we're administering have a direct impact to tribal nations in their communities, including from the very top with our own Secretary of Commerce Raimondo.

3:25

Secretary Raimondo has, from the very beginning of her time here at Commerce, placed a great deal of importance and value on both listening and formally consulting with tribal nations on the digital divide issues facing so many of our tribal nations today. And has been highlighted through the impacts of the Covid 19 pandemic.

3:48

Many of you have had the opportunity to meet and share your stories with Secretary Raimondo, as well as the needs and experiences that you have been having firsthand. As well as meeting with her in a first person basis and providing your comments to her.

4:04

I can promise that her commitment to tribal nations and ensuring meaningful investment is a continued focal point as we look to solve the digital divide in tribal nations. It is my distinct honor and pleasure to introduce Secretary of Commerce Raimondo to provide opening remarks as we kick off today's consultation. Secretary Raimondo.

Gina Raimondo, Secretary
of Commerce

4:40

Welcome to the tribal leaders who are joining us today, and thank you for participating in today's consultation, and for your ongoing work to close the digital divide. Today, we're eager to hear from you, and we'll fully consider your recommendations as we proceed.

4:55

As a Commerce Secretary, I'd like to acknowledge that the Department recognizes and supports tribal sovereignty and self-determination. Ensuring that federal funding reaches all communities, especially underserved communities, is something that I'm passionate about. Last year, I stood alongside Vice President Harris and Interior Secretary Haaland to announce the launch of the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program. Since that time, Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration, NTIA, has received more than 280 applications for the program, representing nearly three quarters of Indian country's tribal governments.

5:41

We're incredibly encouraged by the response, and we recognize that it demonstrates the huge need for expanded connectivity on tribal lands. We all know that universal, affordable broadband is necessary for education, for healthcare and for jobs. NTIA has made an initial five awards totaling two point four million dollars. We're working as quickly as we can to process further awards on a rolling basis over the next few months. The bipartisan infrastructure law includes an additional \$2 billion for the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program, tripling the total available funding. We have an incredible opportunity, right now to leverage that additional funding, as we continue with the current round of applications.

6:33

How we proceed is an important decision, which is why the Commerce Department and NTIA is hosting this tribal consultation today. We want to hear your thoughts, your hopes, your concerns, and we so appreciate your time and your thoughtful input. Our goal is to serve as many tribal nations as possible with the funds that we have.

6:57

I also want to strongly encourage you to continue applying for other federal resources and programs, while you're awaiting responses from the NTIA, the Commerce Department's Economic Development Administration, Treasury Department, and the USDA all have funding available that could potentially benefit your tribes. You may also be able to leverage other forms of funding in the infrastructure law as the country sets out to build a better America.

7:28

Together, we can bring broadband access, economic growth and opportunity to all of Indian country. A healthy and successful Indian country and economy is at the heart of a prosperous American economy. With that, I'll turn it over to Adam.

7:59

Adam Geisler

All right. Well, thank you so much for your opening remarks, Secretary Raimondo, and we really appreciate you spending the time to be here with us today, and kicking us off in a good way. And along those lines, we all know it's important as we engage in tribal consultation, that we do start things off in a good way and today, I am also honored to have with us, Chairman Tilford Denver, who is the chairman of the Bishop Paiute Tribe.

8:30

And I want to recognize Chairman Denver as a leader, who has been actively engaged in addressing the digital divide for people and for his people, and made himself continually available to both share the continued needs and addressing the digital divide, and also modeling creative solutions for tribes to consider, as tribes' embark on addressing the digital divide challenges that so many are facing today. It is our honor, and it is my honor to have you today, Mr. Chairman Denver, and now I will turn it over to you for your opening, prayer and invocation Chairman Denver.

Tilford P. Denver,
Chairman-Bishop
Paiute Tribe

9:13

(Paiute Language for hello) and good morning, everyone. Again, thank you, Adam, for giving me the honor to provide a blessing for this consultation. It's been a very hard two years for a lot of our people. I'd also like to thank all those tribal leaders out there. Moving through the difficult times that we've had continue to fight for your people. Again, thank you. On behalf of the Bishop Tribal Council and the people of my nation, Bishop Paiute Tribe I will offer a blessing to get us going today.

9:49

(Paiute language for hello) grandfathers again we thank you for all those things to provide us in life. Thank you for giving us another day on Earth. Special prayer at those time, grandfathers, for all those that had been affected by the Omicron virus. Bless those who have recently lost their loved ones, be with those who are currently sick with this disease that you help them get through it in a good way. As always, grandfathers, we asked special care for our elders, children, veterans, continue to watch over them. And, again, please let us have a good meeting to today together grandfather. That we have good thoughts and a good heart to work in good ways with each other to move important issues, such as the broadband out to our communities. Again, as always, we thank you for all those things you provide us in life. And, again, please continue to help us, as tribal leaders, to move forward of good ways, to bring good things to our nations. As always grandfathers (Paiute language for closure of prayer)

11:03

Adam Geisler

Thank You, Chairman, for making yourself available today and for kicking us off in a good way.

11:09

Really appreciate those opening thoughts and prayers and for joining us and thank you to the Bishop Paiute people and Council. All right. Well, with that, Carole, we'll go ahead and get onto the next slide if we could. We will now cover an update on the TBCP program, the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program. As I know, many of you have had many questions and understandable concerns about the program, in particular, as I'm very well aware of the timing. So, let's begin. It's also important to take into consideration, that as we move our way through this update, it will be an important focal point for consideration as we get to the bulk of the questions of the consultation a little bit later on.

11:55

So next slide, please. All right. So, uh, a little bit of the backdrop here. The current TBCP applications that are under review is what we're going to be talking about here, in terms of the update. So many of you are likely aware that we have been oversubscribed with this program, and in particular, NTIA has actually received at this point over 301 applications, totaling over 424 proposed projects. And, again, I want to make that important distinction, that there are many of you that applied for both aspects of the tribal broadband connectivity program, whether it be infrastructure or the broadband use and adoption elements within the NOFO.

12:43

In addition to that, when we actually have started to move our way through these applications, what we have found is that the applications represent 452 tribal governments totaling nearly 75% of the tribal governments within the lower 48, Alaska and, yes, including Hawaii as well. That is an amazingly overwhelming response to a program which only continues to demonstrate the ongoing need that is out there as tribes are trying to address this digital divide issue in each of your own unique ways. With that, the applications that we receive totaled over five point eight billion dollars in ask and that's an important thing to keep in mind is that means we are six times oversubscribed. Again, demonstrating the ongoing need that tribes are facing as a as a work to address the digital divide.

13:40

That obviously means that we don't have all the funds to address the challenges that all of you are facing and that have applied for this program, as currently, we have \$980 million. And what we're going to be talking about a little bit later is the additional \$2 billion from the IIJA. Again, six times oversubscribed. Additionally, I know that there have been some concerns about the timing, and we, here at NTIA and amongst the tribal broadband connectivity program team, understand the frustration that many of you may have at this time. But, I also wanted to just spend this time to again, emphasize that there's an enormous amount of work that our team is taking on, including an extensive review process for all 424 projects and the curing associated with each of those applications, especially as we move them forward for consideration for funding.

14:38

The last aspect that I did want to point out as well, is that, in order for applications to continue moving through the review process, and again, I will say, we had an initial review, a merit review, and a programmatic review, were applications to come out of the merit review process. Those applications needed to score at least 70 points to move on to the programmatic review process and for consideration for funding. And I will say, we do have some applications that did not achieve the 70-point threshold to move forward for consideration for funding. So with that, we'll move on to the next slide.

15:20

All right, so the other thing that we wanted to talk about is, along the lines of the amount of work that it is that everybody is putting into this process, whether you are an applicant, or you're here on the Federal side now making our way through, um, the applications that we have been receiving. We want to encourage all of you to continue to apply for all broadband funding that is out there. I have heard some feedback and comments that some folks are waiting to hear from us to see if they're going to apply for other funding opportunities that are out there and from the team here at NTIA, from the team here within Commerce, you even heard our secretary saying a moment ago, please, we encourage you apply for everything that is out there that seems to meet the needs of your community.

16:11

There is the USDA Reconnect Program that is out there. There is treasury funds through the Capital Project Fund. There is also EDA dollars with a window closing here coming up in the March timeframe. So again, as we continue to make our way through the applications, and continue to make awards between now and the spring of 2022, please do not stop in applying for other funding that is out there. I guess the last point that I'll make here is we are six times oversubscribed and even with the addition of the dollars from the IIJA, we still will not have enough money to meet all the needs. So, please, please, please, continue to apply for the other funding opportunities that are out there.

17:01

Next slide, please. All right, so uh, as you are all well aware the IIJA, or the bipartisan infrastructure law is another name that you'll hear used to refer to it, we did want to spend a moment to give an overview about some of the amendments that were included in the new legislation. Next slide, please.

17:31

So uh, I guess one of the things that I do want to say before we start working our way through this slide is that, a number of you raised in our first consultation, a lot of unique challenges that you saw when reviewing our initial appropriation in law. And I guess I wanted to just share that, I'm excited to share with you, that the new legislation from the bill has fixed a lot of the challenges that many of you have faced. So let us talk a little bit about some of those changes.

18:08

The official name is still the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Technical Amendments, right? So, when you look at the IIJA, or the bill, you will notice that, that is the official name of this additional funding. The funding pool is an additional \$2 billion to the tribal broadband program, and the type of program continues to be grants to eligible entities with approved applications.

18:35

With regards to the project objective, providing new funds and extending expenditure deadlines for the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program established by the consolidated, excuse me, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021.

18:52

So, a couple of the key amendments. There is an additional \$2 billion, which is going to be the focal point of our conversation here today for NTIA to distribute to eligible entities including to fund previously proposed programs. Two, uh, we heard, we heard you loud and clear, and it looks like Congress did as well, there is a relaxing of the time requirements from the original program. Eligible entities now have up to six months to submit an application when we open up an additional window. As many of you recall, the initial window was far shorter than that. I think all of us were working our way through a 90-day window. In addition to that six-month grant application window, there's now 18 months to commit funds to projects once funds are received.

19:42

Another key component of the amendment is four years to fully expend grant funds, once funds are received. And I think that that is another exciting aspect that we are all happy to share today. As a number of you raised concerns in previous consultations about some of the constraints that were previously on the program. And so, I'm happy to share with you, we're no longer looking at one-year timeframes. We are happily now looking at four-year timeframes when we're, especially when we're talking about the infrastructure aspects.

20:15

The third element, allowing infrastructure grantees to expend up to 2.5% of the total project costs for related planning, feasibility, and sustainability studies. And as you recall, there was an amount that was less than favorable prior to this amendment.

20:33

Four: Preserving unused allocated funds for other tribal broadband projects instead of reverting back to treasury. And while that is an important amendment, I think between our conversations that we're going to be having today, hopefully we're not going to be in this position, and that we will get all of these funds out in a meaningful way to meet the needs of Indian country and tribal nations.

20:59

All right, so we'll continue to move on, and onto the next slide. And the next slide, we're going to talk about the things that really didn't change. So, no new restrictions have been imposed on eligible entities or uses.

21:12

So, as many of you recall, eligible entities continue to be tribal governments, tribal colleges and universities, the Department of Hawaiian Homeland on behalf of the Native American community, Native Hawaiian community, including Native Hawaiian education programs, tribal organizations, and native corporations.

21:31

And, as we have seen before, the eligible uses continue to be as outlined in prior legislation- broadband infrastructure deployment including support for the establishment of carrier neutral submarine cable landing stations, affordable broadband programs including providing free or reduced cost broadband service, as well as preventing disconnection of existing broadband service, distance learning, telehealth, digital inclusion efforts, broadband adoption activities and one thing I guess I do want to continue to highlight, it probably isn't a point of excitement for anybody, but it's it is still there, is eligible entities can use no more than 2% of the funds for administrative purposes. So again, that 2% admin cap does continue on where we are. So lastly, in terms of the priorities, the priority for this program has not changed either. Eligible entities shall prioritize projects that deploy broadband infrastructure to unserved households. And as many of you are aware, this program has a focal point on

connectivity for unserved households and so that has continued to be a fundamental element of this program as we move forward.

22:44

Next slide, please. Alright, so we've had a chance to talk about the status update of the program with the applications that we're looking at.

22:58

We had a chance to talk about the amendments, the exciting new amendments from the IIJA as well as the additional funding that is associated with that, and now we want to jump into the tribal leader consultation and discussion about that \$2 billion.

23:14

Gilbert, I'm going to go ahead and have you come on camera, if you don't mind, and Carole, if we could move on to the next slide. OK, so before we jump into the consultation aspects in the dialogue, I do want to remind everybody that, obviously, this session is being recorded, number one. Number two is that this is a tribal consultation intended to engage in a government-to-government relationship and dialogue with tribal nations. And that I would ask that if you are not a tribal leader, that this forum is for tribal leaders to engage the federal governments on their concerns or feedback related to this program.

23:56

However, if you do have the authorization to speak on behalf of your tribal government, I am going to ask that, if you introduce yourself and you have the authority to speak on behalf of your tribal leadership, that you acknowledge that when you are brought off of mute and that, you state that as you introduce yourself.

24:18

A couple of the technical aspects here. We're going to ask that you raise your hand, and Gilbert is going to help keep me honest here as we keep a list, and we are going to keep a list, of those of you that want to provide feedback and commentary about the questions that we're going to ask. I also realized that some of you may not be able to fully access the GoToWebinar platform or are using an alternative audio feature or an alternative audio access. That's a fancy way of me saying you're probably dialing in, so if you are dialing in, I'm going to ask you to hit *6 and we can actually see that on our end. We'll put you in the queue as well. When the time comes, or as we get close to calling on you, you'll receive a private message, when it is nearing your time to provide input, and when I do call your name. We'll ask you to come off mute and then before speaking, this is really important, can you please give your name and who you're with, but also please spell that out. We develop transcripts and notes out of this, and obviously, AI is amazing, but it doesn't always pick up the names and spelling's appropriately so we want to make sure we get the name, your name, and the name of your tribe, accurate, as we do this. One other thing, that I wanted to highlight is in the original dear tribal leader letter that you all received, we initially had a closed for comment, written comment, by the end of today. Recognizing that, that may not have been the most advantageous for

many of you, we have extended that date to January 31st of 2022, which is a Monday. So, for those of you that are participating in the consultation today, and you want to think about your responses beyond today and want to provide written comments, you can do so by e-mailing your letters or your comments.

26:15

Many of you sent letters on letterhead, to broadbandforall@NTIA.gov. I am going to try to keep our conversations moving and I would like to, don't be surprised if I asked you follow up questions from your comments.

26:29

I'm loosely using a 1 to 2 minute timeframe, but we have four hours here, or at least 3.5 hours here to engage. And this is an important topic about a big investment that really needs to meet the needs of Indian country and tribal nations. So with that Gilbert, is there anything that I missed?

26:50

Gilbert Resendez

No I think we're good. Hello. My name is Gilbert Resendez that I work here at NTIA primarily with our state equities here on our property and programs. I will announce who is up next and then who is after that person. So folks have an idea of where they are and when to get ready and Adam would engage you in dialogue so thank you very much for having me today.

27:14

Adam Geisler

Wonderful. Thank you, Gilbert. We appreciate you being involved. Many of you are going to see Gilbert out in the field in the next few months as you engage in other processes with NTIA and the states.

27:26

All right, so the primary focus of today's conversation, and I guess I do want to say it's the first of more consultations to come, but we're going to be consulting primarily on this topic this one time. And that is what do we do with this additional \$2 billion, and how do we implement these funds in a way that is advantageous for you and your communities for which you represent? And that is really at the crux of what we're here to talk about.

27:57

So we have essentially three questions that we have posed that I'm hoping to get each of you to respond to as you provide your comments today.

28:06

The first, should NTIA make available any of the additional TBCP funding appropriated by the IIJA for the applications submitted in response to the June 2021 TBCP NOFO? And so I'll just recap that again, of the additional \$2 billion should we spend any of that money towards the applications that we currently have under review and fund more applications beyond the \$980 million that we're currently looking to spend with the applications that we have? If so, how much? What percentage of the additional funding should NTIA make available for this purpose? And some of you may feel we should spend zero. Some of you may feel we should spend 100, and again, in full transparency, we are here because we want your feedback. We really, um, we could really go any direction

here and this consultation is important to understand what the wishes are of all of you across the country and understand what those needs are.

29:09

Then the last one, really has to do with the timing of a second, NOFO, right? So in the event that we have, uh, and we intend to have in some form, a second NOFO, if we were to issue a second NOFO for the remaining funds appropriated by the IIJA, when would it be the most accommodating time for tribes to be able to submit applications?

29:36

And we're asking this question, and I'm going to tease this a little bit. We're asking this question because:

- 1) As Chairman Denver alluded to earlier, a number of you are dealing with, um, things going on at home with the pandemic.
- 2) There are a lot of application windows that are open right now, or closing. And there we have often heard capacity challenges and timing challenges around when another NOFO or one or more opportunity is coming and, you know, just a tribe have the capacity. We have continued to hear concerns about, um not stacking too many opportunities too close to each other, so tribes have an opportunity to make their way through it
- 3) And the third element to this in consideration is, obviously a lot of you are doing planning. And in the event that you're doing planning, I know we wouldn't want a second NOFO before you've had an opportunity to really get your thoughts down on paper for how to solve the infrastructure needs. Or I should also say, use and adoption needs of your communities.

30:38

So, three questions is really what we're here to ask today. So, we're going to leave the questions up on the screen. We're going to start to bring people off of mute. Again, this has meant to be a government-to-government engagement, with a focus on tribal leaders, and with that, we will go ahead and begin our consultation. And again, thank you tribal leaders for being here today. Gilbert, who do we have first?

Gilbert Resendez

Yeah, thank you. So the first individual we have Tyson Johnston, and then after on deck we have Buster Attebery. All right, Tyson.

31:19

Tyson Johnston,
Quinault Indian Nation

Good morning.

31:21

Hopefully you all can hear me OK, I can't really see myself under this platform.

Adam Geisler

We can hear you, Tyson. So if you can please give your name spelling and who you represent.

Tyson Johnston,
Quinault Indian Nation

Wonderful, My name is Tyson Johnston, that is T Y S O N J O H N S T O N, I'm a policy representative with the Quinault Indian nation, and I've been authorized by my tribal council to speak on our nation's behalf today regarding this very important issue.

31:52

So just getting started, as your opening slide deck showed, there's unprecedented need in Indian country that's especially been brought to life by the pandemic. We applaud Congress, NTIA, and all of our federal partners and trustees that are working on getting these very essential infrastructure dollars out to Indian Country. And so I'm going to try my best to speak to some of the points and questions that you're asking about today so to kick off.

32:22

The Nation feels that the Assistant Secretary should designate the full \$2 billion of additional funding provided by the IJA, as permitted under the revisions to the Consolidated Appropriations Act to fully fund grants for which the assistant secretary received an application for. And looking at the, you know, the need, and the excess of applications, you know, in excess of \$5 billion, we really feel that having those awards, you know, be included with the additional two billion, makes the most sense from a tribal capacity standpoint.

32:58

We've already, you know, looking at a delay to the award announcement, and having an additional application requirement on top of that, you know, would be cumbersome, especially without knowing the status of your application, or if you're going to receive funding or not.

33:13

And then, another thing I took a note of too, you talked about the scoring process and moving from, I think, a program, to the programmatic review point, where I was also curious of tribes are going to receive notice if their applications did, in fact meet that threshold. So, that's just something I'm curious about.

33:31

I don't think we also are advocating that no additional formula distribution be made until all of the current applications and receipt have been reviewed and notices are given out. So that's another thing we're advocating strongly for.

33:46

The TBCP applications that included middle mile elements that are not fully funded through the TBCP should receive priority consideration under the middle mile broadband infrastructure program. Applicants should have an opportunity to elect to utilize the same application as with the capital projects program but should be allowed to update information to the account for new criteria.

34:10

The Quinault Indian Nation understands the unprecedented level of interest in the TBCP and fully supports NTIA's work to effectively review and award each application. But given the significant delay in award announcement from November 29th to a rolling basis and unclear of the exact timeline of spring of

2022, we strongly recommend that NTIA update the rulemaking to permit any costs identified in an application that are incurred after December 1, be allowed for pre-award costs if a project is funded.

34:41

In closing, we hope that NTIA will continue to work with us to be a successful advocate for solutions to the digital divide in Indian country.

34:50

Just some additional points. The BEAD Program, the low cost for broadband should include all Native American and Alaska Native persons in the definition of eligible subscriber.

35:01

We are hoping that NTIA can coordinate with recipients of BEAD funds to promote funding TBCP projects that are unfunded. We are also advocating that tribes need a formal consultation on the FCC broadband data maps before publication or use for the BEAD Program. Technical assistance workshops are not sufficient, and no dear tribal leader letter has been received. So those are the comments that we'd like to offer today for the record and thank you for this time.

35:30

Adam Geisler

Thank you, Tyson, for that, those are really solid points of feedback, and I think this is another benefit, Gilbert, of us taking this on today, right? We get to hear a little bit about, it's hard to talk about the TBCB program in itself and then not think about the implications of what that means for the BEAD Program and other appropriations that NTIA has received. So, I do appreciate some of those thoughtful suggestions as well. And, you know, just to recap, making sure I heard things correctly, from Quinault's perspective, you guys are saying, take the two billion, put it all into the round that we're in right now, fund more applications. And you're saying that because of the level of oversubscription, you know, why, add an additional burden from your perspective? So, I appreciate that. Um, as well as, no additional formulas, definitely heard that. And I do appreciate the feedback on the middle mile elements that are unfunded through us is being considered as a priority through the middle mile aspects in other funding at NTIA.

36:38

The other thing that I will suggest Tyson is, if you can also,, I realize you're submitting your responses to us for this consultation, but we also have a separate path for the listening sessions that we're doing with the for the IIA BEAD program and other funds. So I'm going to ask you, if you don't mind to submit those to both boxes, because we have different team for managing those.

37:05

Tyson Johnston,
Quinault Indian Nation

Yeah, I skipped over that, because we do fully intend on doing it. I was just trying to respect the timeline for all of our other distinguished tribal leaders on

the line today. But you can expect to get more detailed, written comments on all those issues from the nation on all the opportunities available to us.

37:20

Adam Geisler

Wonderful. We look forward to seeing those and appreciate your time today.

37:24

Tyson Johnston,
Quinault Indian Nation

Thank you very much and enjoy the rest of the consultation.

37:30

Gilbert Resendez

Thank you. Thank you for those comments. Our next speaker is Buster Attebery, apologies if I mispronounced that and then our person on deck is Michelle Beaudin.

37:44

Buster Attebery, Karuk
Tribe

Oh. Hello, can you hear me?

Adam Geisler

Hello Chairman Attebery, how are you?

Buster Attebery, Karuk
Tribe

Well, thank you.

37:53

I'm Buster Attebery, that is B U S T E R A T T E B E R Y. I am the Karuk, Chairman, and we are located up here in Northern California, the real Northern California not Sacramento or San Francisco as Dodger fans with the tests. Um, about 30 miles, as the crow flies from the Oregon border. We reside along the Klamath River, along with our brothers and sisters to the South, the Yurok tribe. We are the second largest tribe in California and the Yurok tribe is the largest tribe in California.

38:38

So just to answer the questions, question number one, our response is yes. NTIA should make additional funding available because many tribes have submitted a TBCP grant, including the Karuk tribe. In order to support more of these tribes, additional funding is needed.

39:06

Question number two. What percentage of additional funding? We recommend that at least one billion, if not all \$2 billion, should be made available.

39:20

Um, and the third question is, if NTIA were to issue a second TBCP and NOFO the remaining funds appropriated by the IJA, then what would be the most accommodating time? Our response is seven months after award announcements.

39:47

For the first TBCP that are published and this would give tribes to give tribes time to develop projects, but perhaps into the fourth quarter of 2022 would be our recommendation. So, thank you for this time, appreciate being able to comment. I also have our self governance Officer Darrell Aubrey, is online, I don't know if he wants to speak, but, if he does, is authorized to speak.

40:27

We, uh, our IT person, Eric Cutright, is out at the moment. He answered these questions, and he's available at a later date for more questions. I am not an IT person, but I do understand the needs for our tribe. We're very rural, the Highway 96 starts at I-5 just south of the Oregon border and it goes all the way to the Highway 299, which is below the Hoopa reservation. It's approximately 130, 140 miles of road, it is all very rural. We get snow in the wintertime. We have rain causes numerous rock slides has road closures. And the entire length of that road, is there's very few internet or even cell phone access on there, which is a huge safety issue.

41:38

We are involved with a broadband project with the Yurok tribe which is going to go from, uh, Orleans which is the Happy Camp, Orleans is the district of the Karuk Tribe, we have three districts and that will go out to the coast. Again, there's still remaining hundred miles of Highway 96 that is susceptible to outages, power outages, lack of cell phone, connection, internet, connection, which is a huge safety problem, so, thank you for your time. Appreciate it.

42:21

Adam Geisler

Thank you, Chairman. Appreciate the feedback always good to hear your voice, and I appreciate you providing that commentary on behalf of the Karuk Tribe in California.

42:31

Just to recap that I heard you correctly, answer Question one, yes, make additional dollars available. Answer to Question two is at least one billion, if not the full two. And the answer to Question three was, give some time. Let the dust settle a little here and let's look to fourth quarter of 2022 if there is a second NOFO, to give everybody a little bit of breathing room. Did I hear that all correctly?

Buster Attebery, Karuk
Tribe

43:00

Yes, sir. OK.

Adam Geisler

43:02

Thank you, Chairman. Appreciate your time. Feedback.

43:08

Gilbert Resendez

Thank you very much. Our next speaker is Michelle Beaudin. Apologies if I mispronounced that, and then our speaker on deck as Will Micklin.

43:23

Adam Geisler

All right.

43:25

Michelle?

43:38

Carole Garner

Hi, Michelle this is the producer, if you'd like to unmute your, welcome to start speaking. Just push the microphone button, you should be able to unmute.

43:59

Michelle Beaudin, Lac
Courte Oreilles Tribe

Sorry, Sorry about that, thank you so much. It's a little different on my phone, then on my computer, so I apologize. My name is Michelle Beaudin, and I am, my name is spelled M I C H E L L E B E A U D I N and I'm from the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe and I am a council member. And I'm speaking on behalf of our tribe today, one of the, the first question is, is, Yes, we believe that the two billion should be used on current applications to be able to fill that need for tribes. All of our tribes are, struggle with connectivity.

44:46

And, your second question of how much, as much as needed. We believe that up to the two \$2 billion, if needed. Um, and as far as the grant period if there's another one offered, I agree with the previous Chairman that fourth-quarter looks more advantageous for us, if we know, depending on when we're notified of when they're awarded, so that we have time. We're in northern Wisconsin so we need to have time to plan and get projects on the ground during construction timeframe. So, keeping those things in mind really help us in those planning stages.

45:30

But one thing that I'd like to know is, if there's, any plans to help tribes or help US in this whole broadband initiative with the lack of supply is needed for broadband. That is becoming uh, quite a problem for everybody who's going after broadband connectivity. So, just wondering, and then, so we are appreciative that we're getting an extension on, on the timeframes for, for putting this together but I foresee that that's going to become quite a problem in the construction. And the rural tribes will have, like us will have a bigger problem getting those engineers and those types of specialized people on the ground and working with local vendors and providing that assistance in one way or another, within our boundaries of our reservations, which are so needing some type of connectivity. So I don't know if you have any of those answers, or if there's a bigger conversation that's going to be happening regarding that, as well. So I thank you.

46:57

Adam Geisler

That thank you, thank you, council member, and Lac Courte Oreilles for the recording, is the French spelling.

47:06

I remember the first time I saw, your tribe on a sheet of paper, and I was quickly corrected by some of my colleagues, So yes, just for the notes there. So just to make sure I heard you loud and clear, response number one is, yes, we should make dollars available to the applications we're looking at. Question two is up to two billion, and I have a follow up for you on that, but I'm going to also say

Michelle Beaudin, Lac
Courte Oreilles Tribe

question three, you had responded fourth quarter of 2022, as Chairman Attebery had suggested. Did I hear that correctly?

47:37

Correct. Yes.

47:39

Adam Geisler

OK, And I do want to come back to the supply chain topic because you raise a very fair point. In fact, Gilbert and I stay up at night sometimes worried about that, about the actuality of implementation and we have heard this from a lot of folks about supply chain needs or issues that they're running into as they're trying to purchase fiber, or customer premise equipment, or, I mean, Yeah, I mean, you name it, right? So what I can say, I shouldn't get too far into the weeds, is that there is a team within the Department of Commerce that is taking this on and looking at the supply chain issues and how we accommodate that with the implementation of all this infrastructure. A lot of broadband in particular, right? So I know that's probably, Councilman, not the level of detail that you're looking for, but I can promise you, I am well aware of that this issue is a concern that has been raised by Tribal and Non-Tribal stakeholders in that the Department definitely has it on its radar.

48:44

On the topic of the two billion of the second question, you'd said, up to two billion. And, and if you're prepared to dial this in a little bit more, I'd love to hear it and if you're not, please feel free to say, you know, maybe you don't have you want to take some more time to gather your thoughts on that. But we have well in excess of \$3 billion of just infrastructure ask alone. And so, when you had mentioned up to \$2 billion, is there any caveats to that, or things that you're thinking about for consideration in why, in the response. So, I'll pause there and see, yeah.

Michelle Beaudin, Lac
Courte Oreilles Tribe

49:24

No, we don't, at this point, we know that all we we can't make judgements on what other tribes needs are, and so we do know as we are, we have a lot of connectivity problems. And, um, so, whatever that looks like, I didn't know that what the need was at, that it's three billion. So, hopefully, there will be more money coming down so, that everybody's, um, issues can be addressed, and I know that there still probably won't be enough money to address everything. Um, so, I guess I don't really have an answer for you at this point.

50:06

Adam Geisler

And that's, that's OK. I find that hopefully it wasn't unfairly the follow up. But put down on that note, councilwoman, I think, and for all the tribal leaders that are on the line today, now obviously, our focal point is going to be this this \$2 billion for the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program. But there is an additional \$42 billion through the BEAD program that NTIA is administering and that is being run through the states. And so, it is really, really important, for those of you, you know, we all recognize that there isn't one pot of money solving any of these issues. But I did really want to encourage you, whether you're in Wisconsin, Montana, California, you name it, Alaska, it's really important that,

that you consider, um, building those dialogs and relationships with the states in the next about six months or so. A lot of big things happening in terms of the broader aspects of the region that you all reside within or near.

Michelle Beaudin, Lac
Courte Oreilles Tribe

51:09

So, what was the name of that program?

Adam Geisler

51:13

It's the we title it the BEAD Program. Gilbert Do you want to chime in on the broadband?

Gilbert Resendez

51:19

I believe, if I can get this right, Broadband Equity Access Deployment Act, which, which money goes to state, I believe and in my introduction that I do work with our state partners. We do have relationships with all of our state broadband directors and that work in state government and Adam and I are more than happy to facilitate introductions if that is something that would be of help to you and your Tribes and that's to anyone on the call.

Michelle Beaudin, Lac
Courte Oreilles Tribe

51:49

Awesome, absolutely. We'd like that.

Adam Geisler

51:53

Perfect. Yeah, that now, I mean, now's the time, right? We're talking about this two billion, but there's so much out there.

51:58

This is a good time to start to build the relationship, not that you're not, but to continue on those relationships, you know, externally, because there's resources there as well. Councilman, I want to thank you for your time and your feedback.

52:11

For the Lac Courte Oreilles, hopefully I said that correctly, tribe out of Wisconsin and your thoughtful comments today. Thank you. Thank you for having us.

52:21

Absolutely.

52:22

Alright, so it looks like we have Mr. Will Micklin Is that correct? Gilbert?

Gilbert Resendez

Yes, our next person is Will Micklin. And then, after him, we have Jonathan Nez.

Adam Geisler

I think that might be President Nez in the batter's box, Navajo Nation.

52:41

Oh, so the maybe cutoff

Gilbert Resendez

Adam Geisler

Probably go figure the characters within the system. So, all right, Mr. Micklin, how are you doing? Welcome and thank you for being with us today.

Will Micklin,
Ewiiapaayp Band of
Kumeyaay Indians

Can you hear me?

52:57

Adam Geisler

I can. Thank you. Thank you Gilbert. I didn't maybe use your first name.

53:05

So, Will Micklin. M I C K L I N. I'm a second Vice President Central Council, Tlingit and Haida Tribes of Alaska, Tlingit T L I N G I T Haida H A I D A.

53:20

I'm CEO for the Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians. E W I I A A P A A Y P Band of Kumeyaay K U M E Y A A Y Indians. President Richard J. Peterson couldn't be with us today. He's president of Central Council and Robert Pinto Sr. is the chairman for Ewiiapaayp Band, we're an off-grid reservation, so, he's a on the reservation today. So, thank you for the opportunity.

53:55

I have, I'll answer three questions in the dear tribal leader letter for this purpose, and have a couple of comments that I'll keep brief as to the first question.

54:07

Um, we do, speaking for both tribes, believe that the, the full amount to the TBCP funding should be appropriated to the current applications. Um, the, we put a lot of effort into that, that application and we have other application opportunities that include REconnect and EDA, the IJIA or BIL wherever that their acronym is in favor at this point. And replicating, that design and engineering is an expensive proposition. So our intent was to use the TBCP application for a full need in the iterative process, revise the design and engineering and delivery of the end product to available funding but then leverage the remaining mean with the other broadband funding opportunity. So less than one billion dollars for TBCP, an additional two billion is helpful, but as you describe the ask is almost six billion. Um, and we were hoping that we would have a better understanding of what NTIA would fund for TBCP in order to, um, uh, customize our application to EDA and Reconnect and IJAA to what is, um, met need unfunded by TBCP. So we're, we're balancing this. The end result to us, in our view, is that we need all the funds available and asking tribes to redo subsequent applications of a very similar nature is just replicate cost. And I don't think it, we don't think it, it really gains to have to redo, even though other projects may appear, they could be incorporated in extension of what is, I think most tribes have, which is a core capability for the networks that we design for extending connectivity and service by broadband performance into our communities. So, that's answer the first one. The percentage I answered in the whole amount of what's available.

57:12

A second round, um, would be a most fortunate event and now, for us, the sooner the better after we understand what the TBCP is going to fund, because then we can start fitting it into the jigsaw puzzle of the other broadband funding opportunities to determine what parts of our network and, you know, in our

instance, it's region-wide, south-east Alaska, uh, network, and for Ewiiapaayp, it's a reservation wide network. So, it's, it's complicated when we don't have answers to the, uh, to the our application for the core network, but as we move ahead, I think that will be answered in so, any additional, um, NOFO to the TBCP, would be welcome, and the sooner the better. We don't think it would occur earlier than the TBCP round one is going to be answered so, we think we're safe to say sooner the better.

58:26

Adam Geisler

Yeah, that is. Mr. Micklin and that is a fair assumption to make in terms of the timing.

58:35

Yes.

58:38

Will Micklin,
Ewiiapaayp Band of
Kumeyaay Indians

So, just a couple of observations, the, I described sort of a series of funding opportunities. We would be most fortunate if the, um, development of those opportunities and solicitations would be coordinated. Um, sometimes it's difficult to, to see that. We, we think we often sometimes suffer from the two ends of the spectrum where we get broad consultations where we have limited time and opportunity to make remarks and providing recommendations. And, on the other hand, often times, decision makers rely on very few individuals that they know to rely on, on their opinion.

59:39

We think there's a lot of room in the middle, for instance, with the FCC Native Nations Communications Task force, which is a panel by, tribal officials that are vastly experienced in and broadband and delivery of services like Joe Garcia. Danae Wilson, Susie Allen, myself, well, really worked for 20 to 30 years each, and in Indian country, on these issues, and I don't see a whole lot of connection in that. So, I think what we, um, it would be helpful if that were better coordinated.

1:00:22

I'll also say that I'm hopeful that the, with the question of the 70-point threshold for review of the TBCP applications still provide a minimum allocation to tribal applicants who have expended a lot of in cost on submitted those applications and in moving forward, the monies applied to the current round due to the TBCP from the present \$2 billion application we think may also be applied to those costs if there continue to be an unmet 2.5% may be sufficient for that. But um I'm really talking about application costs more than direct overhead costs. We are, and I'll just leave you with two points that may be extraneous, but one is the reliance on the broadband data map. It is in substantial error, Ewiiapaayp reservation is shown with the 100 megs down 30 megs up its unserved, we have letters from the carriers. They're identified is serving the reservation. Um, we every year submit corrections to the map and apparently because the 477 data is not updated, then the map is not updated, and the eligibility, including substantially in the IJA for underserved and unserved, unserved location and eligibility is really dependent on the broadband data

map, and we hope not to be in a position where we're forced to appeal what would otherwise make us ineligible even though we are entirely off grid. It's just an error in the broadband data map. So, I know the 477 is being corrected but that's not going to really be accomplished until 2023, in substantial part.

1:02:39

And we also are concerned with the billion dollars in the IIJA going to middle mile, as we've, I think, testified for many years, the big problem of meeting countries in the middle mile. And we're hoping that the emphasis on funding middle mile was not limited by the then a title for an IIJA that provides a billion into the middle. That the \$42.5 billion from the, um, uh, from the, excuse me, from the earlier section, and the TBCP allocations can substantially fund that very costly needed middle mile, and it is disproportionately costly to population served.

1:03:27

There's no doubt about that. But, we're hoping that the high cost location for the unserved area or unserved locations can prevail on the reviewers of these applications that that cost is merited because without it, there is no service to the tribal lands.

1:03:53

And, finally, I'll just say that the, the matching requirement in the IIJA, excuse me, is a substantial burden, particularly on states, particularly on the state of Alaska where that would be an enormous burden on their Treasury.

1:04:14

And who have not empaneled, a regional, or state-wide broadband group, even though it's in the Broadband the Alaska Broadband Plan recommendation, published in November of 2021. The state just can't come around to accomplish those kinds of things so we're hoping that NTIA can help support the states in paneling those kind of boards contemplated by federal bills, such as the IIJA and the TCBP to allocate funds to tribes and to deem unneeded, the non- federal share or the match for funds provided to tribal to tribes and for and for service on their tribal lands. So, thanks for the opportunity. And we will, of course, to meet this in writing.

1:05:13

Adam Geisler

Yep, I absolutely expect that and we do look forward to receiving that written comments. Councilman Micklin and thank you for providing the feedback for both the Central Council up in Alaska and the Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay.

1:05:30

And so, I heard you heard you loud and clear, additional \$2 billion is important. So, the answer to question one is yes, that gets to question two. All of it. The Answer your question three, if there, if that isn't what happens, then a new NOFO as soon as possible. And then obviously appreciate the feedback on the other aspects that you kind of dovetailed into on the additional funding, through the other programs we have here at NTIA, whether it's middle mile or the match issues, absolutely appreciate that feedback.

1:06:07

OK, well, we're going to keep cruising along. Um, it looks like, Gilbert, I think I see President Nez's is up, and who do we haven't batter's box?

Gilbert Resendez

1:06:21

And the Batter's box we have Joe Garcia.

Adam Geisler

OK, Councilman Garcia. Wonderful, wonderful. All right, well, President Nez we, we have you here, How are you? We'll give you just a moment to come off mute.

Jonathan Nez, Navajo Nation

1:06:50

GoToWebinars...so, good, good afternoon, I think, so good to see you Adam. Thank you Gilbert for both of you facilitating this tribal consultation, of course. We, I we to hear at Navajo, will appreciate Congress and the White House for putting money aside for tribal communities. And, you know, from close to a billion dollars to now over \$2 billion, which is a shot in the arm for us here on Navajo, I'm sure, and to the rest of the other tribes. Our broadband team our Navajo nation broadband team, some of the members are on the call as well. Christopher Becenti, our Navajo Nation Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, Executive director, folks from NTIA, and others. And they helped package up the proposal for the first round. Appreciate them and they're hard work. I'll do my best to do the two minutes, and, of course, we'll follow up with the written comments.

1:08:05

So for the first question, and I won't read the question, the Navajo Nation abided by the rules posted from the Notice of Funding Opportunity, NOFO, and limited time our submission. If the NTIA considers funding projects with the additional \$2 billion received, the Navajo Nation would be at a disadvantage in 2 ways:

1. We are still waiting to hear, and I heard we heard this from other leaders, waiting to hear if any of the projects submitted will be selected or awarded. If any of them or are not selected or awarded, we will not have the ability to replace or add additional projects based on, oh, what we hear today.
2. Per the press release on September 8, 2021, NTIA received over 280 applications for a total of over \$5 billion. If applicants exceeded the threshold, per the NOFO, and the extra two billion is added, we would be at a disadvantage

1:09:27

Now I guess one Question: 1.B is the, the question on the percentage, we would encourage another grant, NOFO to be announced, if application submissions were not selected or awarded. This would give tribes' another opportunity to resubmit an application. The Navajo Nation is still looking forward to the NTIA's decision. If some projects were not selected and the additional funding is added, will there be an opportunity to replace or add projects?

1:10:07

The second question there, were if NTIA to issue a second in TBCP NOFO where remaining funds appropriated by the IJA. There are many funding and grant opportunities available now with many more future opportunities with higher download speed requirements. Now, get this, when we have to plan to expand telecommunications on Navajo Nation, we encourage the new NOFO to support 25 megabits down versus 100 megabits down. 100 megabit speeds are feasible in densely populated areas or neighborhoods. However, as homes get further apart from one another, we need to utilize technology which may have speed limitations versus the physical connection to the home via fiber which can only which can easily support 100 megabit speeds. When we are trying to connect homes over the span of 27,000 square miles, we have to utilize a variety of connections to connect the homes.

1:11:31

Please also keep supply chain issues, as was mentioned, and lead times and in mind. On average, it's taking nine months to 12 to receive fiber or steel for towers. With many funding opportunities becoming available please consider supply chain times to encourage the amount of time before announcing another NOFO. Thank you, and we will follow up with the written comments and thank you to all our tribal leaders that are commenting those that will be commenting today. I'll end there. Thank you.

1:12:09

Adam Geisler

OK, President Nez, if I could ask you one follow up, you know, you had mentioned, and thank you for the comments. I think, I heard you loud and clear, and I think that's an important perspective for us to, to keep in mind right now. Not everybody applied above the \$50 million marker. Um, trying to be respectful of the pot of money is what I heard you articulate just a moment ago, um, And so for those reasons, it sounds like, you know, you want to draw a line with the \$980 million and say, let's look at a second round NOFO for the additional two billion if I heard, I want to make sure I heard you correctly. And, then, the timing of that second NOFO, you really want us, want us to hold off and see how all these other funds kind of pan out let the dust settle. Either, you've heard me say it earlier today, let the dust settle on these other programs and so, you know, something in the 9 to 12 month, you know, quarter four timeframe. I guess that's kind of a secondary follow-up question. Were you talking about a little bit more time, you know, do you have a suggestion on it, a quarter or a month, or anything like that? So, President, if you don't mind, just to, just around those two things out.

1:13:26

Jonathan Nez, Navajo
Nation

Well, I guess, first of all, we would, tribes wouldn't need to know which projects are selected that they have submitted for. Once we know that, we'll have a better idea of the timeframe. Because it'll let us know, know what the limited amount of resources or supply material, I should say. That would gauge on you know, what is needed into the future. Because right now, we are it's under a lot of uncertainty right now.

1:14:10

I mean, especially with the supply chain, and we're looking at trying to get these projects completed at the first round, to see what those are, are awarded, so we can begin to construct those, those projects. So, we were just at a waiting game right now. And we would like for NTIA to give us heads up so we can do much planning. Remember, this, we're talking about broadband here. We're also talking about other infrastructures, and so, material is not going to be readily available. We got to build facilities as well. Other needs are there. So, we have to play, play that into the factor into future plan for this. Hope that answers your question Adam. Thanks.

1:15:03

Adam Geisler

Does that, does president, I think that that's helpful in in, I think, framing, framing that dynamic around timeframes because you're, like you said, you're trying to be strategic with your investments, and it's not just broadband, right? You guys are probably looking to build roads and put fiber in those roads. So I think you raised some important, important things for us to consider about both adding money or not, and then also the timing of that, of that additional NOFO to complement other infrastructure that would work in tandem. Appreciate that. Thank you for being on today, President. Thank you, sir.

Jonathan Nez, Navajo
Nation

1:15:41

Have a good day, everyone.

Adam Geisler

You too. Thank you.

1:15:45

Gilbert Resendez

Thank you. Our next speaker is Joe Garcia, and then after him, we have Laurence Pena.

1:15:57

Joe Garcia, Ohkay
Owingeh

All right, well, can you hear me?

1:15:59

Adam Geisler

We can Councilman Garcia, good to hear your voice.

1:16:03

Joe Garcia, Ohkay
Owingeh

First thing is Happy New Year Adam, and Happy New Year Gilbert. And Happy New Year to all of the people that are online.

1:16:14

First off, I wanted to say, thank you for having this session, and as many of the other sessions, some of the questions sometimes do not make any sense, because they're kind of all tied together. So we answer yes to one question. The answer might be no, by default or the next question. But I'll do my darnest to move things along.

1:16:38

Number one, I think it's important for the tribes that apply for the first round to know where they stand in terms of any project proposals that they sent in. And not having knowledge of where that stands, it's an eerie feeling because, gosh,

is there were more funding available, where would you apply it? And so that's kind of a crazy question to ask, but in my book, if the number of dollars that was requested in the initial funding and the initial proposal far exceeds what was available by greater than four billion or five billion if you will. And so that means that we were in the deficit already with the current application, assuming that they were going to be funded, that there are 100% proposed level. Now, if we add additional \$2 billion, to the additional \$1 billion dollars, it wasn't really one billion we were short, 100 million, I think. Uh, so it was, we're adding two more billion to the additional one billion that we had. So we're still in a deficit by about another three billion. So, if you apply everything, who, the current process, that leaves, nothing for question number two. So because you're going to apply and everything through the part first. Correct?

Adam Geisler

Yeah, I mean, that's really is, that's what we're, that's what we're juggling right now, do we? Do we take OK then?

Joe Garcia, Ohkay
Owingeh

1:18:26

Then the next thing is about, I would really discourage having a second NOFO because, number one, the criteria most likely will change, the effort will most likely change, and the reviewers may likely change and so not knowing what your first project is, it's just like, OK, I'm building a dam. But before my dam gets built, I wanted to put in other infrastructure that's attached the dam. And, it does not make any sense. How can I fit that in unless I know where my first project ends?

1:19:09

Oh, I think that's for that reason this kind of foolish to do that. So what I would do is to get that more funding be made available. And it's like, it would be great if we were to get that extra \$3 billion to even fund the first round of applications that were submitted.

1:19:28

But here's a disappointment to me. That uh, all the tribes a lot of the tribes have been asked me where NTIA stood on it, and I said the only information I got on it thus far is the first three tribes that were funded. And then, a little bit later on, there were the additional few more tribes, but nothing, not even close to 10% of the tribes that applied. And so I thought there would be a better momentum from NTIA's side to provide information back to the tribe so we know where we stand and that's not happening but, you know, that's a fault of the system, I guess. But what I would really like to see is additional funding and that's something that I think, the tribes lobbied for.

1:20:23

And I also, second, the request Will Micklin made about the there are some forces out here, some knowledgeable people in the system that has never been used. I know people have contacted me as a as an individual, but not as the FCC task force. But I think there's a great resource right there and that they can provide some oversight, not oversight but better insight of what are the real

needs in Indian country. And the needs are still there. Needs are still there and so all we got to do is continue moving forward the way we can with what's available. And I appreciate all that you all are doing. I know that you're also under your own guidelines and certainly, the dollar amount is a guideline that we had to live by and unless some things change otherwise.

1:21:24

But that's what I have to offer and I do, that I forgot to say where I'm from, but I'm from Ohkay Owingeh I represent the Tribal Council, I'm the Head Councilman. But I also work with the Santa Fe Indian School. We've got a project from Santa Fe Indian School, we don't know the status of that one either because it's not just for the school, it, for a number of other Pueblos that are, will be positively impacted if they were funded. As well as the representative for the southwest tribes, namely the Pueblos, wherever I can be of support. So, thank you for your efforts and you keep moving forward and any questions you've got my contact info, just give me a holler. And if I can answer any questions or if you have any questions with what I just gave. Thank you.

1:22:18

Adam Geisler

Thank you, Councilmen, and always happy to have you. And always happy to hear that, the honest feedback. And I do want to just echo something I think that you shared on the lines of notification for the applications. You are 100% correct that, that the need for notification is, has been a challenge. And I guess I just wanted to address, we're working as quick as we can and believe me, I will get to you to see the response of yes, or no, as quickly as I can. And, you know, 425 projects to review is just really a, it's been a big, big, big bite to take here, and we're just going to keep moving to your point. I'm trying to get you that information. Do know that I don't say this lightly, there's been a lot of pressure across our team to continue to move forward and get those answers and just know that we are working diligently to do that. And then lastly, Councilmen, I will absolutely take you up on some follow up calls. If I have any questions, I know you are been a great resource, um, to me and others in our career in this space, and so I will be taking you up on that into the future, so, thank you for offering that. All right.

1:23:38

So, if you will, Yeah, oh, Councilmen, can you please spell for the record

Joe Garcia, Ohkay
Owingeh

Ohkay is O H K A Y and Owingeh is O W I N G E H. That's in New Mexico. We almost became part of Colorado. When we were having problems, uh, when the state of New Mexico in gaming said, well, we're going to become part of Colorado. But, uh, history, you know, how that goes.

1:24:16

Adam Geisler

That's right. I appreciate the time, and the feedback is always councilmen. Thank you for being with us today.

1:24:23

Gilbert Resendez

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much Councilman.

1:24:27

Our next speaker that we have in our queue with Laurence Pena and then Kate Weinogrand is the next speaker in the Batter's box.

1:24:38

Laurence Pena, San
Ildefonso Pueblo
Enterprise Corporation

Hello, everybody. I'm Laurence Pena. Laurence Pena and I'm the operating manager for San Ildefonso Pueblo Services, which is a native-owned corporation from the public Ildefonso, and I've been authorized to speak with them on this matter, with pertaining to the additional funding.

1:24:57

Adam Geisler

First and foremost, I think that, um, the application round, the first one, did show that there is a great need for broadband services in Indian country. A lot of us are rural, a lot of us lack access, and I think that the funding is needed. With regards to your questions, number one, I think that all the funding should be used for the applications, that are on record, now, that I pass that merit based. And with regards to NOFO, if there is an additional NOFO, I would say that the fourth quarter would be advantageous for us in terms of, you know, putting our plans together. Again, in terms of what, you know, what additional needs. Los Alamos is a small tribe, but we are definitely in the middle of a great gateway to Los Alamos, New Mexico, which is home to our national laboratory. So any funding that we get, any funding we receive, will actually help in terms of creating, less of a gap in that area. We look forward to hearing from you.

1:25:57

Well, thank you, Mr. Pena. I really appreciate the feedback and the thought that you put into this, I mean, You got, you went through those, I think, very well. So just to recap there. Number one, you're saying, yes. Definitely make more available in the percentages. All of it, 100% of that two billion, and in the event that, we don't do that or there is a second NOFO if you're saying, fourth quarter of this year. Did I capture that correctly?

Laurence Pena, San
Ildefonso Pueblo
Enterprise Corporation

That's correct.

Adam Geisler

Alright. Thank you. To you and your leadership at the Pueblo there and New Mexico. Appreciate you being with appreciate it. Thank you. Absolutely.

1:26:34

All right, Gilbert, who do we have next?

1:26:37

Gilbert Resendez

Alright, thank you. Our next speaker is Kate Weinogrand and on deck, is Deserea Quintana.

1:26:54

Kate Weinogrand, Hoh
Tribe

Yes. Hi. Thank you so much, and I appreciate NTIA taking the time today to have this important webinar discussion. I'm calling on behalf of the Hoh Tribe, they are located in the Olympic Peninsula of Washington State. A smaller tribe, and I'm very remote and rural and currently lacking any terrestrial broadband access. So this application, and this program is of the utmost importance to the

tribe for education, economic development, health care, you, name it, everything. So, from the tribe's perspective, first off, I want to state that, I don't think, the tribe does not believe that there should be another round of NOFO. The first application round, which I think has been echoed by many speakers today, was incredibly burdensome for many tribes; time wise, resource wise, expertise wise and another round or another application would not be in the interest of equity and would not best serve Indian country. Second, all of the funds should be put towards the first round of applications, there is clearly a need based on the amount of money that tribes are asking for across the country.

1:28:02

And secondly, there was not some sort of missing participation element in the first round, which is usually when agencies will go for second round of applications. Clearly this was widely received in Indian country and widely applied for and does not necessitate another round of applications to get greater participation.

1:28:22

Um, I also want to point out that this application and this application process, you know, should take in mind all of the timing and, sorry the what's it called, I'm sorry, I'm having a mental block right now, the pipeline issues that people are having in terms of getting supplies. The Hoh tribe is exceptionally rural, as I stated, and a lot of tribes across the country are rural and getting that fiber and getting those materials is incredibly difficult right now and will take a lot of time to forward plan. So having to pile on another application on top of trying to plan out getting materials would not be in the interest of equity or efficiency for Indian country. I do have a couple of questions.

1:29:12

I was wondering if you could clarify for the group why some of the awards were posted already for some tribes, I think, as another caller mentioned, a few tribes have been awarded funds, why those tribes were awarded and announced because this isn't, obviously a rolling application. So, why were some decided, while others are still sort of being reviewed or waiting?

1:29:35

And, secondly, I just want to echo some of the other comments about having tribes being able to maybe use the same or similar applications if they're not funded for some of the other projects that are out there, I think we talked about the BEAD Program and the middle mile program, being able to not have to re-invent the wheel for some of these other funds would definitely help some of the tribes that are smaller, and have fewer resources in terms of grant application capacity. Thanks so much.

1:30:05

Sure, sure. Absolutely and happy to, happy to have you know, did you mentioned, that I heard you correctly, you are part of the Hoh Tribe? Hoh Tribe out of Washington? Did you mention your council member as well?

Adam Geisler

Kate Weinogrand, Hoh
Tribe

No, I'm sorry, I'm not a council member but I work for the tribe and work on behalf of the tribe. I am authorized to speak for the tribe on these issues. Hoh is H O H.

Adam Geisler

Yep, yep, got that for sure and actually been through your neck of the woods before. So, before we jump into the other questions that you had raised, I do want to just close the loop on the third question on the screen that we have here, which is, right,

1:30:56

We're hearing a lot of different feedback today, around the second NOFO. And in the event that we were to do a second NOFO, what would be a timeline that would make sense? And I absolutely hear you loud and clear on what you said about, you know, there's no missing interest or participation from your perspective, but, you know, in the event that we were to do that, what do you, what would you say to that?

Kate Weinogrand, Hoh
Tribe

1:31:24

I would say that as far out as possible, to be honest. I mean, I think a priority should be to have notice given out and decisions made on all pending grant applications before opening another round of NOFO or another round of applications. And, secondly, you know, there, there is a lot going on in the pipeline right now in terms of applications for these things.

1:31:45

And it would not help tribes to have a second NOFO come out on top of multiple other, ongoing NOFO's. So, you know, while I think, as far out, you know, people have said Q 4 of 2022, you know, as far out as you can go is helpful but also bearing in mind the other active NOFO's that Department of Commerce has and other Infrastructure Investment Act NOFO's that are going to be out there. So, you know, maybe a little bit of co-ordination within the federal family on making sure that, you know, tribes aren't facing, you know, five open NOFO's at the same time.

1:32:22

Just because many tribes don't have the capacity in terms of grant writers and expertise to effectively write strong grants when you have that much on your plate.

1:32:32

Adam Geisler

Yep. I appreciate that clarification, because that is right and in the conversations we've been having, again, none of this is 100% baked at all. And that's why we're here today, as I really want to hear everybody's feedback.

1:32:43

But that has been one of my team's largest concerns, is, not overwhelming tribes with multiple grant opportunities and windows where you're having to, just , where there's too many things you're applying for at one time, for you to feel like, have a good outcome. This is what the concern was, So, appreciate, you, articulate that on the question that you asked. About the selection criteria or, more importantly, the rolling basis that we are making awards, you will

actually see in the NOFO language about our ability to make awards in a rolling fashion. And largely, you'll notice that there are some aspects of the applications that we have awarded, um, up to this point, in that rolling fashion and what you'll notice that most of them are at or below \$500,000, which is the, obviously, as many people are well aware of, is equal distribution funding up to amount identified within the NOFO. So that's the answer to the question. I'm sure that that probably peaks more questions, but, you know, just in transparency, I did want to respond to that because you raise a fair point to ask, which is the NOFO wasn't in a rolling fashion so how can you make those? And the short answer is, is that we did have that flexibility to do so.

1:34:07

So, and then the other aspect absolutely noted. And I've heard this a few times today. I don't know how that would work and Gilbert and I are going to take this back and see, which is how do you use existing applications for all the other funds that are out there, without having to go through and re-apply?

1:34:25

Um, and I don't, obviously, I don't have a good answer for that right now, but those are great points, right? Whether it's the middle mile, or aspects of the BEAD or the equity components that are, that are all sitting out there. That's a fair question to ask, all these different questions asked. But I think that that is a great one for us to see. Given the concerns that everybody has raised about the burden of the application process, and be here, we hear you loud and clear. We know this is not probably been the easiest applications to apply for. So appreciate all of that feedback that you gave us Ms. Weinogrand with the Hoh tribe, so thank you so much for being here with us, and also for the clarification on your permission to represent and speak, so thank you.

Kate Weinogrand, Hoh
Tribe

1:35:13

Thank you.

Adam Geisler

1:35:14

All right, absolutely. All right, So we are 3:30. Eastern Gilbert.

1:35:22

Yep. OK, so we are just past 3:30 Eastern, We're doing good. All right, so it looks like is it? Is it Deserea Quintana is up, and who do we have in the batter's box?

Gilbert Resendez

1:35:34

Yeah, and the batter's box we have Stephanie Bolman.

Adam Geisler

So Ms. Quintana and hopefully we're saying that right? You are up.

Deserea Quintana, Inter-
Tribal Council of Nevada

1:35:50

Thank you Adam. That was close enough. Good afternoon. For the record, my name, Deserea Quintana I am an enrolled member of the Walker River Paiute Tribe and the executive director for the inter-tribal Council of Nevada.

1:36:02

Um, To touch on comments are first like to note that as a tribal consortium on non-profit private 27 and the state of Nevada, and we have submitted an application for 11 of the 27 tribes within the state. And so, I am authorized, especially on the topic, for those 11 tribes that were included in our proposal.

1:36:32

So with that being said, to answer the first statement, my comment would be to prioritize as others have said, the additional funding to the existing applications that were submitted under the first round of the initial NOFO. The second item would be to apply 100% of the additional funds to be used for those projects. And to go back a statement you made Adam, about, even if that were to happen, there still would not be enough funding to cover, obviously, all of the applications and projects that were submitted already. So I would highly advise NTIA to consider an opportunity for the existing applicants to revise the application, with the understanding that may bring down the total requested funds by all applications done so hopefully, that that would allow for more funding towards the projects that were submitted.

1:37:37

What is the other item? So if NTIA were to issue a second NOFO application for submission should be made available as soon as possible to an existing applicants. Of course, understanding the current challenges and impacts to our tribal communities but the current pandemic wave that we are seeing.

1:38:02

It is advisable to create the application process and make it as simplified as possible with the understanding that many of our tribal communities are being impacted and there are several tribal closures that are affecting our administrative offices. So with the understanding there may not be anyone available. So, the easier the application process, the better. Dependent on the ease of the application process, a shortened submission period, I think is acceptable. If the application process requires an extensive workload, and resources to complete then NTIA should consider a longer submission period. And I would also be in agreement in the fourth quarter, knowing that, depending on how challenging it is to submit an additional application, allowing that flexibility and understanding.

1:39:07

And one final comment that I would like to make regarding the other funding opportunities that are available, after meeting and discussing with the tribal, the 11 tribal governments that were included in our Consortium application, the majority, but not all of them, are hesitant at this time to apply for additional funding towards projects that were submitted under the original NTIA application. For the most part, that due to the other high priorities within our tribal communities. There is other needs where tribes would like to use those funds to address those issues.

1:39:46

And that is my comment. Thank you.

Adam Geisler

1:39:50

Thank You, Deserea. And I apologize for not recognizing you right off the top, as soon as soon as I heard your voice and I went Nevada, of Course inter-tribal Council of Nevada.

1:39:59

I do a couple of items here as follow up. So the first one is, really around, you had mentioned a revised application process. And I'm hoping you could just pull that thread a little bit further for me, or if you had, like, an example of what you, what you mean by that. And then the second part of that is, you had mentioned as soon as possible to existing applicants. If we were to do a second NOFO. I heard existing applicants as opposed to all potential applicants. I just wasn't sure if there was a nuance there, or if I heard you correctly.

1:40:38

So I was, I was hoping you could just spend, you know, divulge for just a moment, if you wouldn't mind on those two items sharing,

Deserea Quintana, Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada

With the opportunity to revise the existing applications that have been submitted, as many have stated and I'm sure that you're all aware, we had a very short time period to be able to pull data, information, and to be able to prepare to submit for these various projects. I am assuming, listening to other people, even if you weren't a single tribal applicant, that it was a challenge to try to get together all of the information and backup documentation justification for it, whether it's the infrastructure or the adoption your project. With that understanding, I would be, I would assume that, most applications could have, if given additional time to submit, could have the ability, there may be an opportunity to revisit those budget amounts and the funding requests, if additional time is available and revising. I think we went in, based off of the guidance that we were given at the very beginning of, you know, look at this as a one-time opportunity to kind of throw the kitchen sink in everything that, you know, we may be able to tackle under this funding opportunity to look at, including we went in with, with that idea in mind. We're meeting an application that was very comprehensive and maybe, you know, maybe wish list items? So, if given an opportunity to lower those requested funding amounts, with, now the understanding that there may not be enough funding available to support all of the project in full, as submitted, that may give the opportunity to lower that, the amount, which may provide additional funding to support the main points of the project.

1:42:51

Adam Geisler

Thank you for that, is helpful.

Deserea Quintana, Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada

If You can read through the second question you had.

1:42:57

Adam Geisler

Yeah, so the other aspect that you brought up was, opening up, if we were to do a second window, opening up a second window as soon as possible. Now you heard the caveats of the simplicity of the application.

1:43:12

And that elements, which was a, hear you loud and clear, if it's an easy one, do it quickly. If it's a, if it's something as complicated, or as details what this last process was and pushed the thing out. But one of the things that you did, I heard you say was as soon as possible to existing applicants. And so, I just, I wasn't sure if I had heard you correctly or I wrote it down wrong, but were you, was there a caveat to that you know, in terms of a second NOFO like looking at the parameters of those who applied, or were you getting it though, like everybody that is eligible? I just want to make sure I heard you correctly.

Deserea Quintana, Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada

1:43:50

So yes, you did hear me correctly, and again, that goes back to my second comment and it goes back to the funding availability. And so I think prioritizing the initial NOFO for existing applicants should be the priority. However, if additional funds become available, obviously there's definitely a larger need within Indian country and those applicant tracking already who are unable to submit within the first round. Understanding that, yes, that should also be prioritize but looking at the hard work that everyone had done within a short time, prioritizing them first.

Adam Geisler

OK, All right, what? I appreciate the feedback.

1:44:38

Alright Ms., oh man, I'm going to say it wrong, Quintana! It's always great to hear your voice, and obviously, to engage with you. Appreciate the feedback on behalf of the member tribes that you're representing that are, that are part of your application with the Inter-tribal Council of Nevada. So thank you for being with us today and raising, I think an element that, frankly, we haven't talked about so far so I'm glad to hear another perspective on that. So thank you.

Gilbert Resendez

Thank you very much. Our next speaker that I have on the queue Stephanie Bolman and then after her we have Ruth Gruber. Beth Gruber, excuse me.

Stephanie Bolman, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe

1:45:21

Yes, good afternoon. Can you hear me?

1:45:24

Adam Geisler

I can Miss Bolman, if you wouldn't mind, for the record name, spelling and who you're representing.

1:45:32

Stephanie Bolman, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe

OK, Good afternoon, my name is Stephanie Bolman, councilwoman for the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe in Lower Brule, South Dakota.

1:45:50

So, I just wanted to say thank you for this opportunity to provide input. For the sake of time, I will quickly summarize our stance. I do also want to recognize

two other team members, Lance Wit and Tim Azure, who are also on this call and have been instrumental in our application process.

1:46:08

We, we would like to answer number one. We believe that, yes, the remainder of the funds, \$2 million funds, should be used to fund other projects.

1:46:19

The second question. What percentage. That's hard to answer, but, I think I'll go with 50 to 100%, because, again, we don't know the needs of the other tribes, and we want to make sure that the funds are distributed equitably. And, and thirdly, again, another complex question, I think depends upon the different scenarios that various tribes find them in. Ideally, of course, you know, we need those funds as soon as possible, but, unfortunately, in the conditions that we find ourselves in, later would be more beneficial, I think, in order to navigate all the different funding requests that we have in front of us. So, in being more precise, as you have asked us to be, I would say fourth-quarter would be best. Just because we have a limited number of issues, we have a number of issues in in our area that would require some additional time.

1:47:15

A number of those would be already ongoing projects that have, and again I'll concur with the previous speakers who spoke and tribal leaders, we have supply chain issues, we have IT workforce issues, we have a lot of availability of resources and information that we receive. Thank you so much for all the information that you've provided here today. A lot of those programs I will be following up on.

1:47:46

And Gilbert, if you don't mind, I would also take you up on your offer to connect us with our state broadband director. And so this has been a wonderful, this has been a wonderful opportunity to gather information.

1:47:57

I've been, I've been taking great notes and thank you again to the wonderful leaders that have already spoken. I concur with a number of their, their feelings as well. In particular, the lady who went, maybe two people ahead of me talking about the capacity of grant applications. And, you know, that being overwhelming, especially when we have IT workforce concerns and streamlining that process, being able to use some of our same grant applications in order to keep the ball rolling. So, that is all I have, again, I won't, you know, I will also mention for the record that we too would like to be notified, but we also know that you have those 425 applications. So thank you so much for your time.

1:48:45

Thank you. Thank you Councilman Bolman for the feedback and the thoughts I mean, I know. This is not an easy answer, which is why we're having this conversation today, right? And so, if I heard you correctly, I mean, number one was, yes, we should make some funds, may make available to us, 50 to 100%.

1:49:06

Adam Geisler

And the caveat that you put out there was based on the equitability, right, you know, and I appreciate you saying, you know, you don't want to speak for another tribe. And respecting that, doesn't make my job a little bit harder. But I can understand why you would say that, and in the event that we would be looking to a second NOFO Q4 timing for ongoing, due to all the other elements that you're dealing with, that you had mentioned, did I hear your comments correctly, I just want to make sure I captured that.

Stephanie Bolman, Lower
Brule Sioux Tribe

1:49:35

Yes, you did.

Adam Geisler

1:49:36

OK, and absolutely noted on the supply chain and workforce issues, as well as how the heck do we leverage these applications grants at NTIA. Gilbert and I we continue to hear you guys say that, really be, we're wondering what? we're going to be taking that back. Obviously, I can't commit to anything, because they're all really good, and fair questions. The, uh, covered supply chain, covered the questions, uh, cover the workforce piece, I think, we have those. Is there anything else that you wanted to add before we hop onto our next speaker?

Stephanie Bolman, Lower
Brule Sioux Tribe

1:50:14

No, that is all. Thank you so much. And I will speak to my team. If there's anything that we have forgotten or would like to add, we will submitted in writing, Thank you so much.

Adam Geisler

1:50:22

Oh, Gilbert. Can you please give the council on women your e-mail, so we can get you heard?

Gilbert Resendez

Oh, yeah, yep. I will drop it in the public chat to all folks to have it, but it is the letter, G, Resendez, my last name there @ntia.gov on the screen. But I will put it in the public chat for folks.

1:50:40

Thank you so much.

1:50:42

Wonderful.

Adam Geisler

1:50:43

OK, thanks again, Councilwoman.

1:50:45

All right. So we have it looks like we have Beth Gruber.

Gilbert Resendez

1:50:53

Yep, Yep. We have Beth Gruber is next, and then Danae Wilson is on deck. Again, welcome tonight. Welcome.

1:51:00

Adam Geisler

All right, Beth Gruber, you are up. If you can unmute your phone, you should be. OK, good, I think.

1:51:31

Beth Gruber, Mille Lacs
Band of Ojibwe

Ok thank you, Beth Gruber, director of planning engagement.

Adam Geisler

I think we have some folks that are still on that, thank you. Sorry, if you don't mind Ms. Gruber, could you please just start back from the giving from the beginning named Beth Spelling tribe?

1:51:53

Beth Gruber, Mille Lacs
Band of Ojibwe in Central
Minnesota

Sure I am Beth Gruber, with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe in Central Minnesota, the Director of Planning and Community Engagement. I appreciate the opportunity to listen in today and provide comment. I've been authorized to comment today by our chief executive Melanie Benjamin.

1:52:16

As many of the other speakers share today, Mille Lacs agrees that any additional funding should be made available to the June 21st, 2021 NOFO to answer question number one. Moving to question number two, we believe that 100% of any additional funding should be made available. Tribes spent an incredible amount of time, and resource preparing those applications, so we would love to see all of those funds put towards that original NOFO.

1:52:48

Then to question three, we feel the current applications should also move over. Tribes shouldn't have to go through all of that work again to, to respond to another NOFO.

1:53:00

But it should really happen, you know, if it, if a new NOFO needs to happen it should happen after we've received notification to what our original application, where that landed.

1:53:18

Absolutely.

1:53:20

As the previous caller, it's really hard to navigate all of those funding sources that are out there right now and should another funding source we've put out there. It's difficult to have time and the resource to be able to answer by the deadlines that are imposed. We met our original obligation by submitting by the deadline, and it would have been wonderful if NTIA could have met their deadline. We've been kept in the dark and our current application status and, as we've heard from many others today, it's been frustrating. We struggle in remote areas. We continue to struggle. So, any relief would be most welcome at this time. Thank you.

1:54:01

Adam Geisler

I really appreciate the feedback, Ms. Gruber and the, you know, the constructive comments that you just provided those are absolutely heard and understood with me and my team absolutely. And as I mentioned before, we're moving as quickly as we can because we know how important this issue is for your communities.

1:54:23

I do have just one follow up and I and it's on the last question and I'm just trying to get a little bit more dialed in here. So, if we were to do a second NOFO your first piece of feedback was, one, you said yes to question one? Yes, We should make available more money. Two you said, all right, and it had to do with the amount of effort. Correct.

Beth Gruber, Mille Lacs
Band of Ojibwe in Central
Minnesota

1:54:48

Correct

Adam Geisler

OK, three, any event that, it wasn't 100% or that we would do a second NOFO for whatever the reason may be. The current applications, you're basically saying that we should move those into the second round and not have everybody re-apply that's already applied. Essentially just open up a window for more applications to come in. Is that where you are going with that are denied? I'm hearing, if you have to I you have to open a second round.

Beth Gruber, Mille Lacs
Band of Ojibwe in Central
Minnesota

I think ideally, we would like that pushed far enough into the future so we can manage those NOFOs that are out there at this current moment. We just, small tribes do not have the time and resource to be able to manage all of those of us at one time. So I think as the caller previous to me, said, if the federal family could have a conversation about what's out there, that would be fantastic.

1:55:49

Adam Geisler

We are definitely having, those conversations are happening. Um, but I guess the follow-up there is, is if it you were, when would that timeframe be? Right, And, again, you have written back, OK,

Beth Gruber, Mille Lacs
Band of Ojibwe in Central
Minnesota

Fourth-quarter earlier.

1:56:06

Thank you.

1:56:08

Adam Geisler

Thank you. Appreciate the feedback, and participation, and thank you again so much for being here. Miigwech. Thank you.

1:56:22

Alright, and we are, I believe, Ms. Danae Wilson.

1:56:30

Gilbert Resendez

Ms. Danae Wilson is up next and then William Fenton, then, I only see one of the person's hand up so I want to let Sara Obed know they are the closer. The

people that I see, so if there are others that want to say something, please use the raise hand function.

1:56:46

Thank you. Thank you for the opportunity to participate today.

1:56:52

We hear you, happy to hear your voice today. I hope you're doing well. Um, if you don't mind for the record your name, spelling, tribe, and then obviously the authorization component as well.

1:57:07

Sure. So, Danae Wilson, Nez Perce Tribe and I am authorized by my Tribal Council. I represent the tribe on broadband issues, on a national level, and on a regional level, and definitely, for the Nez Perce Tribe. So, I have a couple of comments. First, some questions to NTIA before we answer the three NTIA questions. And probably, the first and foremost is, in your slide you don't have the e-mail address for us to submit written comments, too. So it would be nice to have an e-mail address, where do we send written comments to originally put it in the chat and I didn't get a response, so I am trying to make sure that we get our written comments submitted.

1:57:51

Scoring criteria was brought up regarding the 2021 TBCP applications, was the target score for funding the same for both the infrastructure and the use and adoption application? Each fund required separate application, and in some cases, the use and adoption is contingent upon the infrastructure deployment. How is NTIA in the curing process reviewing both applications submitted by a tribe to address the interdependency, specifically, were one application, use and adoption as an example, could be approved, but infrastructure could be denied. How or how is NTIA managing the interdependency? You can't do use and adoption necessarily if you don't have broadband, right? And then the second comment is, what are the factors used in the 2021 TBCP applications to be, those applications to be moved to Treasury? I've asked this numerous times, how are those applications being moved to Treasury? There was a request in the original NOFO, that if you wanted your application is sent to Treasury, to specifically state it, and, and in this person's resolution, we specifically stated that we wanted it to be considered for the Treasury Fund.

1:59:09

How are those applications being reviewed by Treasury? And what is the timeframe for notice of funding from Treasury, because they were separate from the TBCP program?

1:59:22

Will the score sheet and comments, this is third, will the score sheet and comments be sent to applications receiving a denial for the 2021 TBCP application? This will help determine how to strengthen future BEAD applications. What do we need to make our application stronger to the BEAD

Danae Wilson, Nez Perce
Tribe

Adam Geisler

Danae Wilson, Nez Perce
Tribe

programs or to any other funding available currently, right now? How do we make that application stronger and why did we fail in this funding process?

1:59:51

The last comment before I answer your three questions is: if the tribe has the support of the state and the emergency response networks within the state in their 2021 TBCP application? But will not be funded under the TBCP can these applications automatically be forwarded to the BEAD programs for funding an award based on the collaborations already established between the state and the tribe? So if a TBCP application came in, that was specifically for middle mile to support last mile service and is not going to be funded under TBCP, can those applications be forwarded to the BEAD programs? So that they can be funded there, especially where there's already well established collaborations between the state and the emergency networks dependent on the tribes for connectivity in their part of the state?

2:00:47

OK, so based on those four comments and questions, if the answer to those four comments and questions work with the additional TBCP funding, then the additional \$2 billion should be added to the existing fund and then those applications. That relieves financial burden on the TBCP program, right, because then, Treasury will be funding some of those applications, and BEAD programs will be funding some of those applications.

2:01:21

So then you lighten your load to tribes based on the offset, right. You're sending those applications to other entities to fund. If that's the case, then 100% should go to the fund, because then you have more money to apply.

2:01:37

And if NTIA was to issue a second NOFO everything that tribes are doing right now is based on the first NOFO. They can't, even if you were, to apply today to another fund. If I don't know that I'm getting denied, bye NTI in my original 2021 application then my foundation has gone, right. So if I want to apply to any of the USDA funds, do I duplicate that foundation and put it into those funding applications today? And just assume that if I get a funded by NTIA down the road, that I'll be able to modify that application to change how I'm going to deploy services. So the issue is, and we're duplicating our requests to the federal government through multiple programs, hoping that we're just going to throw the spaghetti against the wall. And it sticks, right, somebody will fund us. So, that's the biggest problem is, where we're asking for the same funding for the same infrastructure to multiple entities, and, we don't have any idea whether we're going to be funded or not. OK, so there we go, that's it. Thank you.

2:02:52

Adam Geisler

Always happy to have you on, with, with your thoughtful comments today. And, Carole, if you don't mind, just clicking over to the next slide real quick. Cool. I'm going to have you go back, but, so you're wondering where you send your comments for your first, for your first comment.

2:03:09

First, a few questions there, broadbandusa@NTIA.gov.

2:03:15

And, as a reminder, we have extended the comment window, in fact, by now, we should have the updated and posted revised, Dear Tribal Leader Letter on the website. And we have extended that to January 31st, which is a Monday of 2022. So that gives everybody a couple more weeks to again, this is a big deal, right? Thinking a lot of implications and impacts here to think through your comments. So, you send to broadbandusa@NTIA.gov, and Carole, if you don't mind, throwing that in the chat for everybody as well. So, we have that. Let's go ahead and we'll go back. Thank you. Back to the questions.

2:03:53

Um, in terms of the scoring criteria for the 70 points across the board, for whether it was infrastructure, or use and adoption. The answer is yes. The criteria for the applications, whether it was use and adoption activities or, infrastructure related activities, had a threshold of 70 points per the NOFO.

2:04:17

And, so, just to clarify that threshold is there, and I think to follow up that you had to, that was, you know, what does that do to applications? In the event that, the infrastructure isn't funded, but the use and adoption is and what does that, what does that do?

2:04:35

And I don't have a succinct answer for you today with that today Danae. And just, I don't have all the data for those particular nuanced instances to be able to, to address that in this forum. So full transparency, that's just where we are at the moment.

2:04:54

So your next one was sharing with Treasury. When you, in the timeline, so the capital projects fund is the \$167,000 that is available to tribes. Right now, if you go on to the Treasury Capital Project Fund Treasury website, and, complete that and the due date is actually June 1st of this year. So you guys have a few more, five more months to go a little over 5.5 months to complete. And really, when that was, that box, was checked or folks said that you could share it, the idea was that when you apply through the treasury process, you can highlight the activities that you are looking to accomplish or leverage Treasury Funds. Where in your application. And we essentially have a conversation with Treasury, if you do that in their application, and we share, um, so that answers that, that one.

2:05:54

Um, the next one was about, what does the landscape look like, or when we start to issue, uh, please apply again letters or, or folks that may not be considered for further funding within this application round. The answer to the short answer is, is we are not going to be sending out score sheets, per se, but what we, what you will find in the NOFO, is that there is a 10-day timeline to request to meet with NTIA and go through the elements of the application that

that may have been, uh, that may have brought it out of contention or consideration for funding. So, and I guess to that end, too, we, as much as we are working to also provide the notifications, we're also working to notify those of you that may be in a category where you are not being considered for further funding due to merit, for example, or other programmatic elements. And we are working as hard as we can to be able to provide that out to you. And I guess I will, you'll hear me apologize that we, this isn't happening as any faster. But I can just guarantee you, we are moving, frankly, as fast as we can through, these applications, including nights, weekends, and holidays, to try to keep pushing through this process.

2:07:31

On the last part about the state component, um, and the application that you have in relationship to BEAD.

2:07:41

I think you took it to a little bit of a different space here Danae, in that, how do we take into consideration your application for the BEAD Program? And actually, a big portion of the BEAD program on the front end is planning. And so, if you have a detailed plan that you have for your tribe, which I've worked with you for a very long time. I know that you are a very detailed person in the way that you've approached your networking processes for the Nez Perce Tribe. This is the perfect opportunity where the content of the application or the design elements of an application, you really, if you're open, should be sharing that information with the state as the state is compiling their, their overall plan, am I correct Gilbert? Is that a fair? A fair way to articulate that, OK, Gilbert is keeping me honest. So, with that being said, there's other aspects of the of the appropriations that, again, you know, we need to go look and see if there's a creative way that we could not add more. I mean, I hear everybody loud and clear, please don't add any more burden, given the constraints that are on everybody's communities that they're facing at this time. And so again, not a great answer, but we will have to just explore that. And we will, I can promise you that we will. So, Danae, to recap, after all of those pieces, I heard yes, to we should make available additional funding, 100% of that, um, towards, towards the program, so all two billion. Um, and then, uh, on the last question. In the event that we have a second NOFO, what, what would be the timing of that tonight? You know, again, I'm trying to cover all bases, so in the event that, maybe it isn't 100%, maybe it's 50%, maybe 20%, maybe 0%. When would be the right time, given all the other opportunities that are going on, that are out there? I thought I heard you say "wait" but let me, I want to make sure I got it correct Here. For the record.

2:09:49

Danae Wilson, Nez Perce
Tribe

Sure. So considering the fact that all these other funding announcements are being made right now, and we're being encouraged to apply for all these other funding, I would wait until later in the, the fiscal year for those applications, because we're being told to apply for these other funds. Otherwise, what we're essentially doing is, duplicating our same request to multiple agencies, federal agencies, asking for the same fund to fund infrastructure. And so it would

behoove NTIA to stagger those instead of forcing tribes to continually apply for the same infrastructure to all these other agencies.

Adam Geisler

You want to see what you're, where you're funded before you apply for the next one, right? I mean, that's, that's what I'm kind of getting out of this.

Danae Wilson, Nez Perce
Tribe

That's correct, because we don't know, if I'm applying for Middle Mile, and that's what I'm lacking. And I started applying for all these other funds, I can't build anything else if I don't get funded for middle mile, it just doesn't make sense.

Adam Geisler

2:10:56

I'm tracking. Ms. Wilson. I really do, again. I want to appreciate the very candid comments and feedback, and, as always, true to form, um, you have left us with some additional things to really consider. As we move into, I mean, frankly, a really tough decision for us to evaluate, but I do appreciate the comments that you provided from the Nez Perce Tribe and as always your participation in these discussions. So, thank you for being here today.

2:11:28

Thank you.

2:11:30

Thank you. All right, yes. Do we have, is it William Fenton is next?

Gilbert Resendez

Yes, William Fenton is next and then Sarah Obed and then we did have a few others raised their hand so not at the end yet.

Adam Geisler

That's OK. All right, William Fenton.

William Fenton, Osage
Nation

My name is William Fenton and I represent the Osage Nation. I do have the principal chief's blessing to speak in this forum on the subject. I'm the IT Director for the Osage Nation. And as far as that first question goes, I'm going to be echoing what you've been hearing pretty much all day. When the application, when the NOFO was put out, and we went through the webinars and stuff for the TBCP grant, we heard you loud and clear to come up with a complete plan for our area. And so, we did that, and that's what we submitted, and that's what we're working on now, from now on. So, any funding that we get goes towards making that plan come true. And so, we would love to have more funding, but towards the original grant.

2:13:01

The second question, how much is from our opinion, as much as possible? Because I agree with my colleagues here on the call, that it's very time consuming, and costly for us to put it in another application, and it's just burdensome. And if we can reduce that, burden all, the better. I understand that some other tribes, you know, may need to have a second round in. If that's their need and I by all means am not trying to take away from anybody else, but as far as from our opinion, as much as possible.

2:13:45

The third question, when, once again, we have this puzzle that we've made, and we have these pieces that we're getting from all these different funding agencies with different requirements, and we're trying to put the puzzle together as best we can. So, the more pieces that we have in hand, before we had to make a decision on what the next piece needs to be, the better it is for us, in my opinion. So, the further out that it can be, the better. So that we can see what pieces we have and what parts we've built out to continue the plan.

Adam Geisler

2:14:29

So, uh, Mr. Fenton, to follow up on that, and I am going to ask you to dial that in just a little bit more. The last piece, and again, I'm just trying to get clarification, so when we talk about pushing it out, are we talking about, right again, the window here? You have February, um, was that USDA, February 22nd? I think it's 2/22/22, Right? right, yeah, I think I've heard them describe it is really easy to remember when they close. You also, you have March the EDA window you crack the capital projects fund in June timeline. So where you are, then in the middle of this, there's also a lot of other funds that are happening tonight.

William Fenton, Osage
Nation

And we currently have ARPA funding as well. I'm sorry for interrupting.

Adam Geisler

No, just go ahead. So, but I am trying to just kind of understand your timeframe. Like in pushing it out as far as we can and I'm just trying to kind of put some bookends on that. Or, I mean, are we talking? End the summer, beginning of quarter four, or end of the October, November, like, in your mind, you, as you're balancing and put it in putting this puzzle together, what, where does, where does a second round puzzle piece fit?

William Fenton, Osage
Nation

2:15:44

So with the delays that we've seen, and stuff like that, I would spit balling I'd say, fourth-quarter or later. If you're trying to really nail it down, I'm going to echo my, once again my colleagues, in saying fourth-quarter or later.

Adam Geisler

2:16:00

Appreciate that, and just for the record, I've tried to cover all my bases here. This does not mean that one way or the other anything has been decided because I know sometimes people speculate when they're like Adam keeps asking.

2:16:12

You know, there's follow up question when we keep telling him all the money into the round, but I just need to cover my bases here so, appreciate you humoring me on this, Mr. Fenton and for the Osage Nation is just patient today. So, thank you for being here.

William Fenton, Osage
Nation

2:16:27

Sir, thank you.

2:16:29

Adam Geisler

Have a great rest of your day, and a good weekend.

2:16:32

All right, so we now have Sarah Obed and who do we have on deck Gilbert?

Gilbert Resendez

We have on deck Lana McCovey.

2:16:43

Yeah, OK. Sounds good.

2:16:46

There are to disappear on me. Forgive me, I lowered my hand.

Adam Geisler

2:16:53

Thank you, yes. All right Sarah, well name, spelling, tribe.

Sarah Obed, Doyon
Limited

2:17:00

My name is Sarah Obed and I am the Senior Vice President of External Affairs for Doyon Limited, which is an Alaska Native regional corporation based in Fairbanks, Alaska. So I am affiliated with the tribe and I'm a tribal member for Minto, Alaska, but I'm not speaking on their behalf. I'm speaking on behalf of Doyon Limited. We are an Alaska native corporation in our region, which is about one and a half times the size of France, um, we've got about 20,000 shareholders, about 3/4 of which are in the region most, about 10,000 here in Fairbanks, which is an urban center. The rest start in our villages across the region, there's 42 tribal representatives that participate in the tribal consortium, Tanana Chiefs conference, who is our tribal consortium partner of Regional Broadband Planning. I'm not speaking on PCC's behalf, but I am, what we do work with them very closely on tribal broadband development in our region. This tribal consultation has been very informational and enlightening to you.

2:18:39

Doyon is the applicant in the current round of Tribal Broadband funding and we're also looking forward to hearing from NTIA and the status for application. I also found it a challenge to respond to the questions outlined in the consultation, in part because we don't know the status of our application.

2:19:03

One of the things I wanted to highlight in the consultation is the regional nature of our efforts. Again, closely partnering with candidates whose conference we, they PCC put together a regional broadband plan that is about to be released, and we work with them in conjunction on that. So I say that because it was kind of coinciding with the application due date for NTIA application. It has really helped solidify some of our regional goals. Doyon Limited also participated in the state of Alaska's Governor Broadband Task Force. We had a representative, our General Counsel, Allen Todd, sat on the Governor's Broadband Task Force, where they're looking to create an office of Broadband within the state of Alaska to help meet some of those same goals that we outlined for our region. There are more than one application. So we are an applicant in the current funding efforts, but we're not the only one from our region. And so, I kind of wanted to indicate that we work to complementary in partnership with others

in our region but to certain extent, we're in competition with one another. It really speaks to the need and the demand and underserved nature of our region. Um, and also just the fact that the rural nature, and the kind of lack of population in our villages, you know, there's just no investment by industry and really, we won't see further growth in broadband in our region without this federal funding. Really, one of the messages I heard today with keep applying without hearing.

2:21:00

Because I think our approach before today has been, we're waiting to hear from NTIA and then we'll seek through these other funds available after that. So I will take that back to our team and take that under advisement.

2:21:15

But I also agree with the other tribal leaders today who indicated that just the extent and effort that we put into in a very tight timeframe the application process from the first go round earlier this year. I should say mid last year. Um, and so I don't have complete responses for you. I, we are planning to submitting written comments, we'll likely do that jointly with 10 of the chiefs conference.

2:21:52

One thing to think about: I struggle with those recommendations that are conveyed, personal note, as opposed to direct recommendation from Doyon, unless it shows up in our comments. And that is, because it's parallel, because I want to acknowledge the work of other tribal applicants across the nation who also have a need for tribal broadband in their communities. But the opportunity to fund regional planning, we would take advantage of that, I believe, to better kind of identify future application opportunities.

2:22:29

So this would be if there was a second NOFO appropriated, we would love to spend some funds on additional planning, just to address the size and scale to serve our region, and continue that partnership. Again, it sounds like that's only a need in our neighborhood, and again, I don't want to not acknowledge the work of many other applicants who are awaiting funding the sheer volume of applications and need and opportunity was clearly recognized in the demand in terms of the applications. So that concludes my comments today. And we will be submitting further comments, written comments, by the end of the month.

Adam Geisler

2:23:23

Well, Ms. Obed I appreciate the participation, and, you know, obviously Doyon, interior Alaska, for those of you that are maybe not familiar with this particular region. Lot of challenges there, and I, uh, I'm not going to press you on the questions. I will absolutely look for your responses in writing to the inbox. So appreciate your participating in, giving that perspective.

2:23:53

The Alaskan challenges are real, and we do recognize that here at NTIA. I think that this is a hard, a hard job for the team internally, and it has been a hard

Sarah Obed, Doyon
Limited

process for you externally. And the bottom line is, is it just boils down to there is not enough money to solve all the problems. Or what I should say is challenges. Many of you are rising to the occasion to meet this challenge. Um, it just, it causes for a difficult, difficult path for, for all of us. So we will continue to work towards getting an answer out, as you've heard me say before, and we will keep trying to drive towards getting you the information as quick as we can so you continue to make the strategic decisions that I know you guys are thoughtfully considering, and happy to hear that you guys are continuing to collaborate on the state side. That is really important in Alaska, given the nature and Gilbert, he's going nod his head when it comes down to the BEAD program. There's lots of conversation within the shop, about Indian country within Alaska as a whole, and its corollary to the BEAD Program, in particular, so appreciate you being on.

2:25:06

I appreciate that. And I know one other tribal leader in Alaska who said it offered his expertise and I would offer the same, that if you have a working group that meets weekly. And if there's an opportunity to and the next year, meet with our region, with tribal and indigenous leaders from our region, we would definitely be willing to write that information and feedback in conversation with NTIA and, appropriately, maybe after modifications come out.

Adam Geisler

2:25:44

I appreciate the offer. And do not be surprised if I take you up on that.

Sarah Obed, Doyon
Limited

Please do

Adam Geisler

I appreciate, I appreciate you, extending that. So, thank you, and again, thank you for being here today and sharing that perspective. It's important for us to hear. A lot of tribes in Alaska, without a doubt, and a unique landscape. When you weave in how Alaska has been, what the Indian country landscape looks like there.

2:26:09

So thank you for being here.

Sarah Obed, Doyon
Limited

2:26:11

I would just close by saying lots of opportunities for some good wins.

2:26:17

Adam Geisler

I can appreciate the feedback, thank you.

2:26:21

OK, well, we're going to keep moving through. It looks like we're still doing OK on the clock, Gilbert, about an hour and a half left. We have, it looks like, I believe it's Lana McCovey. And then in our Batter's box, we have David Conner.

2:26:45

All right, Lana,

Lana McCovey, Yurok Tribe

Hello everybody. Thank you for correctly pronouncing my name.

2:26:52

And my name is Lana McCovey and I'm from the Yurok Tribe in Northern California Yurok and we are the largest tribe in California. We have ongoing broadband projects, as you heard with them from Chairman Attebery earlier and just have some comments to make and I appreciate the opportunity to make them here today.

2:27:27

The first one is the obvious one. Broadband is expensive. And so what you've stated is that you do not have enough funding to fund all of the tribes' request, right now, you know, to cover all those requests. So, and it disheartening. So that to an answer to the first question that you guys have, you know, the Yurok tribe does think that the funding, additional funding, should go to applications already submitted and that 100% of those of that funding should be um go towards those applications. And it's simply because of the amount that broadband costs.

2:28:17

And we are having a problem, because we don't know if we're funded, you know, if we're going to be funded, if there's a problem here. We haven't received notice and so we know that the reservations, and ours in particular, they have special needs. Our terrains, you know, we're very sloped. Rocky trains. You know, accessibility is awful. And so those middle miles and everything that you know, that all in is incorporated into our projects and cause problems.

2:28:58

So when you guys asked us to submit an application you asked for an application that consisted of everything. You wanted us to put everything into one basket and that's what we did. And without knowing if we're funded or not, you know, we're not sure what parts of those applications you're going to approve, so that makes it hard and you've heard that from others, you know, in applying for additional funding. One thing that I would ask, is that when people are approved for funding, and if it's only a portion of funding, that tribes have the ability to prioritize what projects they will fund, because I'm not sure how the choosing process is going to happen on the applications. So, that's going to be a key one. Because, as some have said before, you know, one application, you know, part of the application may depend on the other. You know, how can you have, learning services and things like that if you don't have the service? So that's, um consideration and I really hope you know that you would allow us to prioritize what is funded. Another thing the delay in notifications is going to greatly affect project timelines. You've heard about supply chains and about the problems we have within our reservations. You know, just the red tape. It all takes time so the longer that you take, it makes it, you know, three times, four times, 10 times harder for us because we just do not know how to proceed without knowing what we're going to get. So the Yurok tribe will be submitting the response to your questions, and like I said, we are, we would like 100% of the funding to be for applications already submitted.

2:31:20

But if it does go for NOFO, we are asking that, that you do some kind of consultation prior to issuing the NOFO, because there are parts of the application process that we would like change.

2:31:38

Yes. To be considered.

2:31:42

And, but without knowing the status of our first app, it's really hard to say, on the second app, that with the new NOFO, you know, we would be questioning formulas, and middle miles, and timeframes, and things like that, which is all in our letter to you. And I just want to say, thank you for allowing me to speak on this. And I totally agree with all the comments that have been made prior and wish you guys speedy dealings with everything. I am thankful for all of your hard work, and just hope that some of these issues can be addressed and I thank you. Bye.

2:32:33

Adam Geisler

Ms. McCovey, thank you so much for the feedback. Please give my best to Chairman James. I know he's been working real hard on this issue, and right up, down river, up river in your region is, it's consistent, right? The challenges are there. Just as we had heard from Chairman Attebery earlier and, uh, I do appreciate the feedback. I guess, you guys are going to keep hearing the apologize but I want, I do recognize each of you is making this comment and I want to be respectful of the fact that each of you are individually living through this. And so you know again, I apologize for the delays. As I've said before, we're moving as fast as we can, I know how important this is for the people of the Yurok tribe and frankly, for the region. And we will continue to drive moving this as quick as we can. Hear you loud and clear on the notification concerns that you have as well, right? It was a, it's a good and a challenged issue to have, to have such an overwhelming response. But with six times, the interest, also add six times the work. And so, we're going to keep moving to try to answer those questions.

2:33:51

I hear you loud and clear on the amount of energy and effort put in. So, I hear you as a yes to the first question. Make more money available. On the second question. You're saying 100%, so I hear that.

2:34:06

Now, in the event that we were to do a second NOFO, I guess I do want to make this absolutely abundantly clear that we would consult further if we end up doing this second NOFO. I absolutely recognize, we all recognize, that there are areas that need to be improved and should be improved if we were to look at a second NOFO, and we would absolutely hold sessions to conduct formal government to government consultation, to address that in the advent that we would do a second NOFO. I guess I make wanted to make that very, very clear. And before you leave, I did just want to add to it, I am going to try to bookend it a little bit, what timeframe, in the event that happened that, I'm going to have to cover my bases here, are you kind of in the same space as everybody

else? Let's let the dust settle. Are you thinking a summer timeframe? Are you thinking, quarter four timeframe? What, would be the timeframe in the event that, you know, 100% as an allocated? And we have the second NOFO happen?

2:35:10

Lana McCovey, Yurok Tribe

Ok, what I've been told is, going along with everyone else, if, you know, give us as much time as we can have been. So, I guess the fourth quarter, and really having the ability to know what the status of the first and application is. I mean, that with that would be key.

2:35:34

So, yeah, I couldn't buy it, and yeah, given us at least, you know, sometimes to get it together and I was, at least 90 days, but yeah. As much time as we can get.

2:35:49

Adam Geisler

Yeah, I appreciate you pointing out the balancing act, right? If you're planned for, if you're funded for planning for example, and we, we, we issue, we say, hey, you're funded and then the next day, open up a window for, for the next NOFO, does that necessarily benefits you? Did you really have enough time to try to implement a plan? So, I absolutely do, I'm assuming I heard, heard you correctly. I guess I took that down an analogy path. Maybe I should. Yeah. OK. Again, I appreciate the feedback and we will absolutely take this under advisement and considerations, we take on the tough task ahead.

2:36:26

Um, and we'll keep moving through this, so thank you to the Yurok tribe to Ms. McCovey and obviously again give my best to Chairman James, and I hope everybody is staying safe there in Northern California also.

Gilbert Resendez

Absolutely. It is the California I hail from there. Thank you again. Up next we have David Connor, and then Kelly Dennis is on deck.

Adam Geisler

2:37:00

All right. Mr. Conner, the name, spelling, who you represent, and if you are not an elected, that you have the authority to speak on behalf of the tribe.

David Conner, Red Lake
Band of Chippewa Indians
in Minnesota

2:37:13

Thank you. First, can you hear me?

2:37:16

Adam Geisler

I can hear you.

2:37:17

David Conner, Red Lake
Band of Chippewa Indians
in Minnesota

Thank you. David Conner, and I'm the self governance coordinator for the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians in northern Minnesota. I have been authorized to speak on behalf of our chairman Darrel Seki Sr.

2:37:51

And I wanted to start on a bit of a soapbox. Since the onset of Coronavirus, tribes have been overwhelmed in trying to manage that pandemic, keep our citizens safe, and to manage the myriad of grant programs resulting from the

Cares Act, Consolidated Appropriations Act, ARPA Act, and now the IIJA Act. Over the last year and a half during dozens of federal consultations, tribal leaders have sounded the alarm over and over, that they are being inundated with complex grant program offerings and many tribes have reached the breaking point. Many tribes lacked the staff to apply for and manage them, especially in the face of trying to manage the pandemic at the same time.

2:38:48

Many tribes have been forced to pick and choose which grants they can apply for, in part because of overlapping submission deadlines from various federal agencies and too short of deadlines. And this is what happened at Red Lake and, we believe, many other tribes that did not apply. We need broadband assistance, we just could not manage to put an application together in the time provided.

2:39:17

So, our response to questions 1 and 3 on making \$2 billion available to first round applicants, our response would be no, or at least not until those tribes that were unable to apply during the first round due to pandemic difficulties beyond our control, have been afforded an opportunity to apply for this new funding. And on the third questions, issuing a NOFO for remaining funds, our concern is that NTIA should first provide an opportunity for those tribes who were unable to apply during the first round for the reasons I stated. We regret it was not possible for us to apply for TBCP under the first round, but people on the phone that know Red Lake, know that we are happy for those tribes and there are many that manage to submit applications. And we respect the effort they put forth, but there are many tribes that did not have the capacity to do so. And those tribes with limited capacity should receive the opportunity to access the new funding under IIJA and NTIA should do whatever they can to reduce the complexity of the application process and to offer technical assistance, and to afford plenty of time for tribes to apply. So, again, sorry, for the soapbox part but, boy it's been a tough two years, and we just can't do everything that we want to do, so thank you.

Adam Geisler

2:41:12

Yes, Mr. Conner, first off, thank you for being with us today, from the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians there in Minnesota, and bringing your perspective to the conversation. I think it's, this is, also it makes I think our job, our job here at NTIA so difficult is, there are so many circumstances when we talk about the responsibility that the government has to every sovereign government, tribal government that we interact with. And, and you raise, as you should, important elements that your tribe is facing and the realities of the pandemic and what that has meant, and what that has meant for your capacity. And so, while we have heard a lot of varying opinions today. I just want to make it abundantly clear that I'm hearing you loud and clear. And your response to number one. It should you make additional funds available to additional TBC appropriate from the age. If the answer's no for the reasons that you described. And just sum it up, the burden of the of the pandemic has stretched the resources of your tribe

and that doesn't mean that you didn't want to apply. And that doesn't mean that, it meant that you couldn't. Um, and so, I hear that loud and clear.

2:42:28

And then on the third, the third point is that, you suggested giving an opportunity if we were to open up a second round with priority to those who did not have a chance to apply as a focal point. And let me just ask, the follow up question, because you're hearing me do this with everybody with the exception, one individual, Ms. Obed is going to send in her comments via the email process.

2:43:01

Mr. Conner, if we were to get out a calendar and talk about a time where the tribe, based on all these funding opportunities, I think you kind of laid out this case just now, right? All these opportunities are coming, when is it? When is the right time or a time that would be more advantageous for a tribe under the circumstances that Red Lake is currently in right now? Is it, I mean tomorrow, is it the summer, is it quarter four, or is it next year, what seems to make sense from your lens based on what you're experiencing?

David Conner, Red Lake
Band of Chippewa Indians
in Minnesota

2:43:39

Thanks. Our first thought is that more important would be a substantial length of time once the NOFO comes out for us to apply. Often, and in our case and I'm sure many other tribes case where we were very staff limited in our grant writing and other departments, 90 days isn't enough. I have to tell a funny little story. Again, our tribal leaders, and us have been on dozens of consultations and webinars from various federal agencies.

2:44:16

And one thing we've seen multiple times on these webinars is there will be tribes posting in the chat box saying, "Hey, our tribe needs a grant writer. Please contact us at this address". And in a way that's kind of funny when you see that, but that's it is a reality out there for, you know, many tribes. So, as far as the timing of a NOFO, I think what's most important is that there be, you know, when it happens is less important than providing, you know, a good amount of time. It'd actually I'd like to see 4 to 6 months time, you know, in order to do the application process. So that's my answer. Thanks.

2:45:08

OK. Appreciate that Mr. Conner. And just for clarification, we are talking about a six-month application window. So before you go, now knowing that there's a six-month application window, when should that clock start? And I don't mean to keep, keep poking, but if it, if you're not prepared to answer that today, too, that's OK, and we'll keep an eye open for anything that you may want to. Yeah, it's a six month.

Adam Geisler

2:45:32

The beginning of the third quarter.

David Conner, Red Lake
Band of Chippewa Indians
in Minnesota

Adam Geisler

2:45:46

OK, well, Mr. Conner, I appreciate the feedback that you provide on behalf of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians out of Minnesota and for your thoughtful comments. Again, an important perspective that we have to keep in mind here at NTIA when we talk about equitability. And again, there's just no simple, simple answer here. So, I appreciate you bringing that to the table today,

David Conner, Red Lake
Band of Chippewa Indians
in Minnesota

And we thank you.

2:46:14

Absolutely, thank you.

Adam Geisler

2:46:16

So we, All right, we're going to continue to keep cruising, we have about an hour and 13 minutes left or so. It looks like we have Kelly Dennis, and who's in the batter's box?

Gilbert Resendez

2:46:30

And the batter's box is Valerie Fast Horse, I saw your hand up, I think I see you in the attendee list so if you no longer wished to send me a private message.

Adam Geisler

2:46:40

All right,, there we go.

2:46:46

Name spelling and tribe you're with and if you're not an elected can you please just validate that you have the authorization to speak so good.

Kelly Dennis, Shinnecock
Indian Nation

2:46:53

Hi, this is Kelly Dennis. I'm an elected tribal official with the Council of Trustees for the Shinnecock Indian Nation, we're in New York on the Eastern end of Long Island. And we, we did complete an application somehow, it was very difficult.

2:47:21

Well, I have a few questions. My first is, is this being recorded? We had difficulty accessing this since it's not a Zoom, and it's a different app that are used to and my program manager kind of gave up in the beginning.

Adam Geisler

It is being recorded. It is being recorded, and for that, sometimes this, the platform, I don't disagree with you on that, you know, it's at times with this particular platform. Google Chrome is the recommended uh, search engine, Web based application to use when you're you're going to be utilizing the GoToWebinar? Gilbert, I think yes, I mostly want to add there. Know, if a browser where you're looking for.

2:48:17

OK, we'll look forward to getting the recording when that's available on the website, thank you.

2:48:24

Kelly Dennis, Shinnecock
Indian Nation

Then my other question is if you're maybe considering to reimburse tribes for the money already expended even if they're not going to necessarily be accepted, or their applications won't be accepted for all or partial of the funding. The only way our tribe, as a newly federally recognized tribe, had the capacity at all to get this in on time was to hire a very expensive consultant to really map out, you know, the broadband, fiber in the ground, and how that would work and explain that to us. It's very confusing, but we knew how important this was.

2:49:03

Seeing Deb Haaland, Secretary of the Interior, go in about broadband, it inspired us to want to try to do as much as we could. And then, you know, not only did we have this broadband use with fiber in the ground and hopefully doing cell towers. But it was also a separate portion that was broadband use and adoption. And actually, you know, having being able to train our tribe members to understand this technology, be able to be better at work when working from home and with accessing healthcare, uses of being able to, you know, if there's like an emergency, be able to have that technology. So elders could use it and actually, you know, get like an ambulance or someone to find them if they can if they happen to, you know, not be near a phone or anything like that. So, yeah, I just wanted to see like if, if that might be something that's taken into consideration to reimburse those tribes with very limited funds. And very limited staff who had to hire consultants to try to get this grant in on time, this application.

Adam Geisler

2:50:20

So, um, pre-application or preparation was an eligible activity within the NOFO and so I would, I would encourage you to just go back and read the language, Um, I should know this off the top of my head, I don't, but I know it's in the first 15 pages. So, there is, consideration there, but the caveat.

2:50:45

I will also say, is that that, right, that application reimbursement expense was contingent upon the amount for which you are awarded. And so, um, that's probably not the answer you want, wanted to hear given the feedback that you just provided to us, council member, but full transparency, that's, that, is the best answer that I have for you today.

2:51:09

And, again, if you want to reach out offline, happy to chat with you on the exact page where application, pre application preparation expenses are identified within the NOFO. So yes, it is being recorded, and yes, into the future, we will be making the recording available on our website, as we've done for other consultations in the past. So, with all that being said, do you have any feedback or comment for us on the questions, the three questions that we have here today?

Kelly Dennis, Shinnecock
Indian Nation

2:51:51

I got on late, so I'll.

Adam Geisler

2:52:03

Councilor, I believe. I think we just think we just lost you.

2:52:09

Oh. Can you hear me now?

Kelly Dennis, Shinnecock
Indian Nation

2:52:11

There we go. OK, yeah. I got on late, so, I will have to review the recording and see what the questions are, and then I can try to follow up individually if I have more questions.

2:52:24

Adam Geisler

Sounds good.

2:52:25

Again, as a reminder, we're accepting written comments or recommendations until January 31st, this, this year, of 2022. So, I've definitely got a window there to reach out. So, thank you again for being here, absolutely happy to hear the perspective that you brought forward. We recognize that one, this process wasn't easy for, or the applicants, and frankly on the backend for us either, and can absolutely appreciate the comments that we've heard today on streamlining. Um, and we will always take that under advisement as we can continue to change process, and influence process internally, and can appreciate the challenge that you raised about the reimbursement. You're right tribes are tribes that are in the greatest aid for this program, likely could benefit from that type of a consideration and in the event that we do a second NOFO, that may be another element to re explore. So, I appreciate that feedback and we will keep an eye out for any written comment that you send it.

2:53:34

So thank you.

2:53:38

All right. Looks like we have Ms. Valerie Fast Horse and after that, Gilbert?

Gilbert Resendez

After that we have Lori Richmond, and then Kim Appelt. That at all that have raised hands right now. So if there are Tribal members that would like to provide a comment and have not had the opportunity, yet, please raise your hand function and I'll get you on.

Adam Geisler

2:54:02

Yep, just for clarification, tribal leaders or their designee, please use your raised hand, you know.

2:54:11

And, Valerie, we're going to go ahead and have you come off mute. Ms. Fast Horse. Good to see you on today. How are you?

2:54:18

Valerie Fast Horse, Coeur
d'Alene Tribe

Yeah. I'm doing great. How are you guys? Great. Thank you. Yeah, Hey, so, hey, thank you, guys, for having this consultation.

2:54:26

It's really helpful, I think, for tribal people to be able to submit their comments in their own situations are what's going on, in real-time on the ground, where they live. I'm raising my hand, I originally submitted on my, in the chat.

2:54:46

Real quick, if you don't mind Ms. Fast Horse, and I don't mean to cut you off, I apologize, just for the recording, can we get the spelling of your name and the tribe you're representing, and the, obviously, the authority to speak on their behalf as well?

Adam Geisler

2:55:01

OK, Valerie Fast Horse, with the Coeur d'Alene Tribe. Well, that's easier to say than Schitsu'umsh And I, I, am, and have been, what was the question? I can speak on, authorized to speak on behalf of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe.

Valerie Fast Horse, Coeur
d'Alene Tribe

2:55:39

So, anyway, I raised my hand, because in the chat, I, my original response to the questions before hearing other speakers, was, for question one I said, yes as to question to us at 100%. I changed my mind on question two, because I feel, for those tribes that were not able to submit their applications. I understand we almost didn't get ours, you know, I wrote a lot of it from the hospital. You know, sitting in the hospital with a relative and just barely skidded in at the deadline. So, I appreciate that there are tribes that still want to submit applications. So I'm going to change question to two, it's up to you, whatever, whatever you think is fair for the rest of the tribes that didn't make it.

2:56:24

For question three, as far as the timelines go, I would say I'm always really conscious, conscientious of construction seasons. And so, you know, if we get a grant and then were awarded and it's already winter time and now we can even construct that, that's always, that's always a pain in my yeah, my rear end. I just like, I would like to be able to know that I'm going to receive an award.

2:56:50

You know, B, when the snow melts and when, you know, it's time to, then I can get out my, my, my RFPs and get my bidders in and get their qualifications, start looking at materials and that kind of stuff. So I think that's my input for the third question is, I would actually like to say ASAP as soon as people know or don't know if they're getting funded for round one, or how much, then, you know, I'm really almost ready for round two right now, because I've already done the work for round one.

2:57:25

OK. Um, I appreciate that, I appreciate the feedback. I think that, you know, again, another perspective here on, um, you know, an allocation. It's up to us. I'm going to ask you just what works, are you be sure you don't have a percentage that you're thinking?

Adam Geisler

2:57:42

Valerie Fast Horse, Coeur
d'Alene Tribe

OK, to be honest, I was thinking 50% just because the average applicant so I'm just going based on an e-mail you guys said earlier, was that there's 280 + applications, \$5 billion in requests. So, that average is \$17.8 million dollars per applicant. Now our application was far less than that, but I mean, that's just an average. So I just, well, if you think about the average per applicant that maybe 50% would be fair to allocate towards future tribes that want to can to tribes future applicants, then the remaining 50% to us that have already applied.

2:58:23

Adam Geisler

So about \$1 billion dollars, all right and construction seasons vary around this country and obviously Idaho, Idaho has its own seasons and weather patterns. What do they say? The weather changes that you know, just blanket, it changes in Idaho, is that what they say Valerie?

2:58:44

So what? So type timeframes. Again, given the six month window that the applicant. Right? So you have six months to apply then the window closes, then we have to go through them. What timeframe are we talking about for? Yeah. Well, I think I heard you say immediately ASAP, just.

2:59:05

Valerie Fast Horse, Coeur d'Alene Tribe

Yes. And if you put up out the NOFO today, that means I turn it in June and then you guys will review it for July, August, September and then I'll get notified when it's snowing.

2:59:18

Adam Geisler

So I'm happy you told me that you don't want it today because that was, I think also, that'd be a unique circumstance for us to have to work with. So I appreciate the flexibility there. All right. Well, Ms. Fast Horse. I appreciate the time and thoughtful consideration, and your comments around that today for this consultation and your representation of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe out of Idaho. So thank you for being here with us, and again, appreciate the feedback that very helpful in the dialog and discussion. Thank you.

2:59:53

Thank you, stay, stay safe, and stay warm.

2:59:58

Gilbert Resendez

All right. So we now have, it looks like Lori Richmond and after Lori we have...

Kim Appelt. I believe, is the correct pronunciation. Please correct me if I'm wrong.

Adam Geisler

3:00:15

Alright, Lori Richmond, we have you off mute. You can unmute yourself.

Lori Richmond, Organized Village of Saxman

3:00:33

OK, directions said You would unmute me, Sorry.

Adam Geisler

3:00:40

That's not a problem, Lori Oh, go ahead, sorry.

3:00:46

Lori Richmond, Organized Village of Saxman

That's OK.

3:00:47

It's Lori Richmond like the city. I'm representing the organized village of Saxman as a contractor, that my official title is Interim Tribal Clerk and I have authorization to speak on behalf of the tribe from my President, Joe Williams, Junior. Alaska? Oh, I'm sorry, south-east Alaska. Thank you.

3:01:25

Yeah, and we, we've been dealing with freezing temperatures for a sustained period of time, which is new and different for us. So, my time is kind of split, forgive me if somebody walks in and just starts speaking. The original application for this was difficult because, as you've heard from a lot of other people, the technical aspect of it is difficult for the smaller tribes, but the smaller tribes that need it the most. So, my concern in having to do another one is we don't have grant writers. We got this one in based on the goodwill of one of our local partners. My number one concern on that is that this same local partner is a for-profit. And so they were trying, they were hoping we would get notification of an award because then they wouldn't have, they wouldn't feel compelled to apply for funding that they're eligible for as a for-profit.

3:02:43

So the situation that puts us in as a tribe is, if we're not getting notifications, then our for-profit partners are getting the opportunities that should be reserved for the tribes. And so that is the number one issue that I would like NTIA to think about. Of course, I absolutely understand the difficult situation you guys are put in but, as you're deciding money and deadlines, just keep in mind that it would be terrible if our opportunity was given to a for-profit because of the way you're structuring deadlines and notices.

3:03:31

OK, so, number one for us, yeah, the opinion is that all the initial applicants should be fulfilled with any money that's available, but then I mirror my predecessor's comment in that I did not think about prior to the comment that was made earlier, that there were some tribes that didn't have the time or the ability to apply for the first round. So also, like she said, it makes it difficult on what percentage, because I have no concept how many people there are. I mean, maybe 80% should be made available and reserve 20%. But I think that has to be an educated guess by NTIA, based on how many tribes weren't able to get their applications in on time.

3:04:34

My only comment, if you were to issue a second NOFO, is that all my cost estimates, they'll be good for, say, the next 12 months. If you wait too long, I don't have a grant writer, I don't have funds for grant writers, even if we did, the technical assistance here in south-east Alaska, there's one person doing them for all the tribes that are applying plus all of the for-profit. So, cutting and pasting into a new NOFO is going to be easier and more accurate the sooner it's made available after this one.

3:05:16

OK, I, I think it's hard for me to bookend you on the last question, Because I think your book ended me. Right?

3:05:27

And, Lori you know, I think I, just, again, in absolutely respect the feedback and perspective that you just put forward. The, and although and also, the suggestions, right? I absolutely hear every tribal leader and representative today that has said, "Adam, we don't quite have all the pieces for some of the questions that you're asking us, to feel confident in our responses". And I absolutely acknowledge that as well. And understand that, that we are asking some difficult questions where many of you still would like to have more answers to that question being asked. But to that end, I hear you loud and clear on as soon as possible as reasonably possible. And the justification behind that really has to do with the accuracy of the budgets, right? If you're under resourced, you're having resource challenges, to have to go through a whole another batch of procurement on pricing and costs, I mean, let's also acknowledge the fact that there is an inflationary element to this, as well as the lead time element to this, is a challenge. And so I do respect and hear you loud and clear on that.

3:06:42

And we have taken note of that. So, Ms. Richmond, thank you so much for being here. Appreciate the feedback from the village in south-east Alaska. I'm not going to try to say the name, because I will not get it correct, but I do want to thank you for getting here. Thank you.

Lori Richmond, Organized
Village of Saxman

3:06:59

Thank you very much for your time. Have a great rest of your day and a good weekend.

Adam Geisler

3:07:05

All right, so I think we're now on to Kim Appelt. I want to say I think we both want to say Applet. All right, we got it on the third one, thank you. Well, welcome, if you don't mind, please spell your name. You give us your name, spelling, and who you represent, the floor is yours.

Kim Appelt, Cowlitz Indian
Tribe

3:07:33

OK, my name is Kim Appelt, I'm with the Cowlitz Indian tribe I am the Tribal Council Vice Chair. Cowlitz out of Washington. South-west Washington.

Adam Geisler

3:07:53

All right, well, welcome, Vice Chairman, and thank you for being here with us today. And I'll, the floor is still yours so we have a few questions there, happy to hear your thoughts or comments.

Kim Appelt, Cowlitz Indian
Tribe

3:08:04

OK, I am, yes, on the first question that you have there, making the funds, it's the additional funding that's come around in the, that's there and how much of that should be made available for the responses. I guess, I would like to ask you a question to that. You know, how much easier would it make the process to

get the approvals done? Because, for instance, if you don't get full funding for people who submitted in the first go round and then they have to resubmit, then you know, it has to be re reviewed. And so, then it, in turn, can slow down, getting funding to those who hadn't been able to submit. But, like a lot of people have already said, it's hard to judge how much funding needs to go where because of the unknown of who submitted and who didn't and the reasons why. So that's a tough one, but I think, you know, if there was funding made available on the first go around, what would that mean for the second go around, for everyone, in terms of timelines and getting needs met for tribes?

3:09:20

Adam Geisler

Yeah. Thoughtful question, or questions, or there's a couple there. Um, the, you know obviously, if we were to add more money to the existing applications that we have, that would extend our review period because we're, we were adding, you know, two thirds more than what we're currently looking at now. So, we're going to be needing two thirds more of the need, which, you know, again, and it's just going to take us more time to work our way through the process and get those out the door.

3:09:51

Now, the converse of that is if we were to hold back, we, as you've heard everybody say, and we, we're in concurrence on this, we would not want to launch a second NOFO until those of you that would be awarded would know, right? And then we do want to make sure that we have a window there to have a conversation with you that those of you that are not funded, to talk through how to strengthen your application if we were to do a second round. And then, there's also an element of this where there's a number of, of tribes would also be funded for planning components of this. And so, you know, the timing of a second NOFO, you know, we want to take all those things into consideration so we're not putting a second novel out at a time when it doesn't make sense, when people are either conducting platting or still trying to get their feedback on what, what could have strengthened their application in the initial submission. So, very, very fed answer and I apologize for that, Vice Chair.

3:10:49

But, that is the truth. If we had more money, we would sit where we'd still target the spring of 2022. Would definitely extend that timeout in terms of that timeline, because of what were added, what we've added to it. But I will also say, in conducting our process, we have gone about this process in the advent that if we were to receive more monies, right, the ball would just continue on in the way in which we're doing our work. So as I said, it would add more time, wouldn't necessarily completely derail any processes that we've already set out upon internally. So hopefully that gives you some context to the to the questions that you asked.

3:11:34

Kim Appelt, Cowlitz Indian
Tribe

Yeah. Thank you. And then I guess, and you know the second question we kind of already touched on that because it's tough to know when we don't have all the information in front of us. But, you know, kind of the funding element that I would like to, you know, I hear planning in there which was, you know, in the

first NOFO, was mentioned in there as well and I do think that planning is a big element. The other element that I think gets overlooked is the technology spending cliff with this one-year limitation and what tribes will face then, too and the being able to sustain any sort of the affordable broadband programs that they're trying to put in place after the one year. And I know that we were seen some of that a little bit because we were told we couldn't negotiate multi-year and use it within the, paid for it in the funding window. And we're getting a little bit of different feedback there.

3:12:31

So some clarity around that, I think, would be helpful for our tribes and keep them in the future when submitting applications as well. Because that sustainability with that technology spending cliff is a real, a real battle that tribes are going to put in place, um, especially under the affordable broadband and adoption late option use program. So thank you.

Adam Geisler

3:12:57

Absolutely. Do you care to throw any percentages, or dates? Like, hey, any chance, just while I have you before you go.

Kim Appelt, Cowlitz Indian
Tribe

I think that the NOFO needs to have a window in there after people are notified of their first submission. Because I do hear what tribes are saying, they didn't get a chance to submit at all, but it's the balance, tribes, like who did like we, submitted, but we submitted quickly. And, you know, maybe we could have done a better job, had we had more time. So, I think that definitely waiting until the tribes having an opportunity for tribes who maybe get notified in the first go around to resubmit a good, solid application on a second try is important to take into consideration. And then the percentage, I don't know, I would like, if there is a way, instead of having to make assumptions of tribes could submit just a quick justification on, even if they're going to be submitting, and why they didn't submit in the first go round and would be maybe helpful, as well. I think we're trying to make a lot of decisions on assumptions in that category. Thanks, I don't really have a good solid percentage.

Adam Geisler

3:14:14

OK, but that's an honest, honest answer, so I appreciate, you know, again, um, I recognize that these questions and the timing may not be the most accommodating, but, but nonetheless, Vice Chair, I do want to say thank you and the Cowlitz Tribe for participating today. Your feedback absolutely noted, appreciate the recognition of the dynamics that, that we're dealing with, where there are tribes like yourselves who have applied, and it sounds like, had you had more time, that may have to improve the process, that would have been something more advantageous to you. But also recognizing in your comments, there are no, the answer to this is the, right, 452 tribes are within the 301 applications. So there is still about a quarter of Indian country that did not have an opportunity, and I appreciate you just recognizing the dynamics that we are trying to work our way through as we look at what's fair to those that applied

and keeping into consideration those that may not, and why. So I appreciate that. Thank you for being with us.

3:15:30

OK, so it looks like it last person after Kim Appelt is Chris Price. We have Chris. Right, so we are, we're now on the homestretch about 45 minutes to go and it looks like Chris Price will be our last speaker today.

3:15:53

Chris, if you could, please name, spelling, and who you are representing, and if you are elected, happy to have you and if you are not, please just acknowledge that you have the authority to speak on behalf of who you represent. Over to you, Chris.

Chris Price, Qawalangin
Tribe of Unalaska

Good afternoon, I, this is Chris Price. The Qawalangin Tribe, or are you hearing me?

3:16:13

Adam Geisler

OK, I am, if you wouldn't mind saying the name of the tribe and spell, spell it out for us, please.

3:16:20

Chris Price, Qawalangin
Tribe of Unalaska

Sure, Chris Price, Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska. On the Aleutians on the Bering Sea. So yeah, I don't have a whole lot more to add today um, you guys, really, everybody hit it pretty hard. I am the CEO, so I am authorized to speak on behalf of the tribal council on this issue so thank you guys again for your time and having this consultation, providing the opportunity to get some feedback. This is a big, you know, this is a game changer for many of our communities. We're a small tribe, we have about 1200 tribal members. So we, again, we're out in the Bering Sea, we're on an island. So, and then the challenges of, you know, connectivity in a very remote location with. You know, we also are really high level commerce area as well for shipping and fishing, the fishing industry. So, all our costs are really high anyway, just to get off, to start out, you know, we started out with some of the highest costs in the nation just to get, you know, basic Internet service, that most people would be really surprised in the lower 48, what we, um, you know, what we have. But we are thankful for, for some of the companies that have started to serve our area. And building partnerships as a tribe with those companies is instrumental for us to try to have this opportunity that we have, that Congress has look to see that there's a way to make tribes eligible and able to take advantage of this opportunity. So, you know, again, thanks for your time today.

3:18:21

You know, that as far as the three questions go.

3:18:28

We, what was the first, and we just make available the additional funding. Um, yeah, I mean, we got our application out on time, and it was a stretch and it was stressful and a short notice, and we had high-tech folks helping us with our application and goodwill and people, you know, trying to help us. So, it took a lot of expertise to get this application in and we, you know, we paid for most of

that out of our own pocket. So, we knew that there was some risk and all these things involved, and hopefully we can, you know, make a good case that we're an important community that needs the, this type of support. In Alaska, again, we're just a huge group of folks that we all have many similar issues. But, then again, we're very different in some, some of our locations. So, we're really looking to get the fiber put into our islands and we end up competing with large other large companies, and if we don't get an opportunity, then these other companies will end up owning the fiber out here for years to come, and it'll be really an unfair advantage for tribes and tribal members. We won't be able to control costs in any way, we'll lack redundancy and to create, you know, other economic hardship. So, we're really hoping to increase the competition out here and just not let all the big companies get all the, the opportunities in Alaska and really let the tribes have a fair and equal opportunity that it appears that Congress and you guys are trying to provide. And so, we're excited, we're hopeful, it's hard.

3:20:22

We've got to just do what we can sometimes to make these applications work. You know, we'll work with you guys if you've got a short timeline, we'll get it in there. We're glad more funds are coming down the pipe, so we're looking to try to apply for those as well and how that works out with planning, I mean we're just going to have to do our best, it's not perfect. But, uh, no, I don't have a whole lot more to contribute, but I really learned a lot today. And there's some excellent speakers that we had today that have a lot of good expertise, so glad it's being recorded. Thank you guys for your time.

Adam Geisler

3:20:58

Absolutely, Mister Price, and so, I'd just to, just to kind of round out the questions. So, do you see this additional \$2 billion that was just allocated, do you think we should add that? Because, you said, you add an application in, in this round? Do you think we should add some of that \$2 billion to the to the pool of applications we're looking at now, or do you think we should hold off?

Chris Price, Qawalangin
Tribe of Unalaska

3:21:28

I mean, I think, I think you should give the other tribes a chance because they were under a lot of pressure to get applications in. And I think that if we build a system that helps all the tribes, you know, at some basic level, it's going to help our, you know, all the tribes in our nation significantly. But, at the same time, we had to, you know, we had to invest a lot of time and resources to get it done in the short window, and of course, our application could have been better, you know, if we had extra time. So, just to take all that into consideration and I'd appreciate it.

Adam Geisler

3:22:04

So, I'm going to ask you another follow up, because you're, you're, what you're saying is, is, yes. I'm hearing you say yes, maybe we should consider that because you guys put a lot of time and effort in.

3:22:15

But the converse of it as you're recognizing others, so is there, if you had to cut the baby, which are, which is what we're going get started especially on this, but I've, I've opened up a little bit more go ahead.

Chris Price, Qawalangin
Tribe of Unalaska

3:22:27

Yeah. I mean, I know what you're saying and we know, you guys got to make a choice here to cut the baby and, you know, for tribes that didn't get a chance, you know, there should be some opportunities down the line for them to get get back into the, to the program. But I think the tribes that put the effort in, from, from this early point, though, we did start last September one was, I think, so, we spent a lot of our summer on this. Um, so, yeah, I think that the tribes that submitted on time should certainly get a high level of consideration.

Adam Geisler

3:23:09

So, I'm hearing you, say, you're not sure what, what a percent would be, but, you, you still think there should be something back for those that didn't apply. Or I guess even those that may, well, those who didn't apply is what you said. OK, um, and as you mentioned, I imagine timeframe, if we were to do another NOFO, um, alright, you talk about building seasons. Yeah, what, what is the right? Just where I? I've had enough conversations with folks? When we do have a recording going so from your land out there, what would that be?

Chris Price, Qawalangin
Tribe of Unalaska

3:23:44

I mean, for us, it's just like, we gotta go like, we gotta go right now. The sooner the better, because, the way costs are going up and the way that just trying to get a contractor and get things in place, the sooner we get notice of potential funding, then we can start working on putting something together. But, no, I would say, as soon as possible, I would say you know within the next 90 days.

Adam Geisler

3:24:14

Oh, so, if we were, if we were to do a second NOFO, you would you would suggest in the next, right, because build times, I'm assuming in the next 90 days, is that what I'm hearing you say?

Chris Price, Qawalangin
Tribe of Unalaska

Yeah.

3:24:27

Adam Geisler

All right. I, very much and I say Unalaska that unique Alaskan perspective from Unalaska. Thank you, thank you so much, Mr. Price for being here and bringing that perspective from out there in the Bering Strait and along the Aleutian. So, again, another aspect of the dynamics that we're working through here at NTIA. So thank you for bringing that perspective.

3:24:55

Thank you, OK. Well, that does wind us.

Gilbert Resendez

Oh, we did. We had one, hand again. In order to distinguish an acknowledge, Nicole Borromeo, hope I pronounced that correctly,

Adam Geisler

OK, Nicole Borromeo. All right, welcome to call. We're going to go ahead and bring you off mute, or Ms. Borromeo. Welcome to the consultation today, and the floor is yours.

3:25:22

If you don't mind, can you please name and spelling who you're representing and that you have the authorization to represent who you're representing?

Nicole Borromeo, Alaska
Federation of Natives

3:25:47

OK, I think I unmuted myself now, can you hear me, Adam? Again? Well, OK, fantastic, thank you so much. My name is Nicole Borromeo. I have the pleasure of serving as the Executive Vice President and General Counsel for the Alaska Federation of Natives. I'm speaking today on behalf of the Broadband Use and Adoption Consortium that we filed, that includes 31 Alaska Native Tribal governments, among other entities that, in total, represents 73 eligible entities in Alaska. And I'm speaking on behalf of those entities, the staff.

Adam Geisler

3:26:27

Great, welcome.

Nicole Borromeo, Alaska
Federation of Natives

3:26:29

Thank you so much. Before I get started, I just want to say hats off to you, Adam, and NTIA. These are always my favorite consultations to participate in, because you know the subject you listen, and you provide answers in real time. So thank you and I say it every time as well, if you could just train the rest of the departments, we'd be light years ahead in a lot of areas. AFN is going to submit comments by the 31st but just providing some reactions in real time to what we've heard today,

3:27:03

Subject to what our final grant comments say. You know, where we really are questioning whether there should be a specific amount that is set aside of this next round of funding for round one applicants. Because tribes are dealing with various aspects of a pandemic that makes getting an application of this nature and on time and complete, very difficult. And that's generally, it's in general to the typical under capitalization and limited human resources that they have. So if we just cut a whole swath of tribes out because they were having to prioritize on the health of their tribal citizens, or they had to make difficult funding decisions or staff decisions on what they could focus on, it doesn't seem fair or in spirit of what this money is intended to do, which is to increase broadband across tribal lands.

3:27:57

So, something that NTIA may consider instead of a specific set-aside, is a priority for applications that are re submitted if you issue an additional NOFO, but, again, we're going to go back and tease that out a little bit. But, there did seem to be an element of various here, that we should address during this tribal consultation. Secondly, in terms of if you issue an NOFO when should it come? I agree with the last speaker, sooner rather than later, the fourth quarter seems

rather late. And especially if you're not going to do a set aside a portion of this \$2 billion for round one applicants about you, welcome those round when applicants who aren't funded to resubmit and in second NOFO in 90 days seem sufficient to re-apply.

3:28:41

I will say, though, in terms of how you allocate the money, having awards issued is going to be vitally important to those notices, those are two considerations for tribes that may seek to re-apply. And that's what I have today. Thanks, Adam.

Adam Geisler

3:29:01

Thank you. I really appreciate Ms. Borromeo for, for dialing in from Alaska and I know, again, the representation that you have for so many of the eligible entities and tribal governments within Alaska. So as always, you leave me with a lot to lots of consider in a very succinct explanation, so thank you for being with us today, and again, a lot to consider. We will keep our eyes open for your written comments as well. Moving forward. So thank you for being with us.

Nicole Borromeo, Alaska
Federation of Natives

(Yup'ik for thank you) Quyana, and thanks to you to Gilbert.

3:29:35

Adam Geisler

All right, well, I want to thank everybody for spending the last 3.5 hours with us today to have, I mean, really important conversation.

3:29:46

And I want to end just a couple of thoughts here, the first is that we don't take this decision lightly and you put that in the very beginning. This is not an easy thing for us to navigate and that is why we are so important. We understand that. Carol, if we can meet some folks? There we go. We do understand that the need is great and the significance of the investment in this infrastructure is going to change the lives and landscapes of the people within your communities. And that is no easy task to take on, to be just completely candid with you, and that anything that we, that we take on lightly within our team.

3:30:36

And I know you've heard me say this today, but I'm gonna say it again, as we round this out, we understand and hear the importance of you, of being notified in order to be able to make decisions about other funding mechanisms and or opportunities. I will also, though, say, um, please continue to apply for those things that do make sense to you and the other funding opportunities that are out there, there's an unprecedented amount of opportunity, which is good and bad when you are resource constrained. And I did hear that very clearly today.

3:31:11

But we will likely never see this type of an investment again in our lifetimes and the time is now to explore all opportunities. Um, and so I did want to double down just on that component with a recognition of, uh, the caveats and the aspects that I've heard from all of you as to why that may not be the right path for everyone. So, in closing, I want to thank all of you that have spent the time

to provide your thoughtful comments. It is critical for us to know where you're all coming from.

3:31:43

All of you come from such unique and different regions of the country and have such unique and different needs for your tribes, and tribal governments, and the communities that you represent.

3:31:54

And know that we will continue to work as hard as we can to get you the answers that you're looking for and to improve this program and implement it in a way that, that will be advantageous and helpful for your communities. And, know that, that comes from the bottom of my heart, my team. And all the folks here at NTIA that have a passion for trying to address this issue and this challenge.

3:32:15

So, with that, the last piece that I will say is, again, please, if you want to take some time on your thoughts, thank you, Carol, you read my mind.

3:32:25

If you want to take, take some time to respond to these, to these questions are in the dear Tribal leader Letter. We have an amended, dear tribal leader letter up on our website at NTIA. And please submit your, your, your comments in writing to, there's a number of you. We had over 270 plus on the line today. I realize that a lot of you just may be sending in written comments, so we look forward to reading those as well.

3:32:49

And as always, if you have any questions, shoot me an e-mail. I have a different phone number, sort of you have found that out. I'm also happy to engage on any types of conversations that we need to have as well.

3:33:03

So please, again, thank you for your patience with us, our team, and the process, and thank you for your continued participation in trying to address this problem as we do this together. So, with that, this will now conclude our tribal consultation, Again, potentially more to come based on the outcome of today, or any secondary NOFO that we may consider.

3:33:28

Again, thank you for being here with us. I know that it takes a lot of time out of your day, but it was important that we did this. No\$úun Lóoviq! My heart is good. Blessings to you and your family, and everybody, stay safe. Thank you again. Have a great day.