

Alliance for Tribal Clean Energy Partners with NREL to Launch Groundbreaking Tribal Transportation Electrification Study

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The [Alliance for Tribal Clean Energy](#), an indigenous-led nonprofit that supports the self-determined efforts of Native American tribes to transition to a clean energy future, announced a strategic partnership today with the [National Renewable Energy Laboratory](#) (NREL) to launch the Tribal Transportation Electrification study.



The 18-month project seeks to build a collaborative dialogue with tribes. It will focus on collecting meaningful data and gaining a deeper understanding of tribal perspectives regarding the need for electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure and its appropriate placement on or near reservations. The study will involve extensive tribal outreach, ensuring that tribal input is central to shaping the outcomes. In addition, the project will respect and acknowledge the significance of sacred sites and treaty lands while affirming tribal data sovereignty throughout the research process.

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*Chéri Smith, President & CEO
of the Alliance for Tribal Clean
Energy*

“The Alliance is thrilled to partner with NREL on this ground-breaking study. This partnership marks a crucial step in addressing transportation inequities in rural and underserved tribal communities,” said Chéri Smith, President & CEO of the Alliance for Tribal Clean Energy. “By focusing on the need for electric vehicle infrastructure, this

study will gather valuable insights to better understand the transportation challenges Native communities face. The findings will inform decision-makers in both public and private sectors on how to make strategic and culturally respectful investments in EV infrastructure. Through meaningful tribal outreach, we aim to support the self-determined efforts of Native American tribes to transition to a clean and regenerative energy future.”

The project will deliver a Tribal Transportation Electrification guidebook and fact sheets and put tribes in the driver's seat, allowing them to contribute to ideas already formulated around clean energy. The guidebook and fact sheets will be valuable resources, focusing on practical insights rather than comparing technologies like Level 2 and 3 chargers. As trusted, objective evaluators of clean energy solutions, NREL maintains its role as an impartial advisor.

While the project will consider the importance of communication infrastructure, critical for EV chargers, its focus will remain on offering a broad perspective rather than delving into specific gaps in broadband coverage. Grounded in economic development principles, the study will emphasize the opportunities that clean energy presents for tribal communities.

Aligned with the Alliance's mission of supporting tribal sovereignty, this project will not advocate for any specific EV charging infrastructure. It will provide tribes with the knowledge and tools to make informed, self-determined choices about clean energy. The guidebook and fact sheets will empower both Native and non-Native planners with clear options and considerations, respecting the unique priorities of native nations as they explore sustainable transportation solutions.

If you are involved in tribal energy planning and would like to participate in the Tribal Transportation Electrification study, please email Tribalev@nrel.gov.

About the Alliance for Tribal Clean Energy

The Alliance for Tribal Clean Energy is an indigenous-led 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting Native American tribes in their self-determined transition to clean energy. Through no-cost technical and financial assistance, policy advocacy, education, and workforce development support, and impactful convening and events, the Alliance supports tribes in advancing economic development, combating climate change, and strengthening sovereignty with the regenerative power of clean energy.

The critical work of the Alliance is fully supported by philanthropy, including the MacArthur Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, Blank Foundation, Invest in Our Future Fund, The Lemelson Foundation, Energy Foundation, and other major philanthropies, family offices, and individual donors. For more information, visit www.tribalcleanenergy.org.

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