



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National Tribal Air Association wins EPA's Clean Air Excellence Award

This award recognizes NTAA as a national leader in air quality and climate change policy.

Flagstaff, AZ – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency today awarded the Clean Air Excellence Award in State/Local/Tribal Policy to the [National Tribal Air Association](#) (NTAA). Leadership of NTAA consists of Executive Committee members, a primary and an alternate elected from each of EPA's ten regional Tribal Caucus' as well as from Alaska. The administrative staff support of NTAA is administered by Northern Arizona University's [Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals \(ITEP\)](#).

The Clean Air Excellence Awardees are selected by EPA's [Clean Air Act Advisory Committee](#). The award recognizes and honors outstanding innovative efforts to help make progress in achieving cleaner air. Winning entries must directly or indirectly reduce pollutant emissions, demonstrate innovation, offer sustainable outcomes and provide a model for others to follow.

“It is my honor to accept this award on behalf of the NTAA's Executive Committee and ITEP staff that support the important work of the NTAA and its membership,” said NTAA Chairwoman Kriebs, Environmental Director for the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho. “The NTAA is committed to advancing air quality protection and reducing environmental pollution for our nation's Tribes, and this award recognizes those efforts.”

“NTAA’s Clean Air Excellence Award reflects the hard work done by the many Tribes across the nation, who are important partners with federal, state, and local agencies, in protecting both ambient and indoor air quality, and in mitigating climate change,” said Chairwoman Kriebs. “Despite several centuries of oppression and trauma, Tribes across this great nation continue to prosper, grow and carry with pride the status of the First Americans. The NTAA Executive Committee understands this legacy and will continue to serve all Tribes to build Tribal sovereignty and ensure Tribal partnerships with federal, state and local agencies remain strong in order to advance our nation’s air quality.”

NTAA Project Director Andy Bessler stated that this award was the result of dedicated service from many, including NTAA Member Tribes and Executive Committee representatives, as well as NTAA’s Senior Research Specialist Dara Marks-Marino, Program Coordinator Mariah Ashley and the other support staff at ITEP.

NTAA was founded in 2002 and is one of the nation’s largest Tribal membership organizations currently with 151 federally recognized Principal Member Tribes. NTAA’s mission is to advance air quality management policies and programs, consistent with the needs, interests and unique legal status of American Indian Tribes and Alaska Natives.

[Learn more about EPA’s Clean Air Excellence Award.](#)

Background on the National Tribal Air Association:

In 1999, Congress amended the Clean Air Act with the Tribal Authority Rule that allows Tribes to regulate air quality in a manner similar to states. Federally recognized Tribes and Alaskan Native Villages recognized the need for a national Tribal air quality organization which would help support Tribes on the policy side of air quality management. In response, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) in 2000 passed Resolution STP-00-074 that endorsed an effort to “resolve and define the membership, mission, and governance of an air management organization, and to bring the organization into existence.”

In 2001, the EPA Office of Air and Radiation (OAR) initiated a cooperative agreement “to strengthen tribal air programs and their abilities, in order to enhance communication and coordination on policy and regulatory activities among federally recognized tribes and between OAR and federally recognized Indian tribes and Alaska Native Villages.”

In 2002, NCAI Resolution SD-02-20 passed to “support in principal the activities, projects and programs of the National Tribal Air Association in its endeavors to address and affect tribal air quality management issues” and “supports the responsibility of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to maintain its government to government relationship with tribes as well as maintaining its relationship with the National Tribal Air Association in fulfilling its mission and goals on behalf of Tribal air quality management.”

NTAA has operated since 2002 funded by a cooperative agreement through the U.S. EPA’s Office of Air and Radiation. Since 2013, NTAA has been administered by Northern Arizona

University's Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals. More information on the NTAA can be found on NTAA's website, www.ntaatribalair.org

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