

Tribal Environmental Resiliency Resources Act (TERRA Act)

Fact Sheet

One Tribe's Fight Against Environmental Threats

Over the past decade, the **Shoalwater Bay Tribe**, a Pacific Coast Tribe on Willapa Bay in Northwest Washington, has battled increased erosion, flooding, and sea level rise, as well as heightened tsunami risk. With a reservation barely 15 feet above sea level, the Tribe launched a **community-driven relocation project** to seek higher ground.

Problem: Current Resources Are Inaccessible and Inefficient

The Tribe's relocation project is estimated to cost **\$120 million**. For reference, \$120 million is also the **entire FY 2023 budget** for BIA's Tribal Climate Resilience Annual Award Program. While the Tribe has been able to source some funding from Congress and federal agencies, they are nowhere near their goal.

Sufficient federal resources do exist, but the Tribe's efforts are hampered by siloed funding opportunities across multiple agencies, burdensome program requirements, and short-sighted grant programs. For example:

- The Tribe's relocation project is expected to take **over 5 years**, but most federal environmental resiliency grants require funding to be exhausted within **1–2 years**.
- Currently there are open applications for **over 60 grant programs** offered by **at least 10 different federal agencies** related to these issues, forcing Tribes like Shoalwater Bay to expend vital time and resources to cobble together a strategy for navigating this complicated bureaucracy.
- Most federal programs, particularly those with broad eligibility, have **burdensome eligibility, cost-sharing, pass-through, reporting, and other administrative requirements**, contributing to bloated agency budgets and straining staff capacity, while also making them underutilized by environmentally vulnerable Tribes like Shoalwater Bay.

Solution: Consolidate Resources & Eliminate Unnecessary Spending with TERRA

The TERRA Act **streamlines administrative resources** by waiving statutory, regulatory, and administrative requirements associated with federal programs integrated into TERRA Plans. Such waivers will maximize the reach of federal funds, broaden access to federal programs for the most environmentally vulnerable Tribes, and reduce administrative costs by increasing efficiency. For instance, a waiver conceivably could:

- Waive the **requirement to have a formal hazard mitigation plan** in place to qualify for FEMA non-emergency disaster assistance grants.
- Waive the **15% match requirement** for the Department of Energy's Grid Resilience State and Tribal Formula Grants.
- Waive the **pass-through requirement** to provide funding directly to Tribes from the Land and Water Conservation Fund rather than through states.
- Waive the requirement for **quarterly performance progress reports** for the EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program.