



Proposed Solutions to Regulatory Barriers to Tribal Solar Development

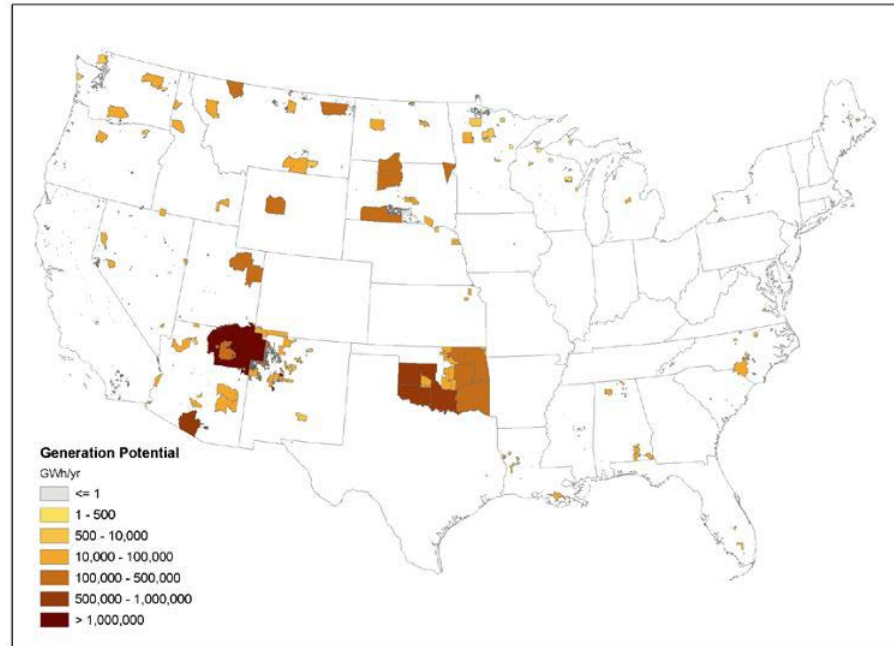
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National Tribal and Indigenous Climate
Conference
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Agenda

- 1** *Addressing Regulatory Barriers to Tribal Solar Deployment Overview*
- 2** **Barrier 4: Net-Metering Limits or Lack of a Net-Metering Policy**
- 3** **Case Study: Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe**
- 4** **Next Steps**

*Addressing Regulatory
Barriers to Tribal Solar
Deployment*

Tribal lands represent approximately 6.5% of total U.S. utility-scale renewable energy technical potential.



Photovoltaic generation potential by reservation



This project articulates key regulatory challenges or barriers that affect solar projects **specifically or disproportionately** because they are located on tribal lands.

This project is working to ready stakeholders to address regulatory barriers by:

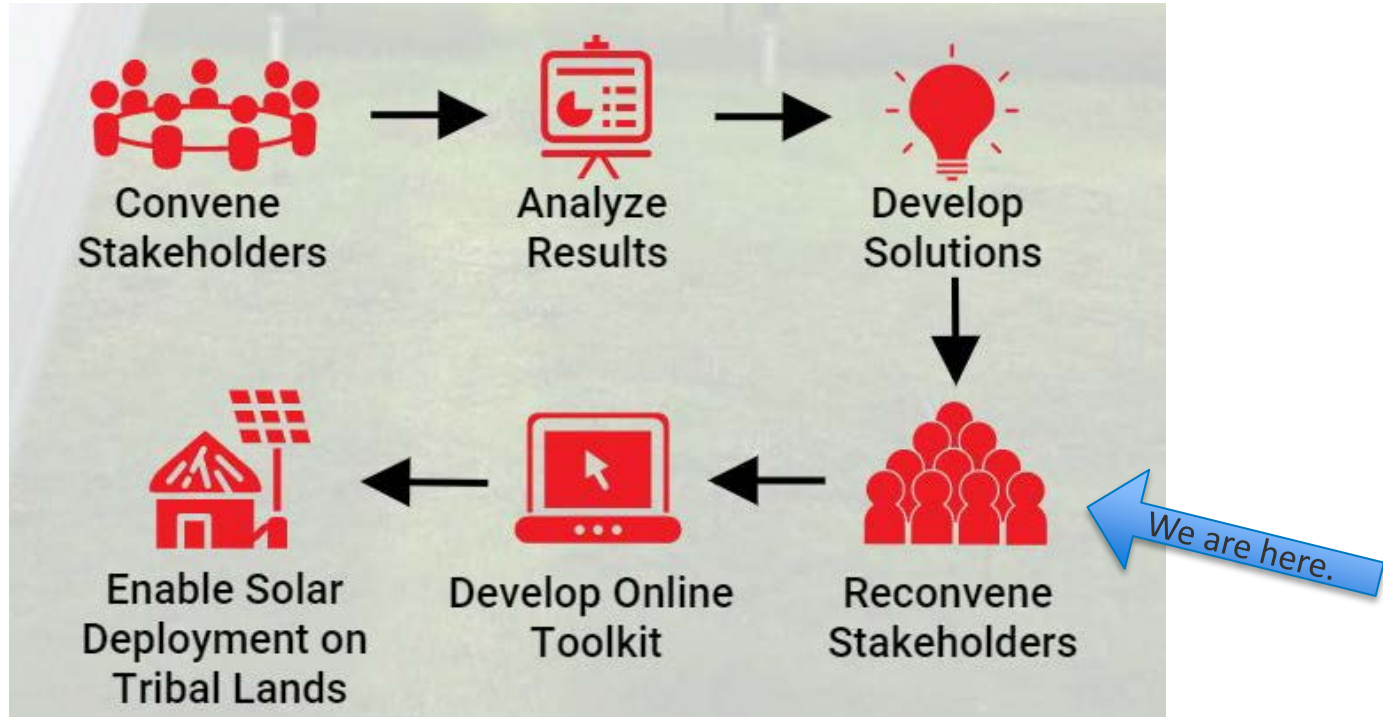
- Increasing institutional capacity for tribes and regulatory bodies
- Developing frameworks
- Providing trainings
- Developing a document repository.

The Tribal Solar Initiative is a partnership between the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) and the Midwest Tribal Energy Resources Association (MTERA).

Project Overview



Project Approach



Regulatory Barrier

Regulatory Process: Any decision-making process that involves making rules that govern where, when, and how a solar project can be developed.

Jurisdictional Level	Organization
Tribal	Tribal government
Local Utility	Cooperative utility (or similar) governing board
Local	County
State	State public utility commission
Regional	Independent system operator/regional transmission operator
Federal	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Solar Project Scale



Barrier Four: Net-Metering Limits or Lack of a Net-Metering Policy

Overview

Net metering: A practice in which utilities credit a system owner for the excess electricity generated by their solar panels.

Net-metering rules (or lack thereof) can play a large role in the economics of a solar project.

- Relevant project scale: Distributed, behind-the-meter (rooftop)
- Relevant jurisdiction: Local utility governed by the state or utility board of directors.



30-kW rooftop PV array that powers the Forest County Potawatomi Community administration building

Barriers

Three ways in which a net-metering policy may be a barrier to tribal solar development:

1. Compensation rate
2. Project or state/utility-wide size caps
3. No net-metering rate.



80-kW parking canopy solar system at Agua Caliente reduces Tribal office electricity cost from \$22,000 to \$200 annually.

Solutions

Short-Term/Workaround Solutions	Long-Term Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be aware of net-metering restrictions early in planning process• Split up large project into smaller projects that meet size caps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with utility or state rulemaking to establish or change net-metering rules• Include net-metering when negotiating right of ways.

See Issue Brief 5:
Utility Tribal Engagement

Case Study: Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe

Challenge: Net-Metering Policy

- Minnesota's net-metering policy allows for solar systems of 40 kW or less.
- Leech Lake wanted to install a 200-kW project.
- Divided the project into five 39.9-kW projects instead
- Allows the Tribe to use net-metering.



One of the five solar PV projects

See Barrier 4:
Net-Metering Limits or Lack of a
Net-Metering Policy

Challenge: Tribe Served by Five Separate Utilities

Solution: Evaluate each utility policy to determine costs and benefits.

Leech Lake sited the five solar arrays in four different utility service territories. The Tribe negotiated four separate contracts using each utility's virtual net-metering system.



Installing one of the five solar PV projects

See Barrier 3:
Tribes Served by Multiple Utilities

Next Steps

Guidebook Available for Comment



Draft:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e8fda58c9a6ee72f8d6a871/t/6247155d9e0af24c6331c7b0/1648825721171/Final+Guidebooks+Draft.pdf>.

Comments: Use [this form](#) or send to laura.beshilas@nrel.gov.

Thank you!

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