

The Native American Enterprise Initiative (NAEI) is the natural outgrowth of two groups with increasingly convergent goals: the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Indian Country. A quiet revolution of entrepreneurship and economic diversification continues to expand and provide growing opportunities for tribes, ANCs, and their members. At the same time, this renaissance presents an increasing set of challenges for tribes and tribal enterprises.

NAEI seeks to capture this opportunity in our nation's economic future and extend the Chamber's advocacy to include this emerging sector of our economy. Drawing on the Chamber's long-standing track record of successful business advocacy, NAEI provides value to Indian Country by removing legislative and regulatory roadblocks that hinder economic success.

Legislative Agenda

NAEI's Leadership Council develops the policy priorities of the Initiative. Some of the issues NAEI staff advocate for during the 115th Congress follow:

- **Energy Development**—Rep. Don Young (R-AK) introduced a bill to facilitate the development of energy on Indian lands. H.R. 210 would be an important step in furthering efforts by Congress to encourage economic development throughout Indian Country by fostering tribal sovereignty and eliminating cumbersome federal bureaucratic processes. In the Senate, Chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs John Hoeven (R-ND) introduced S. 245, which would, among other things, streamline the process for approval of tribal energy resource agreements, bolstering tribal sovereignty and self-determination.
- **Tribal Sovereignty**—The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has increasingly encroached upon tribal sovereignty with uncertain claims of jurisdiction over tribal business and government operations, even when those enterprises are located entirely on tribal lands. Court challenges have produced mixed results, and the time is ripe to pursue a legislative remedy. Both Rep. Todd Rokita (R-IN) and Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS) introduced bills (H.R. 986 and S. 63) that aim to solve this problem.



- **Environmental Protection Agency**—With extensive regulatory power, EPA’s overbearing approach to Indian Country is particularly inappropriate. Curbing increasing regulations from EPA (such as those relative to the Endangered Species Act) would accelerate permitting processes and devolve authority and sovereignty back to tribal governments.
- **Land Into Trust**—In the wake of the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Carvieri v. Salazar*, many bills have been introduced in the House and the Senate to amend the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. These bills seek to authorize land to be taken into trust for tribes federally recognized after 1934, as well as affirm land already taken into trust by the secretary of the Interior.
- **Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act Reauthorization**—Reauthorization of NAHASDA is a Chamber priority. Past bills in the House and the Senate seeking reauthorization represent a positive step toward removing roadblocks to economic success in Indian Country. They include provisions that would streamline the approval and administrative processes, consolidate the environmental review process, and establish a HUD-Veterans Affairs supportive housing program for Native American veterans. The bills would also facilitate construction in Indian Country, producing jobs and increasing household income.
- **Taxation**—Congress is engaged in an extensive debate over the future of the U.S. tax system. This debate presents opportunities to address inequalities and deficiencies in the tax code for Indian Country. Legislation like H.R. 3138, the Tribal Tax and Investment Reform Act of 2017, would help level the playing field for tribal sovereigns vis-à-vis states relative to bonding, pension plans, charities, child support enforcement, and adoptions.

For more information on NAEI’s legislative activities, visit
www.uschamber.com/NAEI.

