

# September 2022 Federal Policy Update

APII tracked the following bills and resolutions affecting Indian Country for the month of September 2022. This list includes legislation that was newly introduced or had other activity between August 26, 2022 and September 23, 2022.

1. **[S.2421](#) - Smoke Planning and Research Act of 2021. Sponsored by Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR).**
  - This bill authorizes the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to conduct research on wildfire smoke.
  - This bill includes a competitive grant program to assist eligible entities, including Indian Tribes, in developing and implementing collaborative community plans for mitigating the impacts of smoke emissions from wildland fires.
  - Hearings held by the Committee on Environment and Public Works on September 7, 2022.
  
2. **[H.R.8789](#) - Connecting Forever Families Act of 2022. Sponsored by Rep. Blake Moore (R-UT-1).**
  - This bill temporarily increases funding to the Court Improvement Program, to improve the ability of courts to conduct remote child welfare proceedings.
  - Section 438(c)(3), "Indian Tribes," is amended to by inserting "\$2,000,000 in the case of the 1st 5 fiscal years that begin after such effective date, and \$1,000,000 for each succeeding fiscal year." This is an increase of the previously stipulated \$1,000,000 per fiscal year.
  - Referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means by the House of Representatives on September 9, 2022.
  
3. **[S.3092](#) - FIRE Act. Sponsored by Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA).**
  - This bill amends the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to improve the provision of certain disaster assistance.
  - Amendments include provisions on cultural competency, in which the President shall, in consultation with Indian Tribal governments, ensure that any individual providing case management services to victims of a major disaster is appropriately trained to address cultural competency and respectful care practices impacts from major disasters in communities, and to individuals, with socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
  - Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 482. On September 12, 2022.
  
4. **[S.4830](#) - A bill to reaffirm actions taken by the Secretary of the Interior for the benefit of Indian Tribes, and for other purposes. Sponsored by Jerry Moran (R-KS).**

- This bill reaffirms actions taken by the Secretary of the Interior for the benefit of Indian Tribes by confirming that any action taken by the Secretary of the Interior pursuant to the Act of June 18, 1934 (commonly known as the “Indian Reorganization Act”) (48 Stat. 984, chapter 576; 25 U.S.C. 5101 et seq.), for any Indian Tribe that was Federally recognized on the date of the action is ratified and confirmed, to the extent such action is subjected to challenge based on whether the Indian Tribe was Federally recognized or under Federal jurisdiction on June 18, 1934, as if the action had, by prior Act of Congress, been specifically authorized and directed.
  - Read twice and referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs on September 13, 2022.
5. **[S.4839](#) - State Opioid Response Grant Authorization Act of 2022. Sponsored by Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-W).**
- This bill reauthorizes and expands a grant program for State and Tribal response to opioid and stimulant use and misuse.
  - Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, and Urban Indian organizations will have a 5 percent set aside of the amounts made available for each fiscal year for grant awards.
  - Read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions on September 13, 2022.
6. **[H.R.8108](#) (related bill: [S.4421](#)) - Advancing Tribal Parity on Public Land Act. Sponsored by Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva (D-AZ-03).**
- This bill seeks to protect cultural sites located on Federal Land, to improve consultation with Tribes, and to bring parity to Tribes with regard to Federal Public land management laws. Among other provisions, this bill would require that Tribal consultations must take place before disposal of a tract of land containing a sacred site and that the disposal would not impact the rights and interests of any interested Tribe and would not impair access to a reservation. It also establishes a Tribal right of first refusal in the sale of a tract.
  - Subcommittee Hearings Held by the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands on September 14, 2022.
7. **[H.R.8109](#) (related bill: [S.4423](#)) - Tribal Cultural Areas Protection Act. Sponsored by Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva (D-AZ-03).**
- This bill preserves opportunities for Indian Tribes to undertake religious, cultural, spiritual, medicinal, or traditional practices within Tribal cultural sites. In addition it would also permanently protect the religious, cultural, spiritual, scenic, ecological, medicinal, and traditional values of Tribal cultural sites. It would also give Tribes the opportunity to engage in the preservation and management of Tribal cultural sites on public land.
  - Subcommittee Hearings Held by the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands on September 14, 2022.

8. [H.R.8115](#) - **To amend the Recreation and Public Purposes Act to authorize sales and leases of certain Federal land to Federally recognized Indian Tribes, and for other purposes. Sponsored by Rep. Doug LaMalfa (R-CA-01).**
- This bill authorizes the Department of the Interior to sell or lease public lands to Federally recognized Indian Tribes for recreational or public purposes, subject to annual acreage limitations.
  - Subcommittee Hearings Held by the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands on September 14, 2022.
9. [H.R.8387](#) - **Parity for Tribal Law Enforcement Act. Sponsored by Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-WA-4).**
- This bill authorizes the law enforcement officers of any Indian Tribe that has contracted or compacted any or all Federal law enforcement functions through the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act to enforce Federal law within the Tribe's jurisdiction if those officers meet certain qualifications. These qualifications include completing training and passing an adjudicated background investigation.
  - Subcommittee Hearings Held by House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Indigenous Peoples of the United States on September 14, 2022.
10. [H.R.8719](#) - **Great Bend of the Gila Conservation Act. Sponsored by Rep. Raul M. Grijalva (D-AZ-3).**
- This bill establishes the Great bend of the Gila National Conservation Area in the State of Arizona to conserve, protect, and enhance for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations the Indigenous ancestral, archaeological, cultural, historic, geologic, hydrologic, natural, recreational, educational, and scenic resources of the area.
  - Hearings held by House Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands on September 14, 2022.
11. [S.4865](#) - **Digital Equity Foundation Act of 2022. Sponsored by Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM).**
- This bill establishes the Foundation for Digital Equity.
  - The Foundation for Digital Equity's goal, among others, is to support the goals of the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program.
  - The Foundation may support a grant made under the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program if there are not adequate appropriations to support such a grant.
  - Read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation on September 15, 2022.
12. [H.R.8859](#) (related bill: [S.4878](#)) - **Secure Rural and Tribal Lands Act. Sponsored by Rep. Joe Neguse (D-CO-2).**

- This bill amends title VI of the Social Security Act to improve the Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund by adding, among other items, that the Secretary shall reserve \$500,000,000 of the total amount appropriated to allocate and pay to eligible Tribal governments.
- The Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund provides flexible support for eligible revenue sharing counties and eligible Tribal governments to meet their jurisdiction's needs. Specifically, the statute directs that recipients may use funds for any governmental purpose other than a lobbying activity.
- Referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Reform on September 15, 2022.

**13. [H.R.8770](#) - Expanding the Voluntary Opportunities for Translations in Elections Act. Sponsored by Rep. Nikema Williams (D-GA-5).**

- This bill modifies certain notice requirements, to study certain election requirements, to clarify certain election requirements.
- Whenever an applicable State or political subdivision provides any registration or voting notices, forms, instructions, assistance, or other materials or information relating to the electoral process, including ballots, it shall provide them in the language of the applicable minority group as well as in the English language.
- Translators for voters may be required for American Indian or Alaska Natives unless the Tribal government has notified the Attorney General that the language is unwritten or the Tribal government does not want a written translation.
- Ordered to be Reported (Amended) by the Yeas and Nays: 22 - 11 by the Committee on the Judiciary on September 21, 2022.

**14. [H.Res.1249](#) - Of inquiry directing the Secretary of the Interior to transmit certain documents to the House of Representatives relating to the impact of illegal immigration on Federal or Tribal lands. Sponsored by Rep. Blake D. Moore (R-UT-1).**

- This resolution resolves that the Secretary of the Interior is directed to transmit to the House of Representatives, not later than fourteen days after the date of the adoption of this resolution, copies of any document, memorandum, correspondence, and other communication or any portion of any such communication, that refers or relates to the impact of illegal immigration on Federal or Tribal lands.
- Placed on the House Calendar, Calendar No. 108. on September 22, 2022.

**15. [H.Res.1250](#) - Of inquiry directing the Secretary of Homeland Security to transmit certain documents to the House of Representatives relating to the impact of illegal immigration on Federal or Tribal lands. Sponsored by Rep. Blake D. Moore (R-UT-1).**

- This resolution resolves that the Secretary of Homeland Security is directed to transmit to the House of Representatives, not later than fourteen days after the date of the adoption of this resolution, copies of any document, memorandum,

correspondence, and other communication or any portion of any such communication, that refers or relates to the impact of illegal immigration on Federal or Tribal lands.

- Placed on the House Calendar, Calendar No. 109. on September 22, 2022.

**16. [H.R.4374](#) - Broadband Internet Connections for Rural America Act. Sponsored by Rep. David Scott (D-GA-13).**

- This bill bolsters certain rural broadband programs of the Department of Agriculture. Funding would be available to Tribes for community broadband mapping as well as allowing a percentage of ReConnect grants to be used for the collection of broadband mapping data.
- House Committee on Energy and Commerce Granted extension for further consideration ending not later than Nov. 14, 2022 on September 22, 2022.

**17. [H.R.5768](#) - VICTIM Act of 2022. Sponsored by Rep. Val Butler Demmings (D-FL-10).**

- This bill directs the Department of Justice to establish a grant program for state, Tribal, or local law enforcement agencies or prosecuting offices (or groups of Tribal agencies or offices) to establish, implement, and administer violent incident clearance and technological investigative methods.
- The title of the measure was amended. Agreed to without objection on September 22, 2022.

**18. [S.4923](#) (related bill: [H.R.8960](#)) - A bill to require Federal law enforcement agencies to report on cases of missing or murdered Indians, and for other persons. Sponsored by Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV).**

- There was no text available for this bill at the time of publication.
- Read twice and referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs on September 22, 2022.

**19. [H.R.8954](#) - To amend part B of title IV of the Social Security Act to require States to comply with Federal standards established under the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978. Sponsored by Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA-27).**

- There was no text available for this bill at the time of publication.
- Referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means on September 22, 2022.