

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 6, 2026

The Honorable Hope Silvas  
Chairwoman  
Shivwits Band of Paiutes  
6060 W. 3650 N.  
Ivins, UT 84738

Dear Chairwoman Silvas:

Thank you for appearing before the Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs oversight hearing on February 3, 2026 to present testimony on "*Making Federal Economic Development Programs Work in Indian Country.*"

Your testimony was extremely helpful in defining the Subcommittee's understanding of the issues and I appreciate the effort you took to prepare and present your testimony. While many questions were asked during the hearing, the Subcommittee has additional questions, attached, for your reply.

Please forward your responses to Seneca Feys, Clerk, Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs at [Seneca.Feys@mail.house.gov](mailto:Seneca.Feys@mail.house.gov) by February 20, 2026. Your assistance in meeting this deadline is requested, as failure to meet it will be noted in the printed transcript.

Once again, thank you for your extensive effort in making this a valuable hearing.

Sincerely,



Jeff Hurd  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs

Enclosure

**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs**  
**Oversight Hearing**  
**1324 Longworth House Office Building**  
**February 3, 2026**  
**2:00 PM**

*"Making Federal Economic Development Programs Work in Indian Country"*

**Questions from Rep. Westerman** for The Honorable Hope Silvas, Chairwoman, Shivwits Band of Paiutes.

1. You state that a lack of communication and outreach from Departments and Agencies has been a barrier to the Shivwits Band of Paiutes and other small tribes in accessing federal economic development programs.
  - a. How do federal agencies typically communicate new funding or economic development opportunities to the Shivwits Band today, and where does that process most often break down for smaller tribes?
  - b. What would effective outreach look like from your perspective, and how should agencies measure whether that outreach is actually reaching small tribes early enough to be useful?
  
2. You explain how many programs are technically “open” to all tribes but, due to the requirements of the programs – like staffing, technical expertise, or financial reserves – less-resourced tribes are often unable to participate in practice.
  - a. What specific program design features or eligibility requirements most often prevent less-resourced tribes, like Shivwits, from participating effectively—even when programs are technically open to all?
  - b. Of those requirements, which impose the greatest burden relative to the value they provide?

3. How could greater flexibility in eligibility rules, timelines, or allowable uses make existing federal economic development programs more usable without the need to create new programs?
4. Congress has encouraged better interagency coordination to help tribes navigate federal capital and economic development programs. One tool intended to address this is the White House Council on Native American Affairs' Access to Capital Clearinghouse, located on the Bureau of Indian Affairs' website.
  - a. Has the Shivwits Band interacted with the Access to Capital Clearinghouse? If so, what aspects were helpful?
  - b. What changes would make it a more effective tool for small tribes going forward?
5. Which federal economic development programs have worked best for the Shivwits Band, and which have been the most difficult to use effectively?
6. When technical assistance has been most helpful to Shivwits, what made it effective? Was it timing, flexibility, delivery method, or integration with existing projects?
  - a. Are there ways agencies could deliver that kind of assistance more efficiently or earlier in the process, without creating new programs or increasing bureaucracy?
7. Economic development allows tribes to generate more revenue that they can, in turn, reinvest to support their communities.
  - a. How does having more revenue that the Tribe has generated itself change what the Shivwits Band is able to provide for its members?
  - b. What additional community needs could be addressed if economic development opportunities were easier to access?

8. What are the most important actions Congress should take – through oversight, statutory changes, or removal of barriers – to ensure federal economic development programs actually work for small tribes like Shivwits?