

**United States House of Representatives
Select Committee on the Climate Crisis**

**Hearing on July 15, 2021
“Advancing Environmental Justice Through Climate Action”**

Questions for the Record

**Nikki Cooley
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The Honorable Kathy Castor

- 1. Ms. Cooley, the impacts of the climate crisis are not distributed equitably, and we see many ways that climate impacts, from worsening heatwaves to floods, hurt low-income households and communities of color first and worst. What is the experience of Tribes and Indigenous communities working to recover from disasters and tap federal funding and resources?**

To the Honorable Kathy Castor:

Thank you for your question. Tribes and Indigenous communities have been addressing and responding to climate impacts and practicing emergency management for hundreds of years. They have had a long and varied history of storytelling and culturally unique ways of communicating with one another and with other communities. When seeking to communicate with Tribes, this rich tradition of storytelling and oral histories should be incorporated. With the addition of forced relocation, cultural assimilation *and* increasing climate change impacts, they have had the addition of learning and framing their emergency responses within a Western, non-Tribal and Indigenous paradigm.

Barriers such as a lack of effective leadership at local, state, federal, and Tribal levels of government have prevented Tribal emergency management programs from making greater progress on responding to and mitigating climate-driven hazards. It is estimated that currently less than 25% of all Tribal nations have an Office of Emergency Management, and less than 10% of those have full-time emergency managers. Without a Tribal emergency management program, it is deeply challenging to implement and adhere to a number of federal mandates and policies. It is imperative that there is an Increase resources and support at the state and federal levels to develop Tribal emergency management programs across Tribal and Indigenous nations.

Additionally, the increase in coordination with state and federally recognized Tribal nations is needed for the Tribal nations to respond to and prepare for climate driven hazards.

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