

REN-19-036: Supporting the Expansion of Opportunity Zones in Indian Country

Sponsor: Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Summary:

- Opportunity Zones were created by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 as an incentive for investment in economically distressed areas.
- These zones are designated by state governors which does not allow for tribal nations to designate their own Opportunity Zones.
- REN-19-036 supports the expansion of Opportunity Zones across Indian Country.

Issue:

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 created Opportunity Zones which are economically-distressed communities where new investments, under certain conditions, may be eligible for preferential tax treatment. Currently, more than 50 percent of tribal census tracts are eligible for Opportunity Zone designation.

The current process for Opportunity Zone designation is problematic for Indian Country because it places the authority with state governors and does not allow for tribal nations to work directly with the Administration to designate their own zones. As a result, many tribal nations have been disregarded and ignored by their respective states when creating these zones.

The expansion of Opportunity Zones has also been supported by the current Administration and the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs.

Action:

REN-19-036 supports the expansion of Opportunity Zones across Indian Country, including tribal jurisdictional areas in Oklahoma and Alaska.

For additional information, please contact Jacob Schellinger at jschellinger@ncai.org or Fatima Abbas at fabbas@ncai.org.

Resolution Action Plan: REN-19-036

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Action Plan:

- 30 Days:
 - Contact sponsor to discuss preferred action.
 - Contact NAFOA to assess if they are pursuing any action on this issue.
 - Research potential other organizations/individuals working on this issue.
- 60 Days:
 - Summarize action ideas and determine the "ask" for this issue (i.e., introduction of legislation; administrative fixes, etc.).
 - Begin implementation of a plan.
- 90 Days:
 - Continue implementation of plan.
 - Prepare activities update for NCAI Mid-Year Conference.
- 120 Days:
 - Continue implementation of plan.