



Planned Oral Testimony of Catherine Zingg

Tribal Policy Director, Tribal Energy Alternatives

Roundtable on “Energy Prices”

Hosted by

Senator Sheldon Whitehouse

Ranking Member, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee,

and

Senator Martin Heinrich

Ranking Member, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

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Ranking Member Whitehouse, Ranking Member Heinrich, and distinguished Senators: Thank you for this opportunity to speak. Hinikaragiwi. Maixete raasra Catherine Zingg hiingaire. Hoocak raasra wihaga hiigaire, naga hipiuksana. Greetings. My name is Catherine Zingg, I am the second eldest daughter of my family, and I am doing well. I just greeted you in Ho-Chunk, where I am an enrolled Tribal citizen. I serve as the Tribal Policy Director at Tribal Energy Alternatives, or TEA, a non-profit that works with Tribal governments across the country to help reach their renewable energy goals. In April 2024, TEA’s Western Indigenous Network Solar For All program, or WIN-SFA, received one of five awards under the \$7 billion Solar For All initiative established by the Inflation Reduction Act. Despite Congress’s plain language in H.R. 1 to rescind only unobligated funds, the Trump Administration issued termination notices for all Solar For All grants, including fully obligated funds, in August 2025. This meant over a \$500 million loss for American Indian and Alaskan Native Communities.

This program would have delivered meaningful cost savings to families on Tribal lands. WIN-SFA was designed to deploy more than 14 megawatts of residential-serving solar projects across six Western states, providing at least 20 percent electricity bill savings to more than 2,900 Tribal households. In total, participating households were projected to save more than \$94 million in electricity costs over time, or roughly \$1,300 per household per year. Direct savings alone would have amounted to more than \$1.52 for every Solar For All dollar spent. The health,

environmental, and climate benefits from reduced pollution would have increased this return on investment even further. But beyond all of the combined dollars in savings and economic benefits provided to the Tribes, this program meant advancing Tribal energy sovereignty, allowing Tribal governments greater control over how energy is generated and used within their communities.

Across the country, families are searching for practical ways to lower energy costs. Distributed energy programs like Solar for All can play an important role in achieving that goal, particularly in Tribal communities that have faced historical barriers in accessing affordable energy.

At TEA, we remain committed to working with Tribal governments, federal partners, and community organizations to expand access to clean and affordable energy solutions. For many Tribal families, this conversation is not abstract; it is about practical solutions that lower electricity bills and strengthen community energy independence.

We encourage policymakers to continue expanding federal programs that support distributed energy resources in Tribal communities. Targeted investments in rooftop solar and storage can help reduce energy costs while advancing Tribal energy sovereignty.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to your questions.