

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

December 5, 2024

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Appropriations
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee House Appropriations Committee
2413 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs Murray and Cole, Vice Chair Collins, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As Members of the House Natural Resources Committee with jurisdiction that includes tribes and U.S. Territories, we write to urge you to support including funding dedicated to bolstering electrical grid resilience for tribes and territories in disaster relief funding. The devastating impacts of recent extreme weather events—including severe storms, flooding, wildfires, and mudslides—have left many communities grappling with prolonged power outages, critical infrastructure damage, and heightened vulnerability. These challenges are exacerbated by the remoteness of many tribal and territorial areas, where the recovery process is often hindered by limited access to resources and logistical difficulties.

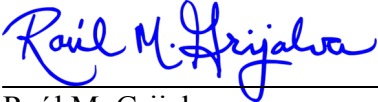
Recent natural disasters have underscored the urgent need for stronger and more resilient energy infrastructure in these areas. Severe storms in March 2024 resulted in extensive outages for hundreds of thousands of Oklahomans, including members of the Chickasaw Nation. Similarly, Tropical Storm Ernesto caused widespread power outages across Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands in August 2024. These events, which were included in recent Major Disaster Declarations issued by President Biden, demonstrate the vulnerabilities faced by these communities and the need for immediate action.

Fragile power grids pose significant threats to the health, safety, and economic stability of residents. Prolonged outages can disrupt medical services, prevent access to clean water, and halt critical communications, all of which exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities within tribal and territorial communities. Investing in grid resilience measures in these communities—such as undergrounding power lines, hardening power structures, and installing new technology to reroute power during storms—would enhance reliability during future disasters, promote long-term energy stability, and reduce future federal disaster expenditures.

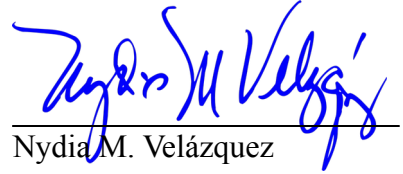
As you consider the difficult decisions associated with year-end appropriations, we urge you to support a disaster relief package that provides tribal communities and the U.S. Territories recovering from numerous recent disasters with emergency funding for hardening electrical grids. Doing so would help

safeguard lives, protect vital services, and reduce damage from future natural disasters in areas that are prone to them.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress
Ranking Member, Committee
on Natural Resources



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



Gregorio Kilili Camacho
Sablan
Member of Congress



Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Val Hoyle
Member of Congress