

PRAMILA JAYAPAL
7TH DISTRICT, WASHINGTON

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Congress of the United States
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March 11, 2024

Richard W. Spinrad, Ph.D.
Administrator
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue NW, Room 5128
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Administrator Spinrad,

I am writing to express my support for the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges' (SBCTC) application for the Inflation Reduction Act Climate Ready Workforce for Coastal States, Tribes, and Territories Competition. SBCTC is requesting funding for the *Tribal Stewards: Cultivating Tribal Leadership & Equity in Natural Resource Stewardship and Climate Resilience* project.

SBCTC is a collective of 34 public community and technical colleges committed to building a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion in higher education. The organization achieves this mission through antiracist policies that ensure economic vitality and opportunity across the state. As a doorway of opportunity for many first-generation and low-income students of color in Washington, the collective works to positively impact the success of students and the communities in which they live.

With funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Climate Ready Workforce Competition, SBCTC will implement the Tribal Stewards initiative. Tribal Stewards will serve to foster collaboration among six community and technical colleges, five Washington Tribes, public and private employers, The Evergreen State College, the NOAA-affiliated University of Washington's Climate Impacts Group and the Office of the Washington State Climatologist. The program's goal is to cultivate a new generation of Tribal leaders and co-stewards who are trained for careers in the green economy and adept in natural resource management and climate resilience.

The Tribal Stewards initiative will build a workforce of Tribal leaders to integrate traditional ecological knowledge, science, and cultural practices to increase Tribal communities' resilience to climate change. It will train 62 faculty and 10 Tribal student support professionals, redesign 10 natural resources programs and train 2,130 students across six colleges. The program will

establish education pathways and workforce development initiatives that prioritize place-based employment as well as Tribal values, knowledge and leadership.

Climate change has disproportionately impacted the ecological resilience, cultural practices and health of Indigenous communities throughout Washington State. Additionally, historical barriers stemming from the legacy of colonialism have created alarming disparities in education and career advancement. The Tribal Stewards program meets the need for a holistic, intersectional approach to both issues, tailoring career guidance and academic support to focus on environmental justice efforts that center Tribal communities.

I urge you to give full and fair consideration to the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges' application for funding from NOAA for the *Tribal Stewards: Cultivating Tribal Leadership & Equity in Natural Resource Stewardship and Climate Resilience* project. Please do not hesitate to contact my office at (206) 674-0040 if you have any questions about my support for this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pramila Jayapal". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Pramila" being more prominent than the last name "Jayapal".

PRAMILA JAYAPAL
Member of Congress