

## **National Tribal Operations Committee (NTOC) “Reinvigorated” Purpose Statement**

**(Draft – June 7, 2011)**

### ***Vision***

Tribes and EPA are implementing environmental programs that achieve high levels of protection for human health and safeguards for the natural environment in Indian country,<sup>1</sup> consistent with EPA’s mission and tribal values and lifeways.

### ***Mission***

The mission of the National Tribal Operations Committee (NTOC) is to ensure that federally recognized tribes have a prominent voice on policy and resource matters related to capacity building, program development, and implementation and a mechanism to facilitate actions that advance human health and the environment in Indian country.

This mission will be implemented in accordance with the EPA Indian Policy, EPA’s trust responsibility and federal laws, regulations, policies, and guidance as well as tribal interests. The interactions of the NTOC do not substitute for the government-to-government relationship between EPA and tribal governments.

As a group, the NTOC will work together to:

- Identify and facilitate actions that address the significant gaps in environmental protection in Indian country and strive for parity in funding between state and tribal programs;
- Strengthen tribal partnerships to build capacity and develop and implement environmental programs in Indian country;
- Promote mutual understanding of interests and perspectives on national tribal environmental issues, policies, and priorities; and
- Monitor and assess progress in the Agency’s tribal program, including the performance of the NTOC in fulfilling its mission.

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<sup>1</sup> Indian country as used in this document includes reservations, dependent Indian communities, Indian allotments, and Alaska Native villages.

To support this mission, the Tribal Caucus of the NTOC will work as a national body to:

- Identify and articulate the relative environmental priorities and issues of tribes that are national in scope, cross-agency or cross-media in nature, and/or urgent or pressing;
- Provide guidance, direction and feedback to the Agency on tribal goals and strategies, program implementation, and consultation efforts;
- Listen to, understand and provide feedback or follow-up on the issues and requests put forward by EPA;
- Coordinate and analyze data, information and input from EPA, tribes, RTOCs and other EPA tribal partnership groups about national tribal environmental priorities and identify the resources needed to address them;
- Convey information about the work of the NTOC back to tribes, RTOCs and other EPA tribal partnership groups in a timely way; and
- Work with other tribal organizations to raise issues and advance initiatives that are mutually beneficial.

To support this mission, the EPA representatives of the NTOC will:

- Bring forward information and Agency initiatives in a timely way that may be of interest to tribes or that may have a significant impact on tribal environments;
- Listen to, understand, address where possible, and provide feedback to tribes on the priority issues and requests that they put forward;
- Establish and implement mechanisms to ensure that tribal interests are addressed consistently and routinely;
- Update tribes at least annually about the progress that is being made by the Agency in achieving tribal goals and addressing tribal priorities;
- Ensure that the tribal representatives to the NTOC have the appropriate resources and information they need to do their work;
- Work with RTOCs/ROCs to assist with information collection and dissemination to ensure issues are brought forward to the NTOC in a timely way; and
- Work with other Federal agencies to address programmatic inconsistencies and explore opportunities for collaboration that will advance human health and environmental protection in Indian country.