

| 1- INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Northwest Tribal Energy Planning Guide

Energy is a precious resource, and our energy choices have long-term impacts on the environment, as well as the economic and social fabrics that make up our way of life. Individuals, communities, and governments are deciding everyday how to use energy. Cost, access, convenience, and quality of life are all factors that play into the decisions made and often long-term wisdom is overshadowed by short-term needs. The energy we use to heat our homes, power our workplaces, and fuel our vehicles often contributes to pollution and greenhouse gases. However, opportunities to conserve energy and use less polluting energy sources are abundant. With these issues in mind, tribal governments and communities across the United States and around the world have recognized a responsibility to craft a plan for their own energy future.

The goal of a comprehensive energy plan is to provide a roadmap to meet current and future energy needs in an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable fashion. The steps to include in an energy plan depend on the unique set of challenges, opportunities, and goals of individual tribes.

Deciding how best to implement these goals can be technically complex and requires expertise that many may not have. Even after energy projects are identified, it may become clear that the projects that would have the greatest impact are not affordable, or are not supported by enough members of the group; a delicate balance must be struck between the needs of the group and the desires of the individuals. Moreover, the

infrastructure must be put in place to make the projects practical. The group needs to have the funding, personnel, permits, etc., to carry out the chosen projects for their full extent and duration.

Native American Indian tribes have unique needs for energy planning. According to the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, their constituent tribes desire the following: “Energy development and transmission programs should honor our sovereign governmental status. Our land rights should not be adversely affected by changes in the energy industry. Our cultural resources and fish, wildlife and treaty resources should not be harmed by energy operations. Indian people are energy consumers. Tribes are also owners of energy resources and are seeking to use those resources, whether renewable or non-renewable, to generate electricity and economic development and need access to transmission. Lastly, tribes seek a continued voice in public processes regarding energy matters.” Although there are many sustainability and energy planning resources, there is a need for a single comprehensive reference that addresses the specific interests of Pacific Northwest tribes.

With this in mind, the Northwest Tribal Energy Planning Guide aims to provide information to Native American tribes in the Northwest that addresses the challenges inherent in the energy planning process. It contains resources to help select and implement projects to conserve energy, generate clean renewable energy, construct efficient and environmentally friendly buildings, and other energy-related community or business projects—all tailored to the geography of the Northwest and the people of its tribes.

What is a Tribal Energy Plan?

An energy plan is a statement of long-range actions and policies to help guide the future of a tribe's energy use. Energy plans include policy recommendations and identify energy project opportunities that will help meet the established energy use goals of the tribe. Energy plans also take into account long-term economic, environmental, and social factors.

Benefits of an Energy Plan

Consider the tribe's priorities- the basic programs that need to flourish for the tribe to flourish: commerce, education, health, families, safety, natural resources, and housing. The tribe may have a long-term strategic plan in some of these areas because it has been determined that these topics are important enough to warrant extensive and directed tribal resources and attention. Energy can be an essential part of the tribe's planning endeavors for the same reasons. Just like food or water, the tribe and its members will consume energy. Just like education, energy can be either a drain on tribal resources or an opportunity to build tribal capacity.

Since energy issues create interrelations between planning areas, energy planning is most effective when it is done centrally and holistically. This allows a tribe's energy resources, as well as human and monetary resources, to be utilized to their full extent and directed where they are most needed.

A good energy plan will work seamlessly with other tribal plans and help all programs run more efficiently. Creating an energy plan makes it possible not only to make electricity and fuel

affordable and clean; it is also a chance to create jobs, build homes and offices, reduce the tribe's ecological footprint, and save money for tribal households or for the tribe as a whole.

Moreover, energy planning empowers tribes to be more self-sufficient at a time when external resources are becoming increasingly volatile. Energy planning is a self-directed process of deliberately choosing to interact with the human and natural worlds in ways that align with the tribe's values.

Topics Covered in this Guidebook

This guidebook is designed to help tribes tackle energy planning in three primary ways. First, the guidebook presents information on the *process* of developing an energy plan. Included are topics such as developing goals, determining leadership, developing a work plan, and garnering community support for the energy plan itself. Second, the guidebook provides in-depth information and case studies about the following types of energy projects: conservation and efficiency, renewable energy, green building, and transportation. These sections offer examples of the many energy *project opportunities* and *measures* that a tribe may wish to identify and prioritize in their own plan. Finally, the guidebook includes a full section on resources and financing for both developing and *implementing a tribal energy plan*. As individual energy plans are developed, planners may find it useful to pair project recommendations for their tribe with financial resources for implementing such measures.

The guidebook breaks down the energy project types by section, addressing conservation, efficiency, and renewable energy discretely. This

is primarily due to the volume of information available and is necessary to adequately explore each topic. However, there are obvious links and overlaps between the various types of energy projects and there are also general rules of thumb for prioritization. Just as healthy eating guidelines can be recognized in the form of the “food pyramid,” the “energy pyramid” (shown below) depicts a basic principle to guide the consideration of the broad array of energy projects that planners may face in the course of developing an energy plan. Energy conservation and efficiency are presently the most powerful tools in a transition to a clean energy future. Renewable energy is an important piece of our energy future and is best harnessed to meet the

demands that remain after all practical conservation and efficiency measures have been taken first. This rule of thumb is used throughout this guide when presenting energy options and should be considered when preparing your tribe’s energy plan.

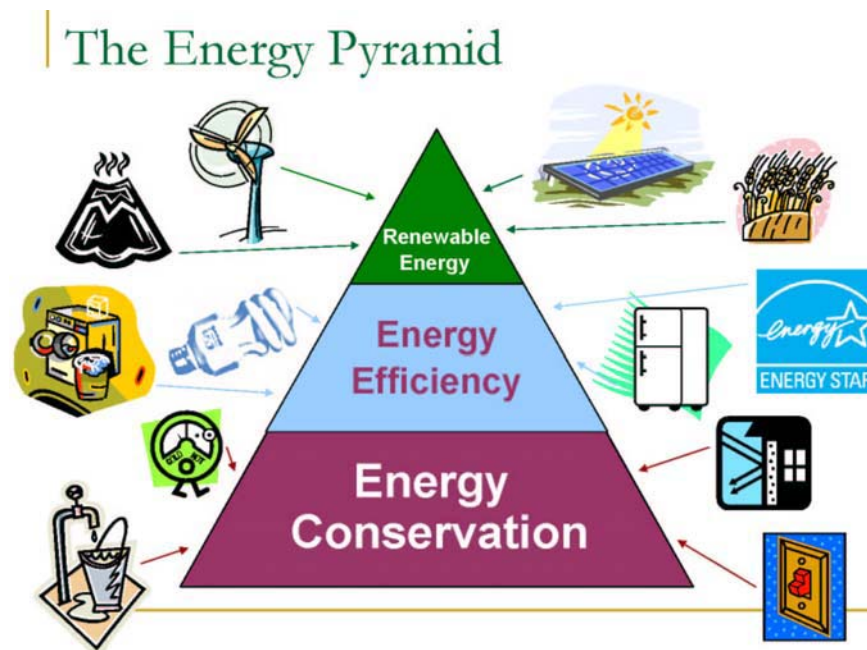


Figure 1.1 - The Energy Pyramid