

## GE Trees and Indigenous Lands

*Good afternoon and I'd like to thank you for joining us today...*

Historically, U.S. Federal and State Governments, along with corporate/private interests, have targeted, lobbied, and used legislative processes to both coerce and convinced tribal officials to act against the best interests of their people by allowing extraction of fossil fuels and minerals from their lands.

Tactics used in the past to garner extraction agreements have included, but were not limited to: 1) making assurances that little or no negative impacts to the people and environment would be realized during or after their operations were concluded; 2) any damage done in the process of their operations would be rectified; 3) promising economic prosperity for the tribe as a government and individually for its citizens; and 4) limiting the ability for citizens to have a vote or say in the process. There are many examples of these promises and agreements that were not honored and caused great and irreversible harm.

Indigenous peoples are now facing continued and new forms of exploitation in the guise of renewable, sustainable and green development from genetically engineered trees for energy production. The other experts on this panel present the government, academic and private entities involved and others have presented the science-based reasons that the insertion and proliferation of GE trees into our natural world will further threaten both environmental and human health.

As Indigenous people, our opposition to these new threats are based on knowledge and adherence to Natural Law, which simply are comprehensive and unchangeable truths or principles inherent in the natural world that have allowed us to live and thrive for countless generations before the invasion of people who had long since destroyed their lands and sought to continue exploitation of ours.

Legislation and acts currently being considered and making their way through the government process, include language that, on the surface, would seem to give tribal governments more control over forest management and energy production on tribal trust lands. In reality, the language is purposely vague and leaves the door open for the continuation of exploitation of fossil fuel and mineral resources which now, if not stopped, will include using our lands for growing genetically engineered trees to fuel the new bioenergy and consumer pulp economy.

Specifically, the [Native American Energy Act](#) includes vaguely worded sections that may be used to, not only ensure tribal government acceptance of projects run by private corporations but also protect those corporations them from future liability or responsibility – and transferring that liability to the tribes.

These have and are being presented under the guise of Indian self-determination, when in fact they are cleverly crafted mechanisms to lift barriers and fast-track the extreme energy and consumer economy by corporate and private interests.

There are also plans and funding currently available and being negotiated that are not specifically targeted to tribal nations, but may also be used to further promote biomass/bioenergy and GE trees, to include: The [American Energy Innovation Act](#); [EPA's Clean Power Plan](#); [Forest Incentives Program Act of 2015](#); and the Department of Energy's Strategic Technical Assistance Response Team ([START Program](#)). These also have the potential to impact not only tribal trust lands but traditional territories and communities where these projects are being proposed and that directly threaten long established subsistence rights.

We reject the efforts by the biotech, agriculture, biofuel, and biomass industries, governments and their agencies, to commodify trees for commercial use at the expense of the earth's delicate biodiversity and climate stability. They do not belong because they have been forcibly contaminated with genetic material from totally unrelated lifeforms which violates Natural Law and threatens the regenerative processes of our very diverse and complex ecosystems. The monopolization of land and water to grow GE trees to replace a fraction of the fossil fuels needed as energy demands increase, will only worsen human rights abuses and intensify global water, food, and the climate crises we face. These trees and their end use are just another way to commodify nature and are a component of carbon trading and offsets that will further displace Indigenous and front-line and traditional communities worldwide.

**REFERENCES:**

Forest Incentives Program Act of 2015

<http://ienearth.org/docs/ForestIncentivesProgramActof2015.pdf>

Native American Energy Act

<http://ienearth.org/docs/NativeAmericanEnergyActHR538.pdf>

EPA Clean Power Plan

<http://ienearth.org/docs/EPACleanPowerPlanOverviewReduction.pdf>

START Program

<http://ienearth.org/docs/START-Lower48.pdf>

American Energy Innovations Act

<http://ienearth.org/docs/AmericanEnergyInnovationsAct.pdf>