



UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER
FOR TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

Stanford Water in the West Program
September 16, 2021

Colorado River Water & Tribes Initiative

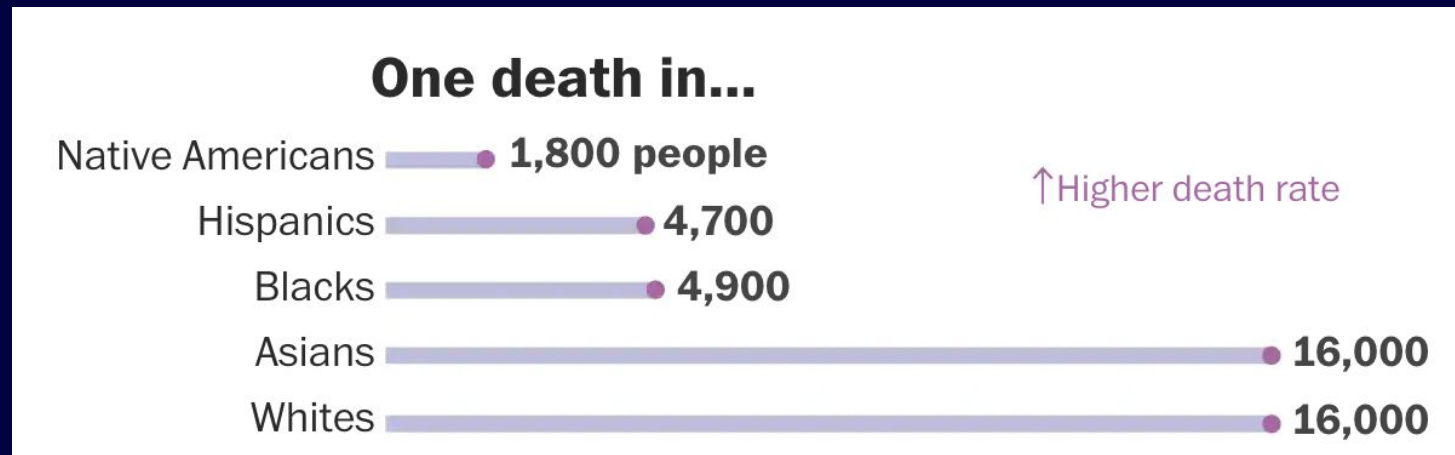


- ◆ All 30 tribes in the Colorado River Basin
- ◆ Goal: Elevate tribal voices in management of River



Tribes and Public Health

- ◆ Highest death and hospitalization rates of any ethnic group
- ◆ Among younger people (18-39), death rate of Native Americans is 9 times that of white population



Tribes and Public Health

- ◆ Incidence of COVID cases on Indian reservations correlated to lack of indoor plumbing



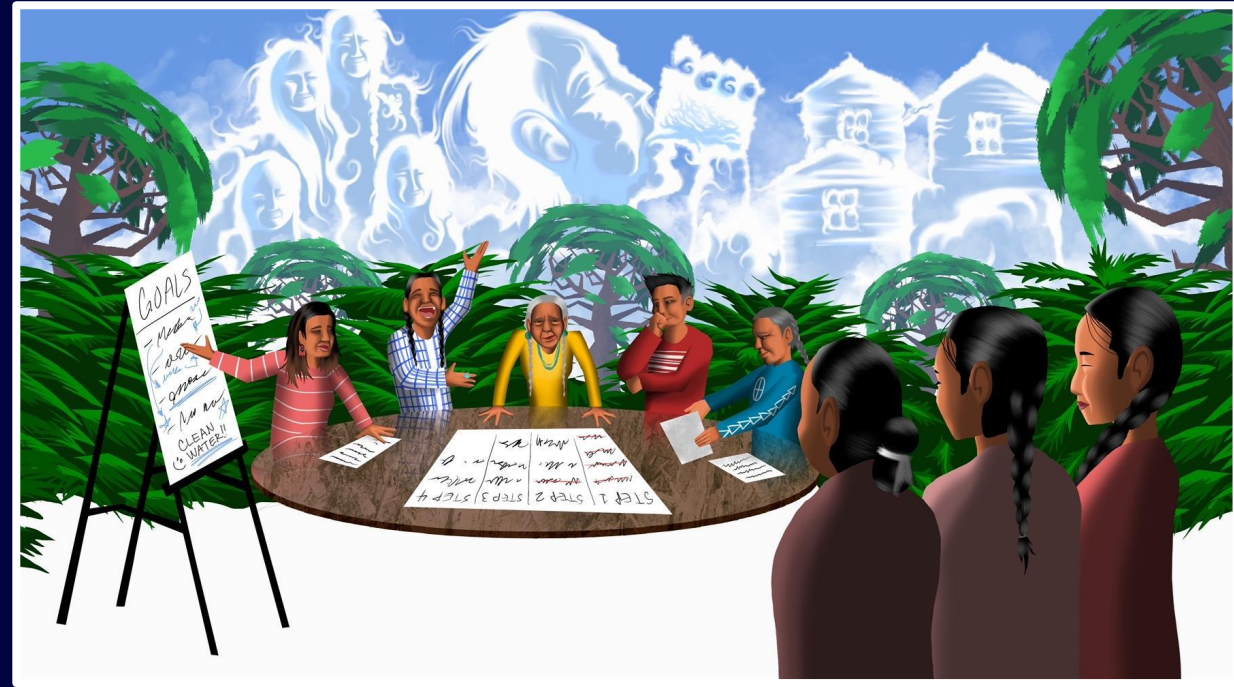
Lack of Access to Clean Water

- ◆ Native American households are 19 times more likely than white households to lack indoor plumbing
- ◆ Nearly 48% of tribal homes do not have access to clean drinking water or basic sanitation
- ◆ Race is the strongest predictor of water access



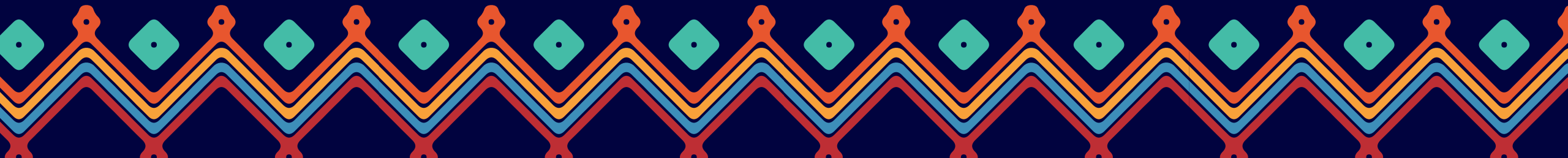
Universal Clean Water Access Initiative

- ◆ Understand the problem
- ◆ Educate
- ◆ Engage support
- ◆ Promote real solutions
- ◆ Seize the moment!



Biden Admin Priorities

- ◆ **COVID Relief** – Addresses public health in hardest hit communities
- ◆ **Economic Recovery** – Build back better with water infrastructure and Indian country jobs
- ◆ **Racial Equity** – Address historical disparities
- ◆ **Climate Change** – Provide resilient water systems



Universal Access to Clean Water
for Tribes in the Colorado River Basin



Water & Tribes Initiative | Colorado River Basin

Research Report

- ◆ Data on access for tribes in Colorado River Basin
- ◆ Federal trust responsibility as applicable to clean water
- ◆ Review of federal agency programs

Lack of Access to Water Can Take Several Forms

- ◆ No piped water
- ◆ Inadequate quality
- ◆ Aging infrastructure
- ◆ Operation & maintenance





PIPED WATER

Tribal households more likely to lack piped water than any other racial group



QUALITY

Inadequate water quality is pervasive in Indian country

AGING INFRA- STRUCTURE

Existing water
infrastructure is
deteriorating or
inadequate





O&M

Operation and maintenance is a critical component of long-term water security

Solving the Problem

- ◆ Commitment to correcting this wrong
- ◆ Funding at level of unmet need
- ◆ Whole of government approach



Commitment



- ◆ White House statement that universal access will be provided for all Native communities
- ◆ Directive to federal agencies
- ◆ Deadlines, metrics, dashboard
- ◆ Other countries have done this!



Funding Needs

- ◆ Indian Health Service
- ◆ Bureau of Reclamation
- ◆ EPA State Revolving Funds – TSAs
- ◆ USDA-Rural Development



Whole of Government Approach

- ◆ Inter-agency task force
- ◆ Assess the need
- ◆ Identify causes of past failure
- ◆ Consult with tribes
- ◆ Plan, design, and build the necessary systems



Support for Universal Access

- ◆ Senate Res. 141 and House Res. 320
 - ◆ “Access to reliable, clean drinking water in Tribal communities is an essential human need, is critical to the health, well-being, and economic development of people, and is integral to maintaining the public health of the entire United States”
 - ◆ “The provision of reliable, clean drinking water is an essential component of the Federal trust responsibility to Indian Tribes”



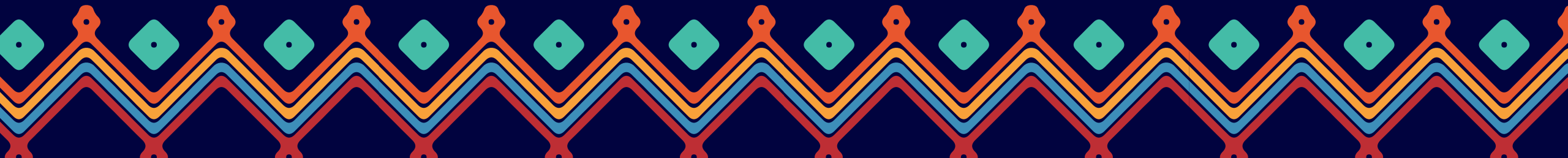
Settlements Not a Precondition!

- ◆ Tribal water rights settlements are critical
- ◆ But settlements are complicated, involve many issues, and can take decades
- ◆ Lack of a settled or decreed water right shouldn't block access to clean drinking water



Funding Legislation

- ◆ **S. 2369** sponsored by Sens. Bennet, Heinrich, Warren, and Hickenlooper
- ◆ **S. 1895** sponsored by Sens. Lujan, Heinrich, Sinema and Rounds has a similar goal
- ◆ Drafted to fold into an infrastructure bill



Funding in S. 2369

◆ Indian Health Service

- ◆ Sanitation Facilities Deficiency List - \$3.1 billion (+10% for admin.)
- ◆ Technical assistance and training - \$150 million
- ◆ Operation and maintenance assistance - \$500 million

◆ Bureau of Reclamation

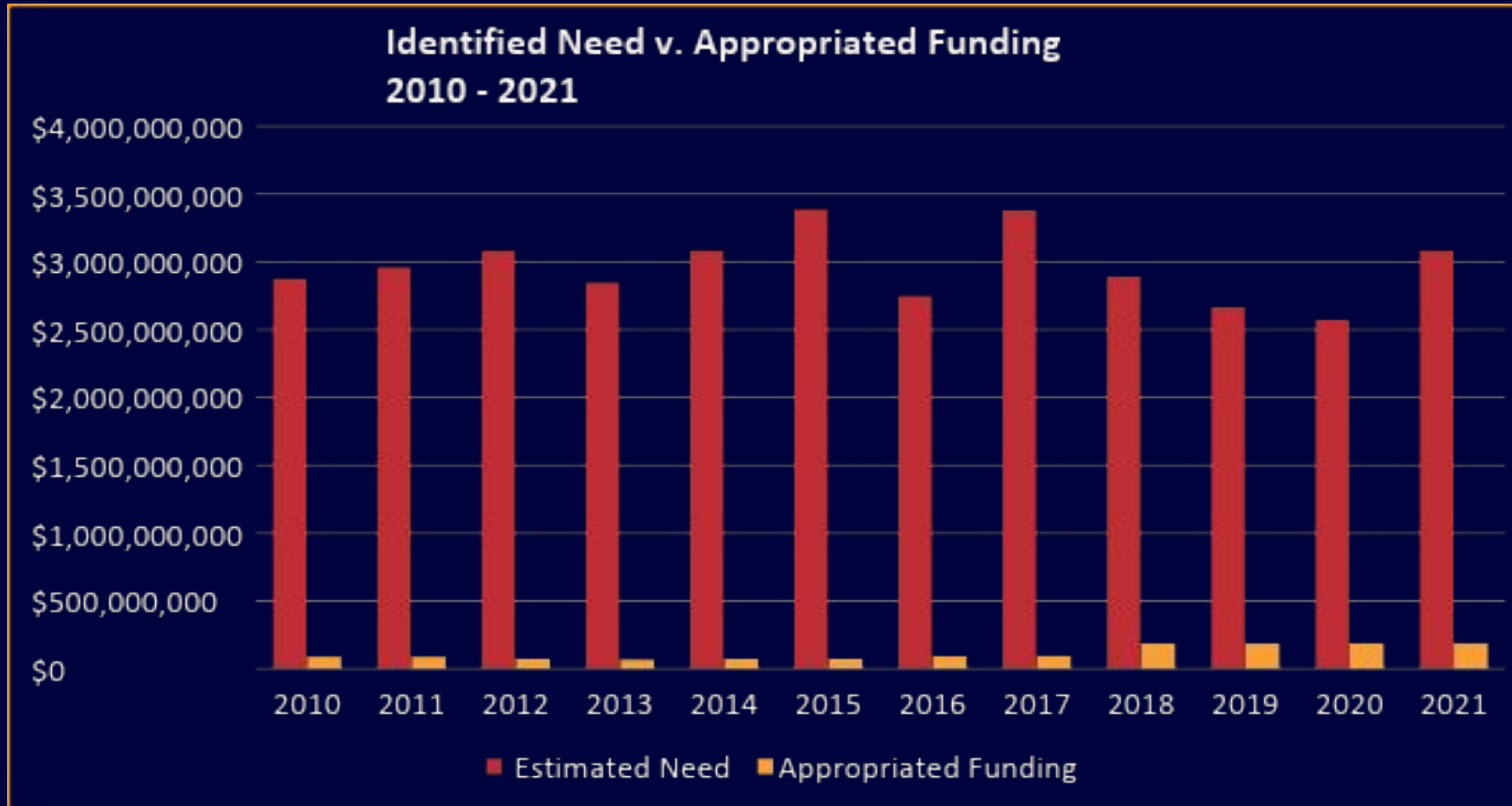
- ◆ Technical Assistance Program - \$90 million
- ◆ Rural Water Supply Act authority - \$2.0 billion

◆ **EPA State Revolving Funds – TSAs** - \$100 million each

◆ **USDA-RD** – grants for water systems - \$500 million



Indian Health Service



Support for S. 2369

- ◆ National Congress of American Indians
- ◆ 20 tribal leaders in Colorado River Basin
- ◆ Ten Tribes Partnership
- ◆ Coalition of water organizations
- ◆ Coalition of business interests



Infrastructure Inv and Jobs Act (bipartisan, \$1.5 trillion)

- ◆ IHS - \$3.5 billion for Sanitation Deficiency
- ◆ EPA - Big plus ups for Tribal Set-Asides
- ◆ Reclamation - \$1.0 billion for Rural Water



Remaining for Budget Reconciliation Bill (\$3.5 B)

- ◆ IHS - \$500 million for O&M assistance and \$150 million for technical assistance
- ◆ USDA - \$500 million for water grants
- ◆ Reclamation – additional \$1.0 billion for tribal rural water and \$90 million for tech asst



Colorado River

Operating Guidelines Negotiations

- ◆ States and Feds committed to tribes having seat at the table, but what does it look like?
- ◆ Request a State and Federal commitment to universal clean water access for tribes?



Ongoing Activities



- ◆ Funding legislation
- ◆ Administrative reform recommendations
- ◆ Work with federal agencies on implementation, detailees
- ◆ Congressional hearings





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Website:
tribalcleanwater.org