



**For immediate release**

## **Tribal Leaders Gather to Celebrate Children of the Sun Solar Initiative**

**WELLPINIT, WA; May 16, 2019** – Today, The Spokane Tribe of Indians is bringing together tribal leaders and project partners to celebrate the Children of the Sun Solar Initiative (COSSI). In 2016, the Cayuse Mountain Fire burned more than 18,000 acres, destroyed 14 tribal homes, cut power to main administrative buildings and water supply, and endangered residents on the Spokane Indian Reservation. In response, the Tribe embarked on an investment in 650 kilowatts of solar capacity, and eventually battery storage, that will save more than \$2.8 million over 35 years, strengthen community resilience, create new economic opportunity, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

“This project is born of fire. The 2016 Cayuse Mountain Fire stimulated us to look at going solar because of the impact it had on the reservation,” said Tim Horan, Executive Director of the Spokane Tribal Housing Authority. “The Children of the Sun Solar Initiatives puts us on a path to energy independence, climate resiliency, and tribal power sovereignty - eventually we could be self-sufficient.”

During the day’s events, project partners, including the U.S. Department of Energy, GRID Alternatives, the Wells Fargo Foundation, SunVest, and the HUD NW Office of Native American Programs, are joining together for a solar celebration and tour of the solar facilities, followed by a policy discussion. COSSI was awarded funding from the U.S Department of Energy and, in 2018, was the first project selected for funding from the [Tribal Solar Accelerator Fund](#) (TSAF), a tribal-led initiative launched with seed funding from the Wells Fargo Foundation that aims to catalyze the growth of solar energy and expand solar job opportunities in tribal communities.

“Wells Fargo is pleased and honored to be part of this exciting project,” said Ramsay Huntley, Clean Technology and Innovation Philanthropy Program Officer at Wells Fargo. “Supporting projects like the Children of the Sun Solar Initiative is directly in line with our goals to accelerate the transition to a low-carbon economy, minimize the impacts of climate change on our customers and communities, and address unique social, economic and environmental needs in Indian country.”

Installation of 650 kW of solar is underway for 23 homes and nine Tribal community buildings, including the Tribal Administrative Building, Spokane Tribe Senior Center and senior housing, and the Spokane Tribal Fish Hatchery. GRID Alternatives is providing hands-on solar installation training for Tribal employees and community members throughout construction.

“The Children of the Sun Solar Initiative was the first project selected for TSAF funds and we’re excited to see it come to life,” said Tanksi Clairmont, Director of the Tribal Solar Accelerator Fund. “Through this new solar project, the Spokane Tribe of Indians is building energy security and resilience while providing solar education and workforce training.”

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