

Trump rescinds Biden executive order expanding tribal sovereignty and self-governance

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The Tlingit and Haida Elders Group performs the entrance dance at the 89th annual Tribal Assembly of the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska on Wednesday, April 17, 2024, at Elizabeth Peratrovich Hall. (Mark Sabbatini / Juneau Empire file photo)

A 2023 executive order expanding sovereignty rights for the nation's 574 federally recognized tribes was revoked Friday by President Donald Trump, putting major tribal projects and policies in Juneau and elsewhere in question.

[Executive Order \(https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/12/11/2023-27318/reforming-federal-funding-and-support-for-tribal-nations-to-better-embrace-our-trust\)14112](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/12/11/2023-27318/reforming-federal-funding-and-support-for-tribal-nations-to-better-embrace-our-trust) (<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/12/11/2023-27318/reforming-federal-funding-and-support-for-tribal-nations-to-better-embrace-our-trust>), signed by President Joe Biden during the White House Tribal Nations Summit in early December of 2023, [sought to give](https://www.bia.gov/sites/default/files/media_document/eo14112_tribal_intro_presentation_jan_22_2024.pdf) (https://www.bia.gov/sites/default/files/media_document/eo14112_tribal_intro_presentation_jan_22_2024.pdf) Native Americans more access to federal funding and spending autonomy.

The order was referenced by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in recognizing expanded [tribal involvement in emergency responses](https://alaska-native-news.com/tingit-haida-activates-tribal-emergency-operations-center-in-response-to-flooding-of-mendenhall-river/75212/) (<https://alaska-native-news.com/tingit-haida-activates-tribal-emergency-operations-center-in-response-to-flooding-of-mendenhall-river/75212/>) and the Environmental Protection Agency in awarding a \$15 million grant for [five Southeast Alaska composting facilities](https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-announces-78m-grants-tribes-alaska-pacific-northwest-cut-climate-pollution) (<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-announces-78m-grants-tribes-alaska-pacific-northwest-cut-climate-pollution>), as well as other tribal projects ranging from fisheries management to broadband connectivity.

Impacts of Trump’s revocation were not immediately clear to tribal leaders.

“I certainly think that it has a potential to impact the work that we are doing, although, you know, it is still new information, and so our team is kind of reviewing exactly how that could impact us,” Sabrina Grubit, public safety manager for the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, said during a presentation about disaster preparedness to officials at the Alaska State Capitol on Monday.

“One thing I will say is that for tribal governments who have decided to take up emergency management and really take care of our citizens in that way, there’s not base funding for that,” she added. “There’s not seed funding for tribal governments to carry out those activities. And so a lot of it is being creative and figuring out from grants where we can do that. And with this new information I’m not quite sure yet how that will have an impact. But we were certainly chatting about it this weekend.”

Bryan Newland, Assistant Secretary for the Assistant Secretary of the Department of the Interior for Indian Affairs from 2021 to 2025, [told Native News Online](https://nativenewsonline.net/sovereignty/trump-administration-rolls-back-executive-order-on-tribal-sovereignty-and-self-governance) (<https://nativenewsonline.net/sovereignty/trump-administration-rolls-back-executive-order-on-tribal-sovereignty-and-self-governance>) on Saturday that “rolling back this executive order increases federal interference with local actions.”

“This executive order was intended to reduce government interference with how tribes spend their money, and to ensure that federal agencies are actually meeting their legal obligations for tribes,” he said. “It made the government more efficient for Indian people.”

Trump’s revocation on Friday was among 18 Biden-era orders nixed in an announcement made late in the day, adding to an ongoing massive redefining of the federal government that includes the 78 presidential orders rescinded when Trump took office on Jan. 20.

Among the other Biden-era orders revoked Friday involved “ensuring a data-driven response” to COVID-19 and subsequent public health threats, raising the minimum wage for federal contractors, allocating federal resources for renewable energy projects, and advocating for LGBTQ+ human rights globally.

“I have determined that the following additional rescissions are necessary to advance the policy of the United States to restore common sense to the Federal Government and unleash the potential of American citizens,” Trump wrote in [the presidential action](https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/additional-rescissions-of-harmful-executive-orders-and-actions/) (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/additional-rescissions-of-harmful-executive-orders-and-actions/>) titled “Additional rescissions of harmful executive orders and actions.”

Trump also on Friday signed an executive order to eliminate several agencies including the parent agency of Voice of America, with much of its worldwide news coverage [coming to a halt](https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/15/media/voice-of-america-trump-cuts/index.html) (<https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/15/media/voice-of-america-trump-cuts/index.html>), as of Saturday.

Biden’s signing of Executive Order 14112 was hailed as [a highlight of the 2023 tribal summit](https://alaskabeacon.com/2023/12/06/biden-meets-with-leaders-of-tribal-nations-signs-order-easing-access-to-federal-funds/) (<https://alaskabeacon.com/2023/12/06/biden-meets-with-leaders-of-tribal-nations-signs-order-easing-access-to-federal-funds/>). Among its provisions was creating a [“one-stop-shop” federal funding hub](https://www.bia.gov/atc/search?page=1&sortBy=date_added_desc&sort(GrantsFirst=true)) ([https://www.bia.gov/atc/search?page=1&sortBy=date_added_desc&sort\(GrantsFirst=true\)](https://www.bia.gov/atc/search?page=1&sortBy=date_added_desc&sort(GrantsFirst=true))) for Native American businesses called the Tribal Access to Capital Clearinghouse. A search for “Alaska” at the site on Saturday afternoon returned 696 “funding opportunities” in a nationwide database of 1,218 items.

“Tribal Nations still face many barriers to fully exercise their inherent sovereignty, especially in federal funding programs,” Biden’s executive order stated. “Far too many of the federal funding and support programs that Tribes rely on are difficult to access, have overly burdensome federal reporting requirements, have unnecessary limitations, or impose requirements on Tribes that drain Tribal resources and undermine their ability to make their own decisions about where and how to meet the needs of their communities.”

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