

under docket identification (ID) number OPPT-2003-0018. The official public docket consists of documents specifically referenced in this action and other information related to this action. Although a part of the official docket, the public docket does not include Confidential Business Information (CBI) or other information whose disclosure is restricted by statute. The official public docket is the collection of materials that is available for public viewing at the EPA Docket Center, Rm. B-102 Reading Room, EPA West, 1301 Constitution Ave., NW., Washington, DC. The EPA Docket Center is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. The EPA Docket Center Reading Room telephone number is (202) 566-1744 and the telephone number for the OPPT Docket, which is located in EPA Docket Center, is (202) 566-0280.

2. *Electronic access.* You may access this **Federal Register** document electronically through the EPA Internet under the **Federal Register** listings at <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/>. You may also access this document and copies of past conference agendas from EPA's American Indian Environmental Office's web page at <http://www.epa.gov/indian/>.

Significant questions and responses as well as any significant clarifications to this request for proposals will be posted on EPA's American Indian Environmental Office's web page at <http://www.epa.gov/indian/>.

An electronic version of the public docket is available through EPA's electronic public docket and comment system, EPA Dockets. You may use EPA Dockets at <http://www.epa.gov/edocket/> to access the index listing of the contents of the official public docket, and to access those documents in the public docket that are available electronically. Although not all docket materials may be available electronically, you may still access any of the publicly available docket materials through the docket facility identified in Unit I.B.1. Once in the system, select "search," then key in the appropriate docket ID number.

II. Background

Starting in 1992, EPA has co-sponsored six bi-annual NTCEM conferences to provide an opportunity for tribal leaders, tribal environmental program managers, tribal organizations, federal agencies, and other interested entities to share information about tribal environmental programs and discuss issues of vital interest to Indian country. Topics at past conferences have helped

to build tribal capacity in the following areas:

1. Managing environmental programs (including integrated waste programs).
2. Grant assistance to tribes.
3. Addressing concerns about human health risks and subsistence.
4. Contracting, research, and business development opportunities.
5. Technology (GIS) and natural resource management.
6. Air, water, and waste management issues.

The conference has traditionally been held in late spring. Following is a list of previous conference locations and dates:

1. Cherokee Nation, NC (May 1992)
2. Cherokee Nation, NC (May 1994)
3. Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation, MT (May 1996)
4. Prairie Island Indian Community, MN (May 1998)
5. Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, OR (June 2000)
6. Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, NV (June 2002)

The most recent conference, hosted by the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, in Reno, NV, was very successful in content as well as in attendance. Over 700 people attended this conference. Past conferences have drawn 500-700 participants representing more than 200 tribes, Native Alaskans, intertribal consortia, federal employees and private/non-profit organizations. The conference agenda included all aspects of tribal environmental issues.

EPA has decided to sponsor the 7th NTCEM in the spring of 2005, with EPA's Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances (OPPTS), serving as the lead office for the event. In the past, the NTCEM has been held bi-annually in late spring which would place the 7th NTCEM sometime in late spring of 2004.

The decision to hold the conference in the spring of 2005 is being made because EPA and its tribal partners are planning several significant activities in the 2004 calendar year. Moreover, EPA is aware that the National Museum of the American Indian is planned to have its grand opening in the fall of 2004. EPA understands that there are a number of tribal activities and celebrations being held in conjunction with the Museum's opening and does not want to detract from these events. EPA also believes that spacing major tribal events more widely presents several positive benefits. It will help spread scarce tribal travel expenses over a longer period and encourage tribal participation at more events. Scheduling the NTCEM for the spring of 2005 would also give the host tribe additional

time to plan for and work with other tribes across the country to ensure fuller participation and a diverse agenda more accurately reflecting Tribal interest and issues.

III. 2005 Host Responsibilities

The tribal host will be the primary non-federal co-sponsor for this conference. Strong conference management capabilities are essential, and include: Developing the conference agenda, handling conference logistics (such as registration, transportation, and travel scholarships for tribal participants), developing conference materials, and communications planning and outreach to ensure that priority environmental issues of interest to tribes are represented. The host tribe will support the tribal community in their participation by encouraging attendance and covering related travel expenses for the appropriate tribal personnel. The host tribe will also take the lead role in developing a conference theme.

EPA will be the federal co-sponsor of the NTCEM and will work with the tribal co-sponsor to identify national tribal environmental issues and arrange for federal participation. The Agency will enter into a written co-sponsorship agreement under EPA Ethics Advisory 96-15 with the selected tribal co-sponsor. EPA will provide technical assistance to the tribal co-sponsor, as needed, to resolve logistics and communication issues associated with the event. In consultation with the tribal co-sponsor, EPA may advertise the conference in EPA websites, notices, newsletters and other internal EPA communications materials.

IV. Coordination with Other Federal Agencies and Tribal Organizations

EPA and the host tribe will coordinate with other federal agencies and key EPA-supported tribal entities (including the Tribal Operations Committee, Tribal Pesticide Program Council, Tribal Science Council, Tribal Association on Solid Waste and Emergency Response, and many other broader-based intertribal organizations and consortia) to strengthen the multi-media character of this conference. These groups will be invited to participate on the conference agenda or independently around the other on-going conference events. Once the conference host is selected, EPA encourages interested organizations to contact the host to coordinate efforts.

V. Evaluation Criteria

EPA is requesting proposals from federally recognized Indian tribes or intertribal consortia to host the National