



## **Pala Band of Mission Indians One of 60 Nationwide Finalists for Build Back Better Regional Challenge Grant**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 21, 2021

**CONTACT:** Shasta Gaughen

(760) 891-3515

**PALA, CA** – The [Pala Band of Mission Indians](#), leading a partnership with the twenty-four federally-recognized Tribes of the Southern California Tribal Chairmen’s Association ([SCTCA](#)), is one of only 60 finalists nationwide to be awarded a Build Back Better Regional Challenge Grant from the Economic Development Administration. EDA announced the finalists for this \$1 billion initiative on December 13, 2021. The Build Back Better Regional Challenge is intended to boost economic recovery from the pandemic and strengthen and rebuild American communities through transformational investments that create jobs, promote equitable economic growth, and build US global competitiveness.

Pala and SCTCA will use the \$500,000 in Phase I funds to develop the SoCal Tribal Accelerated Clean Energy Economy (SCTACEE) initiative to rapidly expand an innovative clean energy economy for the region encompassing the twenty-four SCTCA member Tribes. The SCTACEE initiative will use next-generation renewable energy, energy storage, energy trading, electric vehicle (EV), and other clean energy technologies to generate substantial revenues and cost-savings for SCTCA member tribes, while broadening the regional economic base and increasing GDP with investments in growing technology industries.

Component projects will manufacture, demonstrate, and deploy next-generation technologies to strengthen economic and climate-change resilience for SCTCA tribes, while building skills, creating jobs, and increasing wages for historically excluded Native Americans and other disadvantaged populations throughout the region. This initiative also will establish a model for accelerating the just and equitable transition to a clean

energy economy – a model that can be replicated and expanded by other communities throughout the state and nation.

“The Pala Band of Mission Indians is excited to be leading this initiative to develop a clean-energy economy in partnership with SCTCA member tribes,” said Pala Chairman Robert Smith. “The Build Back Better Regional Challenge will provide opportunities to develop a vibrant and resilient sustainable energy development hub that benefits not just Tribes but communities throughout Southern California.”

Pala and SCTCA will be working in concert to propose projects by March 15, 2022 for one of 20-30 Phase II awards of up to \$100 million from EDA. Read more about the Build Back Better Regional Challenge and the other finalists at the [EDA website](#).

*The Pala Band of Mission Indians is a federally recognized tribe whose reservation is located along the Palomar Mountain range approximately 30 miles northeast of San Diego. The majority of the over 900 tribal members live on the 12,000-acre reservation, established for Cupeño and Luiseño Indians, who consider themselves to be one proud people - Pala.*

###