



# Native American Seeds Act of 2025

**Rep. Norma Torres (CA-35), Rep. Doug LaMalfa (CA-01),  
Sen. Martin Heinrich (NM), and Sen. Mike Crapo (ID)**

The Native American Seeds Act is a bicameral, bipartisan bill to assist Tribal governments working to protect seeds that are culturally significant to their communities. The Act would provide flexibility so that the Department of the Interior, in furtherance of the federal government's treaty and trust responsibilities, can support the efforts of Tribes to develop seed banks and engage in traditional forms of farming. Across the country, factors, such as wildfires, droughts, insect/disease outbreaks, inclement weather, and contamination, have increased the challenges that Tribes face in preserving their seeds. This bill will help ensure that Tribal connections to plants holding traditional importance will continue for future generations while also strengthening food security, improving physical and mental health outcomes, and fostering social cohesion on reservations.

## **Protecting Traditional Ways of Life**

Over centuries, Tribes have served as stewards of their lands and developed relationships with plants for food and medicine and for use in ceremonies and prayers, allowing their communities and their cultures to not only survive but also to flourish. Tribal communities use the same planting, watering, and harvesting techniques that their ancestors perfected. Their continued nurturing of seeds of plants used in ceremonies and for sustenance through intergenerational farming activities, such as digging ditches and preparing fields, has always been a key ingredient binding communities, traditions, customs, and cultures together. Intergenerational farming connects people of all ages and provides invaluable opportunities for elders to teach youth about traditions, culture, and Tribal identity.

## **Strengthening Food Sovereignty and Improving Healthy Lifestyles**

Tribal traditional knowledge in caring for seeds and farming techniques has helped sustained communities with the same healthy food as their ancestors, creating an unbroken connection to the past. Because many Tribes were forcibly relocated by the federal government to reservations where grocery stores are scarce, they rely on traditional foods grown on ancestral lands. This bill would help make culturally relevant and nutritious foods more plentiful, strengthening food security. The need for seed banks and traditional farming to ensure that Tribes can nourish their communities has intensified over the years due to disruption risks in food supply chains and federal food distribution programs.

Research has shown that a diet of minimally processed, locally produced food has a positive effect on health and wellness and helps to reduce the prevalence of diet-related chronic diseases, including type 2 diabetes. Providing traditional foods in schools, healthcare facilities, senior centers, and other anchor community facilities located on reservations not only provides physical nourishment but also spiritual healing, comfort, and a sense of belonging. Preserving seeds is part of the preservation of traditional knowledge about health and nutrition to assist in the development of approaches to address current epidemics of persistent illnesses, suicide, substance abuse, and malnutrition.