

Testimony on climate change in Indian Country

Clayton Honyumtewa says the Powamuya ceremony took place as usual in February on parts of the Hopi reservation, but the planting that traditionally follows the ceremony might not come until May.

The delay is just another example of the effects of climate change that have left dams dry, water scarce—and pushed planting from March to April and then to May, leaving little time for crops to grow.

“Sometimes they don’t even mature because it already gets cold in September,” said Honyumtewa, director for the Hopi Department of Natural Resources.

“It’s been really rough on the farmers.”

It’s been really tough on tribes across the country, officials told a House panel looking at the effects of climate change on Native America. Honyumtewa was not there, but stories like his were repeated in testimony in February by tribal leaders from Alaska, Washington and Arizona.

“Our members go out to gather traditional foods and find that many are blooming out of season or not blooming at all as a result of climate change,” he said.

At the hearing, witnesses asked Congress for a seat at the table as the government

grapples with climate change, and insisted indigenous experience and expertise should be part of any solutions aimed at reversing its effects.

“We as a community can use best practices, going back to our traditional ways as well as bridging the modern social lifestyles to address climate change,” Honyumtewa said. And while some areas of the Hopi tribe prepared for the Powamuya ceremony to inspire a successful growing season, Honyumtewa said the drought has made it harder to keep cultural norms alive. “We need rain, we need water to do that. Rain, snow, all our ceremonies are geared to that,” he said.

Dinner for veterans

The Madras VFW Post 12141 and its Auxiliary invites all people, veterans and non-veterans, to a free Welcome Home Veterans spaghetti dinner and events on Saturday, March 30 from 4-8 p.m. at the Erickson Aircraft Collection in Madras.

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