# **250303\_WRR Solar Update WRAP\_59**

# REPORTER: Hannah Habermann

EDITOR: Nicky Ouellet

**HOST: A project bringing solar energy to the Wind River Reservation has hit some road bumps due to pauses in federal funding. But as Wyoming Public Radio’s Hannah (HAW-nuh) Habermann reports, the team is searching for other ways to move forward.**

Energize Wind River is poised to set up standalone solar systems and bring electricity to roughly forty Eastern Shoshone homes. But?

**Purdum\_7: “ The ‘but’ would be that our construction funding is currently on hold pending review.”**

That’s project director Levi Purdum. He says about $2 *million* of funding is paused. Even though the project has funding for training, employees and outreach, it’s unable to buy or install the solar equipment. Purdum is optimistic that the funding will eventually come through – but for now, the group secured a $20,000 grant from the Nature Conservancy.

**Purdum\_8: “They wanted to support our non-governmental fundraising efforts, and so the intent is to hire and fund a fundraising specialist.”**

Energize Wind River still plans to start construction this spring, if they’re able to raise enough money. Other tribal nations across the Mountain West are facing similar issues amid budget cuts by the Trump administration. SOC.

**CC: 250303\_WRR Solar Update\_12**

REPORTER: Hannah Habermann

EDITOR: Nicky Ouellet

HOST: Energize Wind River is working to bring stand-alone solar power to roughly 40 Eastern Shoshone homes on the Wind River Reservation. The group received an eight million dollar federal grant last fall – but a quarter of that funding is now on pause under the Trump administration. The Eastern Shoshone Housing Authority, or E-SHUH, launched the project with assistance from the Wyoming Energy Co-op.

Gilbert Riche (rich-EE) is the interim executive director at E-SHUH. He says it recently got a nearly 2 million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Although it’s also federal, it so far hasn’t been paused so could fill in the gaps.

**250303\_WRR Solar Update\_12 “That grant will be used to provide critical infrastructure and housing development potential, so we're trying to figure out how we can align that grant funding to assist our own housing projects and to assist Energize Wind River.”**

The project has 8 full-time employees, 7 of whom live on the reservation. Energize Wind River hopes to still start construction this spring. Other tribal nations across the country are facing similar issues amid budget cuts by the Trump administration.