



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Speaker Curley urges the Department of the Interior to work with tribes to address the FY2026 federal budget



Speaker Curley met with Interior Secretary Doug Burgum to ensure that tribal budget priorities are addressed in the fiscal year 2025 federal budget.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — On Monday, during the U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee (STAC) meeting, Speaker Crystalayne Curley urged federal officials to consult and work with tribes to ensure that budget priorities, educational obligations, and public safety concerns are addressed within the fiscal year 2026 federal budget.

Speaker Curley's comments to Interior Secretary Doug Burgum stemmed from the White House's recent release of President Trump's fiscal year 2026 discretionary budget request, which proposes significant reductions to several programs that serve tribes.

"Tribes must have a seat at the table with all federal agencies when any proposals or decisions are being considered, especially when it comes to funding that impacts our students, public safety, and other key programs and initiatives. We look to this administration to uphold its trust responsibilities to tribes and to hold consultations with tribes before implementing significant policy changes," said Speaker Curley.

Among several provisions, the White House's budget proposal includes a \$107 million reduction for tribal law enforcement programs to "streamline" operations, \$187 million reduction from construction programs for Bureau Indian Education (BIE) facilities, \$617 million reduction to programs that support tribal self-governance and communities, and eliminating the Indian Guaranteed Loan program for tribal business development and the Indian Land Consolidation Program.

In reference to public safety, Speaker Curley called for increased support to solve missing and murdered persons cases, more funding for law enforcement officers and public safety facilities, funding for school resource officers to help secure students in schools, and resources to address the trafficking and increasing use of fentanyl on the Navajo Nation.

On Tuesday, the STAC members met with representatives from federal agencies including BIE Director Tony Dearman. Speaker Curley informed Dearman that the Navajo Nation Council recently adopted a resolution opposing a school voucher program that is being proposed through White House Executive Order 14191.

Among several priorities, Speaker Curley called on the BIE to ensure that tribal schools continue to receive Impact Aid funding in the event that the U.S. Department of Education closes, to fund operations and maintenance costs for schools, and to protect the BIE employees from federal layoffs.

"I am appreciative of Secretary Burgum for spending an entire day with tribal leaders to hear our concerns and for being receptive to our input. As we move forward, it's very important that we continue informing and educating our federal partners and work with our congressional members to advocate for budget priorities and our treaty rights," stated Speaker Curley.

In 2021, the Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee was established to ensure tribal leaders have direct communication with the officials to facilitate discussions on intergovernmental responsibilities, exchange views, share information and provide advice and recommendations regarding Departmental programs and funding.

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