



Navajo Nation Washington Office

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Homeland Security Leadership visits NNWO



DHS Staff with NNWO Deputy Director Crank and Kyle Petersen

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On Tuesday, July 22, 2025, senior leadership from the Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”) visited the Navajo Nation Washington Office to meet with NNWO staff regarding the transition, increasing tribal relations, and working with their component agencies.

Those in attendance included Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs, Sara Perkins; Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Tribal Affairs, David Flute; FEMA Liaison Zach Hogg; as well as Tyeisha Williams, the head of Community Relations for Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

During the meeting, NNWO elevated the concerns of possible bad actors imitating federal law enforcement officers to harass people who appear to be of Latin American descent and making threats to deport them. Deputy Assistant Secretary Perkins said that the Department is aware of these rumors and is closely monitoring for any potential imitators. DHS also asked the Nation to immediately report any potential imitators to them, and they will respond accordingly.

NNWO also inquired about the REAL ID program, and some of the challenges tribal members in extremely rural areas face in proving their identity to the standards necessitated by the federal government.

Deputy Director Crank shared the story of a Navajo elder who was born in a very remote area of Northern Agency shortly after World War II. He never received a birth certificate and does not have living relatives who were present for his birth to sign an affidavit proving his identity. Thus, this Navajo citizen will never be able to receive a REAL ID. Mr. Flute then shared that some Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux members who live near the border between South Dakota and Minnesota have legal addresses in Minnesota, despite their being fully located in South Dakota. This results in these members having South Dakota IDs with a Minnesota addresses.

The DHS team was very receptive to these matters and said they would attempt to work with the United States Postal Service to address the issues of rural addressing. They also proposed a review of the acceptable proof of residency means for securing REAL IDs, as even utility bills do not show actual street addresses or widely known community names.