



# PORTFOLIO UPDATES

## PUBLIC SAFETY

Congressman Mark Green (R-TN), Chair of the House Committee on Homeland Security, announced his plan to retire later this summer. The current front runner for Chair is Congressman Michael McCaul (R-TX-10), who previously chaired the committee from 2013 to 2019. Speaker Johnson allegedly met with Green and McCaul Thursday for a meeting Green requested and the group discussed McCaul taking over the role to avoid a messy, mid-session fight.

Senator Daines (R-SD) and Senator Smith (D-MN) introduced Protection for Reservation Occupants against Trafficking and Evasive Communications Today (PROTECT) Act of 2025 to address the growing drug crisis by enhancing the ability of Tribal courts to issue warrants and expand Tribal jurisdiction for certain drug, firearm, and related offenses

Senator Wyden (R-OR) and Senator Budd (R-NC) introduced S. 2015 to expand prescribed burns to manage federal lands utilizing indigenous knowledge and practices.

## VETERANS AFFAIRS

Senator Jon Ossoff (D-GA) introduced S. 784, Rural Veteran Transportation Grant Program. The legislation would expand and make permanent the Department of Veterans Affairs grant program that provides transportation options to veterans for medical purposes.

The FY26 appropriations bill for Veterans' Affairs and Military Construction was released on Thursday. This is the first appropriations bill released for FY2026, and NNWO has begun review.

## ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

Congressman Eli Crane (R-AZ) introduced H.R. 3713, the Legacy Mine Clean up of 2025. The bill establishes the Mountains, Deserts, and Plains in US EPA. The department will coordinate, establish and disseminate best practices on the cleanup action of the EPA at a covered mine site, including a covered mine site in Indian Country.

Administrator Lee Zeldin proposed repealing rules passed under the former President Biden Administration that curb emissions of carbon dioxide, mercury, and other air pollutants from power plants. This comes from President Trump's broader efforts to unwind environmental regulations he views as unnecessary barriers to industrial development and expanded energy production.

## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Congresswoman Emily Randal (D-WA-06) introduced H.R. 3654, the Tribal Emergency Response Resources Act. The bill would streamline funding for tribes that are impacted by climate change.

FEMA's 10th Annual Tribal Nations Training Week is rumored to be rescheduled for late September this year, potentially the week of Sep 20-27, but this is not yet official. The training was originally scheduled for late spring but was suddenly cancelled with no input from Tribes despite numerous registrants, among a list of other Tribal event cancellations for which we wrote a letter for President Nygren to send to the acting head at FEMA requesting answers.

President Trump and DHS Secretary Noem outlined changes for FEMA. Beginning after the 2025 hurricane season, Trump intends to begin shifting more responsibility to states, and have FEMA hand out less money.



## GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIP

The Nation continues to make in-roads with agencies and members of Congress. Director Redhouse met with Speaker Johnson and also with leadership from EPA, including Administrator Zeldin. Since the meeting with EPA, the Administrator's team has already reached out to NNWO for assistance on legislative matters.

Senator Hawley (R-MO) has requested support from the Nation on his RECA legislation being included in the reconciliation package; and Senator Luján (D-NM) reached out for support on his legislation to make mandatory appropriations for BIA, BIE, and IHS.

We strengthened our connections with the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs majority and minority leadership, as well as the Senate Subcommittee on Energy and Natural Resources minority staff.

## OFFICE OF NAVAJO HOPI INDIAN RELOCATION

NNWO was successful in preventing President Trump from immediately closing ONHIR; however, ONHIR has been informed that it will likely close at the end of the current fiscal year (September 20, 2025), with its remaining funds likely to be transferred to the Department of the Interior.

NNWO—working through Senator Gallego's (D-AZ) office—submitted a letter requesting an oversight hearing should ONHIR close, and submitted separately a request for consultation on behalf of the NHLC and President Nygren to ONHIR on their closure activities.

The Nation is working on various strategies to either prevent ONHIR's closure or to ensure that its statutory obligations are and continued to be performed.

## TAXATION & FEDERAL BUDGET

Senators Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) introduced the Tribal Tax and Investment Reform Act of 2025 that would create parity for Tribes by expanding tribes' ability to issue governmental bonds, create \$175 million in annual tax credits for tribal community development, and clarify tax rules around Indian lands.

The Senate continued to debate the reconciliation bill. The Senate has made substantial changes to the House version of the bill that was passed earlier in the month. For the legislation to move to President Trump's desk, both the House and Senate have to approve the same text. Once the Senate approves the bill, it will go back to the House. President Trump has called for this to be completed by July 4, 2025.

## TRANSPORTATION

USDOT announced the availability of \$5.4 billion in bridge funding to get "America building again." Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) stated up to \$500 million for repairing or replacing bridges in rural areas through the Competitive Highway Bridge Program. USDOT has lifted restrictions on the program.

Congressman Tom Barrett introduced H.R. 3055, the Transitioning, Retiring and New Service Members to Port Ocean Rail and Truck Jobs Act (TRANSPORT) Jobs Act, which directs the Secretary of Transportation to develop an action plan on member of the Armed Forces eligible for preseparation counseling and veterans becoming supply chain employees.



## HEALTH

NNWO continued to advocate for an exemption for tribal members from the proposed Medicaid work requirements and enrollment verification requirements, as well as securing no cuts to the 100% FMAP for tribes. As of June 30, 2025, our efforts, along with those of our partners, were successful in securing an exemption from work requirements and securing no cuts to the 100% FMAP for tribes. **As of the Senate's passage of the bill, our efforts with regard to work requirements and 100% FMAP were successful.**

The Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health, held a hearing on the Fiscal Year 2026 Department of Health and Human Services Budget, and Secretary Kennedy was the witness. The hearing was full of tension and showed deep bipartisan divides, however, it is important to state that Secretary Kennedy once again mentioned his commitment to improve health in Indian Country.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS) has committed \$500,000 to the Northern New Mexico Youth Fund, marking the agency's first formal partnership with the fund to expand workforce training for underserved youth across the region. This investment—channeled through the Community Benefit Fund established by Senate Bill 48—targets job training in renewable energy, grid modernization, and climate change mitigation. With this contribution, the Youth Fund now totals \$1.6 million, combining support from 12 philanthropic partners and coordinated by the LANL Foundation. Prioritizing Opportunity Youth (ages 16–24), Native youth, and other underserved populations, the initiative supports internships, pre-apprenticeships, and career pathway programs across multiple counties and Tribal communities. The grants are awarded through a participatory process involving youth leaders, Tribal reps, and public officials—including NMDWS Deputy Secretary Marcos Martinez.

NNWO is working to advance advocacy for the inclusion of tribal-specific Opportunity Zone (OZ) enhancements within the Senate's reconciliation bill. With guidance from Native American Finance Officers Association, NNWO is pushing for the bill to explicitly reference Tribal Nations and allow tribal governments to designate their own census tracts as Opportunity Zones, rather than relying on state governor's use of rural census tracts. This recommendation stems from our analysis identifying 13 poorly placed OZs across the Navajo Nation—zones that were designated in 2017 and are approaching their 10-year maturity threshold. Additionally, our efforts are informed by the House's reconciliation bill, which includes rural investment incentives such as a 30% basis increase (compared to the current 10%), further reinforcing the need for equitable treatment in tribal areas.

To support our outreach, NNWO has been in communication with Senators Warren and Cassidy's offices. While initial feedback from Senator Cassidy's office raised concerns about the potential impact on the Senate bill's score and the importance of having state-level support, our consistent message has been that this policy would expand economic development potential across Indian Country, not solely within the Navajo Nation's individual states.



## AGRICULTURE

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is proposing to rescind a December 2023 final rule that eliminated the practice of "visual observation" by State agencies when collecting race and ethnicity data for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants. The Intertribal Food Assistance Initiative (IFAI) has provided a template letter for tribal comments, which are due by June 16, 2025 (Docket No. FNS-2025-0006). The draft letter argues that reinstating visual observation would perpetuate misclassification of American Indian and Alaska Native participants and revive outdated, harmful bureaucratic practices. For the Navajo Nation, this issue also presents an opportunity to build legislative documentation in support of preserving and strengthening FNS programs—including SNAP and other nutrition services—as critical infrastructure for rural and remote Navajo communities.

ProPublica reported that the USDA has terminated the Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) Cooperative Agreement Program, a key Biden-era initiative that provided funding to dozens of Tribal communities to procure fresh, locally grown food. Despite the Trump administration's stated commitment to health and traditional diets in Indian Country, the program—credited with supporting Tribal food sovereignty and cultural restoration—was cut in March 2025. Advocacy organizations have called on USDA to reinstate the program, citing its role in honoring Tribal sovereignty and improving access to culturally relevant, nutritious foods.

The Coalition for Tribal Sovereignty has issued an action alert urging Tribal Nations and organizations to contact Congress regarding the reconciliation bill, which currently includes no exemptions to new SNAP work requirements for Native peoples or Tribal Statistical Areas. This poses a threat to food access in Indian Country, where up to 80% of residents in some communities rely on federal food assistance. The Coalition and the Native Farm Bill Coalition are calling for advocacy to ensure Native peoples are exempted from work requirements and to promote Tribal authority in administering SNAP. **NNWO assisted in this advocacy and helped secure an exemption for tribal members from the SNAP work requirements in the Senate's version of the bill.**

## RADIATION EXPOSURE COMPENSATION ACT

A version of Senator Hawley's bill is currently included in the draft text for Senate Judiciary's portion of the megabill.

While it doesn't include everything in S.3853, it covers the majority of the Navajo's priorities: coverage is extended to miners through December 31, 1990, core drillers and remediation workers are included, compensation is increased to \$100,000, additional kidney diseases for miners are covered, and combined work histories are allowed.

The extension would only be through December 31, 2028. The bill would not expand the use of affidavits for employment history, allow previously successful claimants to resubmit for the difference under increased compensation, and it would forego the grant program to study epidemiological impacts of uranium mining/milling GAO study/report on unmet medical benefits.

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## NATIONAL PARKS & MONUMENTS

the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), Association of National Park Rangers (ANPR), and Coalition to Protect America's National Parks (CPANP) submitted strong opposition to the Office of Personnel Management's proposed rule, "Improving Performance, Accountability and Responsiveness in the Civil Service" (90 Fed. Reg. 17182, Docket ID: OPM-2025-0004). The groups argue the rule would undermine over 140 years of civil service protections, politicize staffing within the National Park Service (NPS) and Department of the Interior (DOI), and enable politically motivated dismissal of career staff. They warn this could erode science-based resource management, reintroduce a "Spoils System," and harm recruitment, retention, and morale across the NPS workforce. The proposed changes could also negatively impact tribal-federal partnerships and the integrity of DOI programs that serve tribal communities.

A new legal opinion from the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel (OLC), dated May 27 and released June 10, asserts that the Antiquities Act of 1906 grants presidents not only the authority to designate national monuments but also the power to revoke or eliminate them entirely—reversing nearly 90 years of legal precedent. The opinion, authored by OLC head Lanora Pettit at the request of the White House, paves the way for former President Trump to dismantle or reduce monuments established by prior administrations, including Bears Ears, Grand Staircase-Escalante, Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni-Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon, and others. The move has been described by legal experts as a radical departure from conservation norms, potentially reducing monument protections to the length of a single presidential term. Tribal nations and conservation groups are expressing growing concern, especially as this interpretation threatens hard-won protections of culturally and spiritually significant lands.

NNWO worked closely with Mr. Richard Begay to develop a draft response to the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) request for written comments regarding the potential partial revocation of the Chaco-area mineral withdrawal. A preliminary draft was shared with legal partners at Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck and received input before being finalized. The letter was then reviewed internally and sent to Director Vince Redhouse for clearance, followed by distribution to Mr. Leonard Tosie (Eastern Navajo Land Commission) and Mr. Begay for their review prior to formal submission. NNWO will next engage Navajo Nation Attorney General Heather Claw to finalize and submit the comments on behalf of the Nation.

The Trump administration has proposed a 30% reduction to the National Park Service (NPS) budget, sparking concern, including from Republican lawmakers. The proposal includes significant cuts to visitor services, facility maintenance, and resource stewardship, alongside a controversial plan to transfer some lesser-visited historic and cultural sites to state control. Interior Secretary Doug Burgum has defended the cuts as efforts to reduce "overhead" while prioritizing frontline park staff, but critics argue the loss of support personnel could harm disaster response, climate planning, and visitor safety. Lawmakers like Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID), and Sen. Steve Daines (R-MT) have voiced concerns, noting the proposed cuts contradict the administration's stated commitment to economic growth through public lands