



Senate Passes Update to the NATIVE Act Benefitting Access to Tourism Grants Across Indian Country



*Capitol Hill before the holiday recess, where the Senate unanimously passed updates to the NATIVE Act.
Photo courtesy of the Navajo Nation Washington Office.*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Earlier this week, the United States Senate unanimously passed the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience (NATIVE) Act, marking a major step for tribal tourism programs nationwide. The Navajo Nation Washington Office has tracked this bipartisan legislation since its introduction earlier this year and worked with the Navajo Nation’s official tourism program, Discover Navajo, to submit a formal letter of support to Senate Committee on Indian Affairs leadership in August. The submitted letter spoke to the direct benefits the NATIVE Act would immediately have on Native-owned businesses and tribal enterprises on the Navajo Nation.

The updated NATIVE Act would broaden coordination among federal agencies with tourism responsibilities and improve access to grants, technical assistance, and strategic planning support for tribes and Native organizations. These improvements would help ensure that tribal tourism programs receive consistent federal backing and have clearer pathways to develop long-term projects.

For the Navajo Nation, this support directly aligns with the Division of Economic Development's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, which places tourism as the Nation's top economic priority. Expanded federal tools will help advance projects that strengthen cultural preservation, expand visitor education, and create local jobs across Navajo communities.

The updates also reinforce the Navajo Nation's partnerships with programs like Native Edge Tourism, which provides marketing and capacity-building services to Native-owned businesses and has already supported Discover Navajo, the Nation's lead tourism program. Through this partnership, Discover Navajo has elevated Navajo stories, artists, and destinations using photography, videography, and digital outreach that reflect Navajo culture and community values.

With the Senate's action complete, the bill now moves to the House of Representatives. If approved, these updates would lock in stronger federal commitments that help tribal nations build resilient tourism economies and ensure programs like Native Edge Tourism continue to serve communities across Indian Country.