



## The Navajo Nation Council - Office of the Speaker

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**



### **MacDonald-Lone Tree presides over Tribal Justice Advisory Group meeting in Washington**

*"There was a sense of frustration expressed. Frustration that two years of consultation has resulted in the elimination of the budget for Indian Country." —  
Council Delegate Hope MacDonald-Lone Tree*

**WASHINGTON** — Council Delegate Hope MacDonald-Lone Tree represented the 21<sup>st</sup> Navajo Nation Council by presiding over the Tribal Justice Advisory Group meeting, in place of absent chairman Jefferson Keel, at the second quarterly meeting of the Tribal Justice Advisory Group recently.

MacDonald-Lone Tree (Coalmine Canyon/Toh Nanees Dizi) was appointed by the Public Safety Committee and Intergovernmental Relations Committee of the 21<sup>st</sup> Navajo Nation Council to represent the Navajo Nation for the newly formed group, which is operating under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Justice.

MacDonald-Lone Tree explained that there were numerous issues and recommendations raised at the consultation sessions by many tribal leaders and service professionals.

One issue with many tribes is the cross-deputization of law enforcement officers. Tribes experience obstacles in establishing working relationships with officers with local county sheriffs, state patrol, and federal agencies.

Another issue is domestic violence, which is occurring at an alarming rate on many reservations with slow and inefficient federal prosecutions.

MacDonald-Lone Tree explained that the one main issue that was reiterated throughout the day from tribal leaders was the lack of funding and available resources for tribal justice and safety programs.

Tribal leaders expressed great concern over the fiscal year 2009 budget requests that eliminated the tribal line items in the budget for the Justice Department. Tribal leaders also expressed the challenges associated with preventing and reducing crime without adequate

manpower. Tribal leaders displayed strong advocacy in requesting additional funding for manpower.

Funding for jails and treatment centers are a high priority across Indian country as well. Alcoholism and drug abuse are major contributors to violent crime.

MacDonald-Lone Tree said that "Native people are suffering and the victims and perpetrators are becoming younger and younger."

"Crime is increasing on reservations across the country and Indian Country has become a safe haven for criminals, because criminals know that public safety programs are underfunded and understaffed," she added.

MacDonald-Lone Tree said that tribal leaders made one last recommendation to federal officials to create focus groups that will address specific concerns and develop solutions.

MacDonald-Lone Tree added that TJAG members also had the opportunity to meet and share some of these concerns with the Justice Department and acting Assistant Attorney General Jeffrey L. Sedgwick.

MacDonald-Lone Tree stated that Sedgwick said that he is willing to help the tribes. "He wants to work with the tribes while he is in office during the short period that he's there," she said.

"There was a sense of frustration expressed," MacDonald-Lone Tree explained. "Frustration that two years of consultation has resulted in the elimination of the budget for Indian Country."

For more information, contact Joshua Lavar Butler with the Office of the Speaker at 928-871-6384.

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