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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Indian Affairs Department announces appointments to Tribal Infrastructure Board

SANTA FE – The New Mexico Indian Affairs Department (IAD) on Friday announced Governor Lujan Grisham’s appointment of new members to the Tribal Infrastructure Fund (TIF) board, effective immediately.

The Tribal Infrastructure Act aims to ensure adequate financial resources for infrastructure development in tribal communities, provide for the planning and development of infrastructure in an efficient and cost-effective manner, and develop infrastructure in tribal communities to improve the quality of life and encourage economic development.

The Tribal Infrastructure Board is administratively attached to the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department and consists of nine voting members and four non-voting members. Each member of the board is appointed by the governor and serves a two-year term. The TIF board works to adopt rules governing terms, conditions and priorities for providing financial assistance to tribes, including developing application and evaluation procedures, forms, and qualifications for applicants and for projects.

The governor appointed:

Pueblo Representative: Pueblo of Acoma First Lieutenant Governor Mark Thompson

Navajo Nation Representative: Dr. Pearl Yellowman

Jicarilla Apache Representative: Romaine Wood

Mescalero Apache Representative: Christopher Little

Mark Thompson is a U.S. Army veteran and currently serving in his fourth year as the First Lieutenant Governor for the Pueblo of Acoma. Lt. Governor Thompson has extensive experience managing successful community development projects that include infrastructure, housing, schools, and commercial development projects for tribes in New Mexico and Arizona. He served on the Board of Directors for Acoma Business Enterprises and the Santa Clara Development Corporation. Lt. Governor Thompson also served on the Grants Cibola County School Board and the Native American Community Academy Charter School Board. He earned a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering and a master’s degree in manufacturing engineering from the University of New Mexico.

Pearl Yellowman is a member of the Navajo Nation. She is the cofounder and owner of Yellowman Maho & Associates, a Native woman-owned business. In 2019, Dr. Yellowman was appointed by President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer to serve as the executive director of the Division of Community Development, which includes administrative services for 110 Navajo Nation chapters, community housing and infrastructure and capital project and management department. Dr. Yellowman earned a bachelor's degree in social work, a master's degree in educational leadership, a master's degree in counseling education and a doctorate of education in educational leadership from the University of Montana, with a focus on the contributing factors to the achievement gap for Native Americans.

Romaine Wood is an enrolled member of the Jicarilla Apache Tribe. He currently serves on the Jicarilla Apache Legislative Council in its mission to implement sound public policy. Wood served as program director and general manager of KCIE 90.5 Dulce and has more than 20 years of experience in broadcast media. He also has extensive experience in project management, including broadband access for the Jicarilla Apache tribe, radio tower construction and the renovation of the community studio at KCIE.

Christopher Little is an enrolled member of the Mescalero Apache Tribe and lives on the Mescalero Apache Reservation. He worked for 22 years with the Bureau of Indian Affairs Forestry in Mescalero and has extensive experience in fire management, fuels management and pre-sales timber. He currently serves as the public works director for the Mescalero Apache Tribe and manages the Roads and Utilities Departments. Little earned a bachelor's degree in forestry from Northern Arizona University.

Other Cabinet designees and non-voting members of the TIF board include:

Lynn Trujillo, Cabinet Secretary, Board Chair, New Mexico Indian Affairs Department
Wesley Billingsley, Designee, New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration
Judi L. Kahl, Designee, New Mexico Environment Department
Zack Dillenback, Designee, New Mexico Finance Authority
Aiko Allen, Designee, New Mexico Department of Health
Shannon McKeenan, Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs Representative, Albuquerque Office
Sharon Pinto, Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs Representative, Navajo Office
Chris Bradley, Albuquerque Area Indian Health Services Representative
Roger Martinez, Navajo Area Indian Health Services Representative

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