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## **Lashawna R. Tso appointed to serve as Deputy Secretary for the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department**

SANTA FE – Indian Affairs Secretary Designate James R. Mountain on Tuesday announced the appointment of Lashawna R. Tso as Deputy Cabinet Secretary. Tso brings years of expertise working on local policies affecting Native American communities and advocating for critical problems affecting New Mexico's Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos. Tso is a member of the Navajo Nation. She is Tódik'ozhi (Salt Water) and born for Mą'ii deeshgiizhinií (Coyote Pass). Her maternal grandfather is Áshijhi (Salt People) and her paternal grandfather is Chíshí (Chiricahua Apache).

"I am pleased to welcome Ms. Tso and look forward to working with her to strengthen the Indian Affairs department's relationships and engagement with New Mexico's 23 sovereign nations, tribes, and pueblos," said **Secretary designate James R. Mountain**. "I have confidence in her abilities to serve this administration, this agency, and, most importantly, the 23 sovereign nations and Indigenous peoples of New Mexico."

Tso formerly served as the Executive Director of the Navajo Nation Washington Office, as well as the Assistant Secretary of New Mexico's Indian Education Division and the Chief of Staff for the Navajo Nation Legislative Branch's Office of the Speaker. Prior to that, she worked as a Legislative Staff Assistant for the Navajo Nation for four years. Deputy Secretary Tso is honored and excited to be returning to New Mexico to work with the Lujan Grisham administration.

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*Since 2003 the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department (IAD) has implemented groundbreaking state-tribal policies intended to improve the quality of life for the state's Native citizens. Our initiatives are designed to strengthen Tribal and state relations and address the challenges we face in our communities: economic development, infrastructure improvement, the protection of our cultures and languages, health care accessibility, and educational opportunities for our most precious resource— our children. Learn more at [www.iad.state.nm.us](http://www.iad.state.nm.us).*