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## **New Mexico Indian Affairs Department announces new Appointees**

SANTA FE – Indian Affairs Secretary designate James R. Mountain on Monday announced the latest appointments to the Indian Affairs Department team. Jonathon Tafoya has been appointed Director of Policy and Governmental Affairs and Josett Monette has been named General Counsel.

"I am pleased to welcome Mr. Tafoya and Ms. Monette and I look forward to working with them to further enhance the Indian Affairs Department's relationships with New Mexico's 23 sovereign Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos," **Secretary designate James R. Mountain** said. "I have full confidence in their skills and their ability to serve the Lujan Grisham administration as well as the Tribal communities and Indigenous peoples of New Mexico."

**Jonathon Tafoya** is a member of the Pueblo of Santa Clara. He earned a bachelor's degree in social psychology from Eastern New Mexico University in 2010 after graduating from Santa Fe Indian School in 2006. Jonathon worked as a guidance counselor at Santa Fe Indian School from 2010 to 2013, where he cycled between residential and academics and coached cross country and track & field. Jonathon then transferred to the Pueblo of Santa Clara in 2013, where he served as Recreation Manager before moving on to positions such as Deputy Director of Youth and Learning and Deputy Tribal Administrator until 2021. From 2021 to 2022, he was the Indian Education Director for Espanola Public Schools. He returned to the Pueblo of Santa Clara in 2022 to serve as the Health/Nutrition/Safety Coordinator for the Head Start program.

**Josett Monette** is a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians. Prior to joining the Indian Affairs Department, she was the New Mexico Legal Aid Native American Program ("NMLA NAP") Director. Josett also is an Adjunct Professor for the University of New Mexico School of Law National Native American Law Student Association ("NALSA") Moot Court Team. Throughout her legal career, she has worked as an Associate Attorney with Barnhouse Keegan Solimon & West LLP, an Associate General Counsel for the Pueblo of Isleta, and as a Staff Attorney at NMLA NAP. Josett served as a Board of Director for the New Mexico State Bar Indian Law Section for seven years and she continues to serve as an Attorney Bar Exam Coach. She holds a JD, with a certificate in Indian Law from UNM School of Law, a M.Ed. in Educational Leadership, B.S.Ed. in Secondary Education –

Social Sciences, and B.A. in (American) Indian Studies from the University of North Dakota. Prior to her legal career, Josett was a teacher and worked mostly in the Turtle Mountain Community Schools.

Jonathon and Josett are honored and excited to work with the State of New Mexico and 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).*