



STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
INDIAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor  
Lynn Trujillo, Cabinet Secretary  
Nadine Padilla, Deputy Secretary

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Contact:** Sherrie Catanach  
Public Relations Coordinator, Indian Affairs Department  
[Sherrie.Catanach2@state.nm.us](mailto:Sherrie.Catanach2@state.nm.us)  
505-469-7599

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## **Indian Affairs Department Issues Statement on Removal of Chaco Protection Language in Senate Appropriations Bill**

SANTA FE – Legislation introduced by US Senate Republicans today to fund the United States Department of the Interior for fiscal year 2021 has excluded language intended to protect the Greater Chaco region from increased oil and gas drilling. In 2019, New Mexico Senators Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich included a rider to the fiscal year 2020 Interior appropriations bill directing the Bureau of Land Management to refrain from approving new oil and gas lease sales within ten miles of Chaco Culture National Historical Park. That language has been removed from the updated appropriations legislation.

Indian Affairs Department Cabinet Secretary, Lynn Trujillo on Tuesday issues the following statement:

“We are concerned by the appropriations bill released today by Senate Republicans because it would eliminate an existing prohibition on issuing oil and gas leases within 10 miles of Chaco Canyon. The greater Chaco landscape is a sacred place to New Mexico’s pueblos and tribes, and it has been targeted for oil and gas drilling for far too long. We encourage congressional leaders to restore this prohibition, which has been in place for over a year, and to ensure that tribes have sufficient funding to complete critical cultural resource studies that are ongoing in the Greater Chaco landscape. We also look forward to working with the incoming administration to develop lasting protections for Chaco Canyon and native communities who live in the area.”

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