

NCUIH Statement on President-elect Biden's Nomination of Urban Indian Health Champion Haaland

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President-elect Joe Biden nominated New Mexico Congresswoman Deb Haaland as Secretary of the Department of the Interior. If confirmed, she would be the first Native person to hold a Cabinet-level position and the first to lead Interior. In addition to public lands, waterways, wildlife, national parks, and natural resources that fall under the purview of Interior, the agency has wielded untold influence over the nation's federal policy towards tribes and Native people in general throughout its history. As Congresswoman for New Mexico's Second District and Co-Chair of the Native American Caucus, Congresswoman Haaland has championed priorities for Urban Indian health, including First Nations Community HealthSource in Albuquerque.

"NCUIH is so pleased to learn that Representative Haaland will be tapped to lead the Department of the Interior and will be the first Native in a Cabinet-level position," said Francys Crevier, Algonquin, CEO of the National Council of Urban Indian Health. "As vice chair of the House Committee for Natural Resources, she has been exceptionally supportive of legislation that upholds tribal sovereignty and improves the quality of life for all Native people, including those residing in urban areas. The selection of a Native woman to oversee this agency holds special significance for us because of the sordid history of federal government policies to dispossess indigenous people of their land and culture with an intent to 'kill the Indian, save the man.' Today, Urban Indians participate in many programs under the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Bureau of Indian Education, including social services and adult care assistance. We are confident that Representative Haaland will bring the same level of competence and passion to her role as Secretary and congratulate her for this well-deserved nomination."