# Project to upgrade water infrastructure serving Hopi villages and BIA facilities aims to reduce high arsenic levels in drinking water to meet EPA water quality standards

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**WASHINGTON –** On October 28, 2020, Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Tara *Katuk* Mac Lean Sweeney, accompanied by several Trump Administration officials, met in Flagstaff, Arizona, with Chairman Timothy Nuvangyaoma of the Hopi Indian Tribe to sign a commitment letter for $5 million dollars towards an infrastructure project to reduce arsenic levels in drinking water on the Hopi reservation. Accompanying Chairman Nuvangyaoma were Executive Advisor to the Chairman Duane Humeyestewa; Carroll Onsae, general manager of Hopi Tribal Communications Inc. (HTC) and Hopi Utility Corporation (HUC); and HUC engineer Timothy Bodell, who is leading the Tribe's water quality analysis.

Joining Assistant Secretary Sweeney from the Administration were Assistant to the President and Director of White House Intergovernmental Affairs Doug Hoelscher; Deputy Assistant to the President and Domestic Policy Council Jennie Lichter; U.S. Health and Human Services Deputy Secretary Eric Hargan; U.S. Indian Health Service Director Rear Admiral Michael Weahkee; U.S. Attorney for the District of Arizona Michael Bailey; and Kate Sullivan, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.

"It was an honor to join the Federal delegation in discussions with the Hopi Tribe, including the Chairman and other tribal leadership, to advance an important water quality project that will bring better health, improved infrastructure, and stronger communities to the Hopi people," **said Director Hoelscher**.

"Clean, accessible drinking water is vital for the health of our Native communities," **said Assistant Secretary Tara Sweeney**. "I am proud to announce that the Trump Administration has committed $5 million to the Hopi Arsenic Mitigation Project to reduce the levels of arsenic in water in three Hopi communities. This project has languished since 2008, but the Trump Administration made the Hopi Arsenic Mitigation Project a priority and is helping to move it forward."

Arsenic is a naturally occurring element in the groundwater used by the Hopi communities of Second Mesa, First Mesa, Low Mountain and Keams Canyon. In 2001, the EPA adopted a new standard for concentrations of arsenic in drinking water of 10 parts per billion (ppb), replacing the old standard of 50 ppb.

In order to begin addressing the problem, EPA and the U.S. Indian Health Service (IHS) provided the Tribe with financial and technical assistance to implement a regional water supply delivery system. Named the "Hopi Arsenic Mitigation Project," or HAMP, the system involves construction of wells at the Turquoise Trail region and installation of water lines to the areas of First Mesa and Second Mesa.

*The Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs advises the Secretary of the Interior on Indian Affairs policy issues, communicates policy to and oversees the programs of the BIA and the BIE, provides leadership in consultations with tribes, and serves as the DOI official for intra- and inter-departmental coordination and liaison within the Executive Branch on Indian matters.*

*The Bureau of Indian Affairs directly administers and funds tribally operated infrastructure, law enforcement and justice, social services (including child welfare), tribal governance, and trust land and natural and energy resources management programs for the nation's federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes through four offices: Indian Services, Justice Services, Trust Services, and Field Operations.*

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