



Communications Office

For Release to the Membership

June 27, 2024 – Flandreau, SD

On Monday, June 24, 2024, Vice President Cynthia Weddell led our delegation to the State Capitol to attend Governor Noem’s Tribal Law Enforcement Summit. Three of the nine tribes were represented; Standing Rock, Yankton Sioux and Flandreau. Due to the timing of the summit, many Native Nations were not in attendance, as most were celebrating the Battle of Little Big Horn or had prior engagements.

The Summit was designed to hear from law enforcement officials from around the state especially those that share borders with nine native nations. A lengthy discussion was held on the issue of jurisdiction, where fear of infringement on sovereignty exists. The Governor made the suggestion of signing Mutual Aid agreements with the State. These cross jurisdictional agreements would allow local, county and tribal law enforcement to work together to apprehend criminals who evade arrest by “ducking” in and out of Native and State territories. We already have these agreements in place.

Another discussion was held regarding the BIA’s Special Law Enforcement Commission (SLEC), which is awarded to law enforcement candidates, who successfully complete a 3 day training program that permits Local, County and Tribal Law Enforcement to assist in Federal Investigations of major crimes occurring in Native Country. Most of the Tribal Law Enforcement Officers have successfully completed the necessary 13 week training course as well as the 3 day BIA training but have never been issued their SLEC from the BIA, inhibiting their assistance in the process. Another discussion focused on the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who will take a case, only if the case meets the criteria for the Major Crimes Act; resulting in cases being dismissed for lack of prosecution; some native nations do not have adequate jurisprudence or prosecutors to prosecute crimes.

Governor Noem expressed interest in working toward viable solutions and offered to assist the Tribes in requesting additional appropriations from Congress that benefit tribal and state law enforcement. Yet the BIA has not provided data that would reflect a necessity, inhibiting the Governor’s request for additional law enforcement appropriations to provide proper public safety for Indian Country.