

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

November 18, 2021

The Honorable Debra Haaland  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland,

We write in support of additional funding for the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate (SWO) Community Justice and Rehabilitation Center. Specifically, there is an urgent need for a new police department headquarters housed within this new center, following a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) report that mold has infiltrated the existing police station.

For several years, SWO has sought to build a Community Justice and Rehabilitation Center. The need became more urgent after the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), the BIA, and the Office of Justice Services (OJS) condemned and closed their 28-bed adult jail in December 2016. After this closure, Congress directed the BIA and OJS to assist the Tribe in reconstructing its adult detention facility. DOI has since awarded \$11,175,000 to SWO for construction of a 25-bed adult detention facility. We are told that construction should begin in spring 2022 and we ask that you honor Congress's FY 2021 request for expedited action on the SWO adult detention facility project.

Despite this positive development, SWO is faced with further public safety issues. As noted earlier, a recent BIA report found that the current SWO Police Department headquarters has been taken over by mold. The existence of this mold poses a health hazard for police officers, station staff, and Tribal members visiting the station. To combat this, we ask that the Department of the Interior provide appropriate funding for: (1) temporary police headquarters to remove SWO officers from immediate risk, and (2) a new police station to allow Tribal law enforcement officials to better serve their community and function in coordination with the SWO Community Justice and Rehabilitation Center. Building a new station in conjunction with the detention facility would establish greater public safety in the community, as well as eliminate the current health risk within the existing station. Additional funds from DOI to SWO are needed to make this a reality.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent public health and safety matter. We look forward to progress to remedy the present situation.

Sincerely,



JOHN THUNE  
United States Senator



M. MICHAEL ROUNDS  
United States Senator



DUSTY JOHNSON  
Member of Congress