ARIZONA — Today, Chairman Baca announced the appointment of Sophie Schwartz as the Executive Director of the Indigenous Peoples’ Initiative (IPI) and Juan Quintana Lopera as Deputy Executive Director.

Chairman Baca stated, “As leaders, we are tasked with thinking at the intersection of two axes; the first between the past and the future, and the second between the abiding values and aspirations of those we lead. For our strategies to inspire, we must serve as educators communicating objectives, assuaging doubts, and rallying support. It is my great pleasure to welcome two individuals who emulate these qualities: Ms. Sophie Schwartz as the IPI Executive Director and Juan Quintana Lopera as the Deputy Executive Director.

Sophie is a citizen of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and currently resides in Washington D.C. where she works as an Analyst for Emerson Collectives’ Political and Campaigns team. Sophie has worked extensively on GOTV efforts within Indian country as well as human trafficking prevention in South Dakota.

Since Juan has been a part of IPI, they have strengthened IPI's relationship with the United Nations (UN) and the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC). We have seen the extraordinary work that they have been doing in Colombia. Juan started Bonda, an organization dedicated to safeguarding the future of traditional artisanship and of those who keep it alive.

The work IPI has been able to accomplish would not have been possible if it weren't for the diligent efforts of Sophie and Juan. While there are a plethora of challenges that face Indigenous communities in the United States and across the globe, we remain optimistic and willing to face the challenges ahead. I am confident that Sophie and Juan will create a movement of engaged citizens who will work to support Indigenous people to change their communities, nations, and ultimately, their world.”