



THE NAVAJO NATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

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CONTACT: GEORGE HARDEEN
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR
OFFICE – 928-871-7917
CELL – 928-309-8532
pressoffice@opvp.org

Navajo President Joe Shirley, Jr., sends \$2.9 billion needs request to Obama-Biden Transition Team, asks that Navajo not be forgotten

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., has sent the Obama-Biden Transition Team a request for \$2.9 billion in funding for the Navajo Nation's priority needs through the President-elect's proposed \$775 billion stimulus program.

In a Jan. 5 letter to the transition team, President Shirley described the Navajo Nation as equal in size to the combined area of Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Vermont but with significant economic and social needs.

“Within that vast space are too few employers for our people, thousands of miles of rough dirt roads that are traveled daily, and inadequate means of communication,” he said. “More than half of our families heat their homes with wood they cut themselves, drink water hauled in barrels from windmills, and light rooms with kerosene and gas lanterns. Their wealth is not measured by what's in a savings or retirement account but by what's in their sheep corral or held in a border town pawn shop.”

The 50-page “Navajo Nation Federal Agenda for the Obama-Biden Transition Team and the 111th Congress” is the result of a three-day workshop among Navajo Nation division directors held in Washington last month with input from the Navajo Nation Council's Intergovernmental Relations Committee. The packet was delivered to the transition team by the Navajo Nation Washington Office.

The packet sets out the Nation's needs priorities in transportation and roads, education and school construction, community development, water management and pipeline construction, public safety, health care programs and new facilities, judicial services, information technology, economic development and the rehabilitation needs of people impacted by the Navajo-Hopi Relocation Act.

President Shirley said the Navajo Nation lies at the geographic center of the fastest-growing region of the United States but historically has not taken part in the prosperity the Southwest has enjoyed.

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– Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr.

“We are a corridor for energy, for food products, for manufactured goods, and for national defense. Railroad cars and interstate highways carry untold cargo and passengers along our boundaries,” he said. “Truck stops, depots and train stations just beyond our reach to realize any benefit are laden with prosperity meant for others.

“We are encircled by more national parks and tourist destinations than anyplace else in the country. Navajo livestock graze the rim of the Grand Canyon, Colorado River and Lake Powell along our remote western border. Meanwhile, tourism dollars flow away downstream rather than being captured here because our people simply have no net to catch them with.”

The priorities document cites 27 policy recommendations for the incoming administration. Among them are the Nation's need for research funding for Navajo Nation water rights claims, carbon capture sequestration

technology for the proposed Desert Rock Power Plant, and a health assessment of impacts from past uranium mining and 520 abandoned uranium mines on Navajoland.

The recommendations also include funding requests for a veterans medical facility on the Navajo Nation, funding to replace the outdated facilities at the Tuba City Regional Health Care Corporation, and the establishment of a comprehensive aging and disabilities resource center for Navajo elders.

Among the Navajo Nation's legislative priorities for the 111th Congress are funding for the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project, rehabilitation of the former Bennett Freeze Area, and passage of the Northwest New Mexico Land Consolidation Act.

President Shirley said the image of the Navajo Nation as isolated, picturesque, quaint and stoic is how Navajoland was perceived 100 years ago, but that Navajos today are, in many ways, like other citizens.

"Like Americans everywhere, Navajos pack high school gyms for weekend basketball games, celebrate Christmas with presents under the tree and colored lights on their homes, sit at the kitchen table to complete their income tax returns, and spend the same sleepless nights worrying about how to pay for their children's college education," he said. "The difference is that when wildfires, drought or pounding storms strike us, when uranium contamination makes our people sick and renders our groundwater undrinkable, and when unemployment cripples half of our people, CNN doesn't come and the world and Washington are never the wiser."

He said when the country went through previous economic boom and bust cycles, with the federal government providing help, Navajos historically have been forgotten and left out. But no area or people are more deserving of help than Navajos, he said.

"In the past, when the rest of the country received rural electrification and paved roads, Navajos received sheep dips and surplus road graders," he said. "When American farmers received federal subsidies, Navajos received federal livestock reduction that dispirited every family."

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"Now, when we see American financial institutions and auto makers receive multi-billion dollar federal bailouts to fix problems of their own making, Navajos recall a federal law that forced 10,000 of our most traditional people to relocate from their homes to resolve a problem they did not cause and could not comprehend."

Without the help a federal economic stimulus program could provide, President Shirley said, Navajos will continue to have to leave their homeland to find the work they want and need.

"But that is not as it should be," he said. "If Navajos are to remain on Navajoland so that our children continue to speak our language, live our culture and practice our way of life, the Navajo Nation needs economic development. After generations of federal policies that hindered America's most traditional indigenous people, we pray that the Obama-Biden Administration's economic stimulus program can give us the help we seek."

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Transportation	
Roads	\$128,640,000
Navajo Transit Dept. Projects	\$11,700,000
Education	
School facilities - New Construction	\$33,100,000
Navajo Technical College	\$10,450,000
Community Development Solid Waste Management Program	\$750,000
Housing improvement program	\$10,710,000
Community Development Projects	\$6,260,000
Water Management Branch	
Albuquerque to Tohajillee Waterline	\$10,000,000
Dilcon Waterline	\$10,700,000
Sweetwater Red Mesa Water line	\$20,000,000
Cutter Lateral Phase III	\$5,000,000
Page-LeChee Water Supply Project	\$10,000,000
Gallup Regional System	\$40,000,000
Navajo-Gallup Water Supply project	\$864,000,000
Western Navajo Pipeline	\$390,000,000
C-Aquifer Ganado Groundwater project	\$62,000,000
C-Aquifer Leupp Dilcon Project	\$90,000,000
Halchita to Kayenta waterline	\$151,000,000
Many Mules water project	\$151,000,000
Navajo Indian Irrigation Project	\$40,000,000
Navajo Hopi Land Office	
Housing	\$110,000,000
Uranium Clean-up	\$5,000,000
Health Care Stimulus Priorities: Replacement of Kayenta Health Center	\$37,200,000

Public Safety Department of Corrections	\$580,188,783
Department of Emergency Medical Services	\$955,080
Department of Highway Safety	\$229,000
Judicial	\$14,800,000
Information Technology	\$90,300,000
Economic Development	
Nahat'a Dziil Shopping Center	\$6,000,000
American Family Entertainment Centers	\$10,500,000
Bottled Water Processing Plant (Leupp, Ariz.)	\$3,600,000
Seven Rural Commercial Facilities	\$10,500,000
Sheepsprings Welcome Center	\$1,800,000
Kerley Valley Commercial Light Industrial Site	\$4,500,000
Rubber Glove Manufacturing/ Incubator & Training Center	\$4,351,049
Navajo Nation Shopping Center	\$5,000,000
Acciona Thermal Solar Project	\$2,000,000
Mariano Lake Trading Post	\$1,500,000
TOTAL	\$2,933,733,912