



The Navajo Nation Council — Office of the Speaker

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Speaker Morgan sends Navajo delegation to lobby Arizona State Legislature, Arizona Governor's Office for preservation of funds

Morgan commends IGR Task Force on State Affairs, Navajo Vice President Ben Shelly, the Navajo Nation Executive Branch, Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer, the Arizona State Legislature

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Navajo Nation Council Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan sent a delegation to Phoenix to lobby the Arizona State Legislature and the Arizona Governor's Office on May 20 based on a May 13 resolution, approved by the Intergovernmental Relations Committee of the Navajo Nation Council, authorizing the IGR Task Force on State Affairs, the Navajo Nation President and Vice President to advocate for the preservation of funding for Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010.

The Navajo delegation delivered their message to a variety of state officials including key policy advisors to Gov. Jan Brewer, the Native American Legislative Democratic Caucus, and the Republican and Democratic Legislatures in both the House of Representatives and Senate.

In an effort to ultimately deliver a joint statement that would speak a clear and concise message from the Navajo Nation Legislative Branch and the Executive Branch to the state of Arizona, Speaker Morgan and his office requested task force members solicit the assistance of Navajo Nation Vice President Ben Shelly to collaboratively produce a priority list summarizing key areas that could be negatively impacted with both branches agreeing to this common goal. Further, acknowledging the Nation will inevitably sustain budget cuts, this initiative was launched in order to minimize adverse impacts to the Nation from impending state budget cuts for FY 2009 and FY 2010.

According to the resolution, sponsored by Young Jeff Tom (Mariano Lake/Smith Lake), chairperson of the IGR Task Force on State Affairs, the Navajo Nation finds the health and welfare of the Navajo people in Arizona significantly impacted by the provision of services of the state.

The Navajo Nation found proposed cuts to the state of Arizona's FY 2009 and 2010 budgets will negatively affect the provision of services by the state to the Navajo Nation, negatively impacting the health and welfare of its people.

As a result, the Navajo Nation is very concerned about the imposition of budget cuts within FY 2009, as well as the preservation of funding in crucial service areas for FY 2010 for the state of Arizona.

In response, the Navajo Nation Council, the Office of the Speaker and the Office of the President/Vice President of the Navajo Nation take the position that cuts in the following areas will have a negative impact and preservation of funding allocated for services by the state of Arizona be maintained.

The resolution includes seven main priorities that include: education, social services, health, economic development, public safety, community development and general services. These priority areas emerged after matching Arizona state legislative proposed budget cuts against Navajo Nation records to produce key intelligence and deliberation on what the Nation least could afford to lose in the context of such budget cuts.

Speaker Morgan appreciates the assistance from members of the IGR Task Force on State Affairs, Vice President Ben Shelly, the Executive Branch of the Navajo Nation, Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer and the Arizona State Legislature.

"I appreciate the assistance of all these cooperating entities and especially to certain staff members from my office, the Office of the Vice President and the governor's office, who worked tirelessly to make this initiative move forward," Speaker Morgan said. "I look forward to our continued working relationships on behalf of the Navajo people."

The task force, created on Jan 8, is comprised of six committee members appointed by the Council Speaker to cover state issues in Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. Arizona members include Kee Allen Begay Jr. (Many Farms/Round Rock) and Leonard Chee (Birdsprings/Leupp/Tolani Lake), LoRenzo C. Bates (Upper Fruitland) and Young Jeff Tom to cover New Mexico; and Katherine Benally (Dennehotso) and Francis Redhouse (Teecnospos) to cover Utah. The task force is designed to advance the priorities and strategies of the Navajo Nation Council to state government.

The Arizona State Legislature is statutorily required to remain in session for 100 days beginning in early January however, much like previous years, it is anticipated that the legislature will not adjourn sine die until the latter part of June 2009.

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