



## The Navajo Nation Council - Office of the Speaker

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Navajo Nation awarded \$2.3 million grant for repairs, renovations of jail facilities**

#### ***Navajo lobbies Washington, first tribe to strategize \$2 billion authorization***

**WASHINGTON** — The Public Safety Committee of the 21<sup>st</sup> Navajo Nation Council has an important mission, to lobby for full funding for Indian Country. Recently, the committee conducted an important lobbying effort for the appropriation of a \$2 billion authorization bill that was first approved by the U.S. Senate on July 16 through a bill titled, the Kyl-Thune Amendment.

The amendment is planned to provide \$2 billion for public safety, healthcare and water projects in Indian Country, and it states that \$1 billion will go towards law enforcement and improved health care, with another \$1 billion going towards water projects. The funding is being appropriated from a \$50 billion foreign assistance bill aimed at combating the spread of AIDS worldwide.

The Public Safety Committee has been instrumental in advocating for increased funding in Indian Country and continues to push forward a bill that will make construction of jail facilities a reality.

Hope MacDonald-Lone Tree (Coalmine Canyon/Toh Nanees Dizi) explained, "We were enthusiastically greeted and informed that we were the first tribe to meet with Washington officials to strategize a plan to fund the \$2 billion authorization."

The committee was informed that packets of information the committee presented was necessary and well timed, since the Congressional staffers plan to meet soon to strategize funding of the authorization bill.

Staff from Sen. Tim Thune's (R-SD) office informed the committee that they plan to make every attempt to fund the \$2 billion and build a new coalition to support the effort.



The Public Safety Committee lobbied in Washington recently to secure a portion of a \$2 billion authorization bill for public safety needs for the Navajo Nation. Pictured is Delores Greyeyes, director of Navajo Department of Corrections; Rex Lee Jim, Hope MacDonald-Lone Tree, Benjamin Curley. (Courtesy photo)

MacDonald-Lone Tree said, "Our meeting with the White House's Office of Management and Budget allowed us to engage the analysts and share ideas on how to address the lack of jails in Indian Country."

After extending an invitation to visit the Navajo Nation, the committee is pleased to report that the analysts were open and interested in touring its facilities and programs.

The committee also met with the DOJ's Office of Tribal Justice Programs to ask that information regarding the lack of Navajo facilities is included in their transitional report, which they assured will be included for the next administration.

The committee also met with staff from the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs to determine what their strategy is to fund the \$2 billion authorization. The Senate Committee staff indicated that they will be working with the new congressional members to begin planning for the funding strategy with the coalition.

The committee was also notified that the Navajo Nation was awarded \$2.3 million worth of grants for repairs and renovations for its current jail facilities.

"The \$2.3 million was great news for the Navajo Nation," said Delores Greyeyes, director of the Navajo Department of Corrections. "It took years of hard work to educate officials on our issues, to lobby with our Public Safety Committee for increased funding. We are eager to partner with the congressional coalition to fund the \$750 million public safety fund as well."

Rex Lee Jim (Rock Point), chair of the Public Safety Committee said, "We were successful with our trip to Washington. Our committee has worked hard in educating the U.S. Congress and the administrative offices in Washington on the tremendous needs we have in Navajo Country regarding our public safety issues."

"We worked with the Navajo Division of Public Safety to secure more funding for correctional facilities," Jim said. "As chair of the committee, I am extremely grateful for staff like Ms. Delores Greyeyes, she has spent a tremendous amount of time and energy writing grants for the program. Her diligence has paid off in the form of \$2.3 million for the planning and renovations of our correctional facilities."

"It takes a team to bring about concrete results and I thank all members of the Public Safety Committee and the Navajo Division of Public Safety for their help in moving our issues forward," Jim added. "We still have much work to do — results like this keep us going and motivated."

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