



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Council takes part in historic signing ceremony to bring successful end to litigation against the U.S. over mismanaged trust fund assets**



**Photo: From left, Council Delegate Walter Phelps, Council Delegate Lorenzo Curley, Deputy Attorney General Dana Bobroff, President Ben Shelly (sitting), Council Delegate Roscoe Smith, Speaker Pro Tem LoRenzo Bates (sitting), Council Delegate Jonathan Nez, Attorney General Harrison Tsosie, Navajo Tax Commission director Martin Ashley, and OPVP Chief of Staff Arbin Mitchell.**

**WINDOW ROCK** – Speaker Pro Tem LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland) along with members of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Navajo Nation Council joined Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly on Wednesday, to take part in a historic signing ceremony of Council Resolution CMY-28-14.

The resolution, approved by the Council last Friday, will award the Navajo Nation a total of \$554 million, representing the largest recovery of any Indian Nation in any breach of trust litigation with the United States government.

In return, the Navajo Nation agrees to dismiss its pending lawsuit over the historical mismanagement of trust fund assets, which was filed on Dec. 29, 2006 in the United States Court of Federal Claims.

Pro Tem Bates thanked members of the Naabik’iyátí’ Committee Trust Mismanagement Litigation Task Force for guiding the legal team throughout the negotiations and also said the Navajo

Nation's success in negotiating the agreement sends a very strong message to other tribes that are currently in litigation over trust fund assets.

"The fact that the Navajo Nation is the largest tribe sends a very strong that there is hope at the end of the day," said Pro Tem Bates. "There is light at the end of the tunnel."

Pro Tem Bates and President Shelly praised the tremendous contributions of Navajo Nation Deputy Attorney General Dana Bobroff, who worked diligently for years to reach an agreement.

"I would like everyone to realize what an absolute historical landmark accomplishment this is for the Navajo Nation," stated Bobroff. "This is the largest trust responsibility award from the United States in the history of Indian Country. It will never completely address the wrongs done on prior generations, but it's going to allow some opportunities for future generations."

Bobroff also noted that under the terms of the agreement, the Navajo Nation will receive the \$554 million award no later than 120 days following President Shelly's signing of the resolution.

President Shelly expressed the need for careful planning and recommended that the Nation look to invest the funds in a manner that benefits the Navajo people.

"Let's put that plan together to help the people out there. There's so much we can do out there," said President Shelly.

Council Delegate Lorenzo Curley (Houck, Klagetoh, Nahata Dziil, Tsé Si áni, Wide Ruins), who chaired the Naabik'iyátí' Committee Trust Mismanagement Litigation Task Force, was also on hand to express his appreciation to fellow task force members and to acknowledge their unified efforts that led to the successful agreement.

"We were all unified in our approach," Delegate Curley stated. "My hats off to the task force members for sticking together and making the United States [accountable]."

Task force members also thanked members of the 20<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council and in particular former Council Delegate Ervin Keeswood, Sr., who introduced legislation in 2006 that led to the establishment of the Historical Trust Asset Mismanagement Litigation Trust Fund, and authorized the filing of the lawsuit against the United States on behalf of the Navajo Nation.

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