



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Delegate Filfred elected as vice chair of the Utah Tribal Leaders

VERNAL, Utah – Last Thursday, the Utah Tribal Leaders met to discuss key issues regarding policies that may affect Utah tribes such as healthcare reform, and the states continued advocacy to repeal the status of the Bears Ears National Monument status to the federal government.

The UTL also held an election to fill a vice chair vacancy in which Council Delegate Davis Filfred (Mexican Water, Aneth, Teecnospos, Tólikan, Red Mesa) was elected to fill the position by the UTL members. His term as vice chair will coincide with his term as a council delegate.

“I would like to thank my colleagues on the UTL for electing me as their vice chair. We work through very important issues and I hope I can assist in the best way that I can in my capacity,” said Delegate Filfred. “It is an honor to serve on this council with other tribal leaders that have the same goals – to protect the sovereignty and status of tribes within Utah.”

The UTL is comprised of tribal leadership throughout the state of Utah, which include the Navajo Nation, Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation, Skull Valley Band of Goshute, Ute Indian Tribe, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe including the White Mesa Community, Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation, Paiute Indian Tribe, and the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe.

The first resolution that UTL members considered was to call upon the U.S. government and the state of Utah to begin immediate consultation on healthcare reform proposals with Indian tribes because “it is the trust responsibility of the federal government to provide adequate health care to Native American citizens,” according to the resolution.

The second resolution seeks to oppose the state of Utah’s actions to seek to repeal of the Bears Ears National Monument designation, however, during the 2017 Utah State Legislature General Session, House Concurrent Resolution 11 was approved by both houses in support of the repeal. Both UTL resolutions were approved.

“I supported both these resolutions because it is important that we send a message to the state of Utah as a unified voice. The UTL has the support of the Navajo Nation, and I will continue to advocate to push our interests forward for Indian people in Utah,” said Delegate Filfred.

Delegate Filfred also presented reports regarding issues on the Navajo Nation, such as the Navajo Generating Station, which may close in the coming years. A closure would affect Utah communities in terms of employment and revenues that they receive from the power plant.

Delegate Filfred also provided an update on the construction of the Utah Navajo Health System, Inc., which would be completed in early 2018, and would be the largest employer and medical service provider in the San Juan County area.

The next UTL meeting will be held in Cedar City, Utah on June 8-9, 2017, and the 12th Annual Utah Governor's Native American Summit will be held in Orem, Utah on July 20-21 at the Utah Valley University.

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