



24th Navajo Nation Council

Office of the Speaker

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 14, 2019

MEDIA CONTACT

Carl Slater
(928) 871-6815
nmlb.communications@gmail.com

With Delegates' Leadership Three Branches Advocate for New Shiprock Judicial/Public Safety Facility

SANTA FE, N.M. – Navajo Nation Council Delegates Eugenia Charles-Newton (Shiprock), Mark Freeland (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish, Tse'ii'ahí, Whiterock), Pernell Halona (Coyote Canyon, Mexican Springs, Naschitti, Tohatchi, Bahastl'a'a'), and Raymond Smith (Houck, Klagetoh, Nahat'a Dziil, Tsé Si'áni, Wide Ruins) met with New Mexico Senator John Pinto, Representative Anthony Allison, and staff of Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham to advocate for funding for the new Shiprock Judicial/Public Safety Facility.

In two weeks, the existing Shiprock police and corrections facilities may be forced to close due to building health and safety issues. Seeing a potential risk to the public safety of the Shiprock area and Northern Agency, the group of delegates joined with members of the executive and judicial branches to bring in funding to complete the facility's design and move forward with the project.

They were joined by Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne, Division of Public Safety Director Jesse Delmar, Chief of Staff for the Office of the President and Vice President Paulson Chaco, and Dr. Delores Greyeyes, director of the Navajo Department of Corrections.

"We're hurting pretty badly in Northern Agency," Dr. Greyeyes explained.

While meeting with the governor's staff, Delegate Charles-Newton described how important the project is for Shiprock and all of Northern Agency. "Getting this project going will reaffirm that public safety is a primary concern and that police are going to be a presence in the Shiprock and surrounding communities. I know that the governor identified public safety as a top concern for her administration and this project aligns with that vision."

After a recent inspection of the Shiprock Public Safety Building by the Northern Navajo Medical Center Office of Environmental Health & Engineering, the district sanitarian determined that the facility is unsuitable for continued operation and should be closed.

The project will consolidate judicial, public safety, and corrections programs into one facility. The proposed tenants of the new facility will include Navajo Police and Criminal Investigations, along with adult and juvenile corrections; the Judicial Courts and their support programs,

including probation officers, the peacemaking program, and reentry programs; and prosecutors and public defenders.

This facility will provide capacity for assessment and intervention services for individuals in the corrections system, which will enhance the Navajo Nation's public safety system.

The estimated facility cost is \$79 million and \$3.1 million has been allocated from the Navajo Nation Judicial Public Safety Special Revenues. The Navajo Nation leadership requested \$3.5 million to complete all design activities, which will allow the project to seek additional funding from Navajo, state, and federal sources.

Poqueen Rivera, legislative liaison for the governor, expressed her support for the project's merits. "I will continue to push these projects in the capital outlay discussions. I appreciate all the work and the planning that has gone into this."

The project aligns with master-planning dating from 2007. Additionally, the project will add an autopsy and lab facility to the capabilities of the Shiprock Police/Investigation District.

At the meeting's close, Chief of Staff Chaco clarified how important the project is for the Nation after the participants delivered a support letter Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and 24th Navajo Nation Council Speaker Seth Damon (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí', Rock Springs, Tsayatoh) wrote to the governor. "The three branches have come together to identify [the project] as a priority," he stated.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org or find us on Facebook and Twitter, keywords: Navajo Nation Council