



Contact: Erny Zah
Director of Communications

Cell: (928) 380-0771

navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov

For Immediate Release
January 30, 2012

President Shelly Assures BHP Negotiations Will Continue for Navajo Mine

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly, during a Wednesday morning meeting with BHP Billiton New Mexico Coal President Pat Risner, said owning a coal mine could be beneficial to the Navajo Nation and to continue the due diligence process to explore the acquisition.

“I think this could be a good acquisition for the Navajo Nation. But as President of the Navajo Nation, I must be sure that this is a good investment. After being informed of the process to now, I am comfortable with the progress our negotiations team has made. Lets continue to explore this proposal more and make sure this is good for the Navajo people,” President Shelly said during the hour-long meeting.

Both parties agreed that the due diligence investigation should continue and both are interested in further pursuing a possible deal that could sell Navajo Mine to the Navajo Nation.

“We have to protect the jobs at the mine,” President Shelly said. The mine employs more than 400 people.

President Shelly responded to criticism about comments he made after he presented his State of Nation Address to the Navajo Council on Monday.

President Shelly told the Council that he didn’t have enough information about the possible acquisition to support the transaction in its current state.

“I like the concept of acquiring the mine, but I didn’t have the information that I was looking for. I needed to see how this would be good for the Navajo people in the long term. Information has been shared with me and I like what I see right now. Lets continue negotiating with BHP,” President Shelly said to Risner.

President Shelly said he was concerned about the long-term investment of the mine, which includes, equipment, buildings, railroads and other infrastructure. President Shelly said he wanted to know how eventual repairs would be paid for.

In October, BHP- Billiton and Arizona Public Service, primary owners of Four Corners Power Plant, presented a proposal to the Navajo Nation that would essentially sell Navajo Mine to the Navajo Nation.

In December, President Shelly signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Risner to enter into negotiations to acquire Navajo Mine.

“Acquiring a coal mine is a giant step for the Navajo Nation. However, we must become more certain as to the benefits the Navajo Nation will receive. There are many issues to consider, but right now, we agreed to continue the due diligence investigation,” President Shelly said.

###