



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## VICE PRESIDENT NEZ URGES NM GOVERNOR MARTINEZ TO APPROVE FUNDING FOR NAVAJO NATION CAPITAL OUTLAY PROJECTS



Vice President Jonathan Nez met with key members of Governor Martinez's cabinet on Tuesday, Mar. 8, to discuss and advocate on behalf of 35 capital outlay projects that the Nation would like to see funding appropriated for.

SANTA FE-Vice President Jonathan Nez met on Tuesday, Mar. 8, with Governor Susana Martinez's Chief of Staff, Keith Gardner and other staff members to advocate on behalf of 35 proposed capital outlay projects totaling approximately \$3.2M.

The deadline for Governor Martinez to approve allocations compiled in Senate Bill 219, Capital Outlay Projects Bill, is Wednesday, Mar. 9, before midnight. Although the governor will give final approval, it's the work of the New Mexico State Legislators that funded the outlay projects.

A majority of the Navajo Nation's capital outlay projects fall in line with the four pillars of the Begaye-Nez Administration, which are Veterans, Infrastructure, Youth and Elders and Job Opportunity.

"We advocated for all the projects to get funded," Vice President said. "If you look through the list many of them reflect the four pillars and we want to see all of these projects funded."

The projects listed numerous water line and power line extensions, which support the administration's push for improving infrastructure across the Nation. There are also proposals for two Senior Citizen Centers in both Red Rock and Upper Fruitland and beyond that, there is also a proposal for a Veteran's Memorial Park in Two Grey Hills.



**Members of OPVP and other key department staff met with members of Governor Martinez's cabinet to discuss important capital outlay projects the Navajo Nation would like to see funded. Vice President Nez stands next to Tom Clifford, Cabinet Secretary of the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration and Kelly Zunie, Cabinet Secretary.**

Cabinet Secretary Kelly Zunie said the Governor's Office had concerns about funding projects that sit stagnant without progress.

"We have to make sure the money gets spent," she said.

Cabinet and Federal Affairs Director, James Ross spoke to this issue as well.

"We have heard that it takes chapters take upwards of nine months to get money funneled through to them from the Nation. This causes projects to take years to complete," he said.

Chief of Staff Keith Gardner said that the list of capital outlay projects had many justifiable and worthwhile projects but he also was concerned about unspent balances that are still being drawn down.

For Navajo Nation these capital outlay projects constitute big dollars and the Nation has done its due diligence in reviewing the projects and making sure they are ready to go.

"Some projects didn't make this list because some chapters were not able to get their proposals fully completed," Vice President Nez said. "We need to teach our people to abide by due diligence and to get their projects ready to go. We want the message to be 'Chapters do your work and we'll help you find dollars'. That's why we're here today."

Vice President also advocated that Capital Improvement Outlay funds are meant for all citizens of New Mexico, of which, Navajos are citizens of the state and justifiably deserve state

financial support and services.

Office of the President and Vice President Executive Staff Assistant and New Mexico Liaison, Mark Freeland said it's important that both the Nation and the State work off of updated Capital Projects Monitoring System lists so there is no discrepancy over what projects have been completed and which ones have not.

"We look for process improvement all the time and also improved communication. All we want is an opportunity to showcase what we can do with getting our projects completed," he said. "We have the capacity, project management and key personnel in place to complete projects for our Navajo Nation chapters."

Vice President Nez stated that every project on the list is beneficial to the lives of the Navajo people in each respective New Mexico community. Additionally, once Intergovernmental Agreements are executed, it allows usage of the Navajo Business Opportunity Act, which in turn stimulates the Navajo economy.

"We are here to fight for these projects as we know that the lawmakers have the ability to push project recommendations forward. We have a great partnership with the State of New Mexico and we are here to respectfully request approval of all of our capital outlay projects. These projects will empower our people and contribute to their self-sufficiency. That is the bottom line."

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