



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

CONTACTS:

Jared Touchin, Communications Director
(928) 274-4275

Crystalyne Curley, Sr. Public Information Officer
(928) 274-2758

nnopvp.communications@gmail.com

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Solid waste disposal proposal aims to address illegal trashing dumping and to promote recycling on the Navajo Nation

SALT RIVER, Ariz. – On Thursday, officials with the Nez-Lizer Administration including Navajo Nation Division of Community Development Executive Director Dr. Pearl Yellowman, Division of General Services Executive Director Lomardo Aseret, Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency Executive Director Oliver Whaley, and 24th Navajo Nation Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. had the opportunity to visit and tour the Salt River Landfill, which is an enterprise of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.

The purpose of the visit was part of the overall initiative to design and establish a landfill for the Navajo Nation to address solid waste, eliminate illegal trash dumping, and to promote and increase recycling among the Navajo people and communities.

The 200-acre Salt River Landfill site provides solid waste disposal and recycling facilities operated in accordance with the rules and regulations of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, in order to protect the environment, to promote good public health, and to conserve natural resources.



PHOTO: (left to right) Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. Navajo Nation Division of Community Development staff, Salt River Landfill General Manager Oscar Tsingine, Division of General Service Director Lomardo Aseret, Environmental Protection Agency Executive Director Oliver Whaley, and Division of Community Development Director Dr. Pearl Yellowman at Salt River Landfill in Scottsdale, Ariz. on August 8, 2019.

“The Division Directors under the Nez-Lizer Administration are taking a proactive approach to addressing how the Nation can manage and dispose of solid waste. Illegal trash dumping is a critical concern for many communities and our administration, and so we need an effective plan

that protects our environment and helps sustain our lands for generations to come,” said President Nez. “It’s important that local residents also take on the task of disposing of their waste in a responsible manner – there’s always the opportunity to organize at the local level and develop solutions and ideas as well.”

Division of Community Development Executive Director Dr. Pearl Yellowman, who is tasked with working with the Nation’s 110 chapters, voiced concerns from chapters and residents over the lack of availability of solid waste disposal in many Navajo communities.

Illegal trash dumping is the disposing of waste in unauthorized or unpermitted areas, usually found along roadways and washes. Aside from household trash, other items that are often illegally dumped include appliances, trash, furniture, yard waste, mattresses, tires, and used oil.

Navajo Nation EPA Executive Director Oliver Whaley also expressed his concerns with the impacts of illegal dumping on the environment including forest areas, the ecosystem, animals, and communities and residents.

In 2017, Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. introduced legislation to implement the Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan for the Navajo Nation, developed by the Division of Community Development, that outlined the practices of landfills, transfer stations, robust waste regulations, program responsibilities, methods of disposals, waste shed responsibilities, and future management practices. However, the bill did not proceed beyond the Council level.

“The initiative is a step forward to address the deficiencies in the current system and provide support for plans. Most importantly, we need full participation from the chapter communities to move this initiative forward,” said Delegate Begay.

Vice President Lizer stated, “The Nation needs to develop a safer and convenient way to dispose and recycle waste for our children and future generations, and establishing a landfill will resolve many of the problems.”

On behalf of the Office of the President and Vice President, we thank the Salt River Landfill General Manager Oscar Tsingine for providing his insights on the operation and functions of the landfill. The Nez-Lizer Administration intends to introduce its waste management proposal in the coming months.

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