



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 21, 2019

Navajo Nation receives President Trump's support for disaster declaration



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer meeting with FEMA officials at FEMA headquarters in Washington D.C. on March 6, 2019.

WINDOW ROCK – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer were informed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on Tuesday that President Donald J. Trump granted a Major Disaster Declaration for the Navajo Nation, which prompts the release of federal funds for the reimbursement of emergency funds expended in February due to severe snowstorms that impacted many Navajo communities.

“Today’s announcement is a very significant step forward for the Navajo Nation in our collaborative effort to obtain reimbursements for chapters, divisions, departments, and other programs who contributed their funds and resources to helping our Navajo people who were adversely impacted by heavy snowfall during the winter season. This is truly a successful outcome due to the proactive approach that we took to address the initial snowfall and the heavy mud and flooding that resulted,” stated President Nez. “We thank President Trump, FEMA, Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management, and many others who helped us to reach this point.”

In February, President Nez and Vice President Lizer requested the Navajo Nation Commission on Emergency Management to convene and issue a state of emergency prior to the forecasted snowstorms to allow chapters and other entities to use funds to prepare prior to the storm.

On Feb. 19, the President Nez officially signed the emergency declaration for the Navajo Nation. Throughout the emergency response efforts, the Nez-Lizer Administration continuously reminded chapters, divisions, and others to document all expenses and resources that were used.

On March 5, Vice President Lizer personally delivered a letter to U.S. Vice President Mike Pence stating, "We respectfully ask for support from the Trump-Pence Administration to assist the Navajo Nation to secure reimbursements for financial resources used during this period. To that end, the Trump-Pence Administration is kindly asked to concur with the Navajo Nation's declaration of emergency to facilitate the reimbursement process."

President Nez and Vice President Lizer also met with FEMA officials in Washington D.C. on March 6, to advocate for the Nation's reimbursement. On April 29, President Nez submitted the formal request for a disaster declaration to the Trump Administration, which is required to be considered for reimbursement from FEMA.

"We are very pleased and grateful for today's action, but it's important that we remain diligent in seeing this process through to receive the federal funds to the fullest extent possible," said Vice President Lizer. "We have to continue to be proactive and work together for the benefit of our communities and our people."

President Nez is recommending that the Nation set aside funds specifically for emergency response efforts, which can be used to reimburse chapters while the Nation seeks approval by the federal government for disaster declarations in the future. He added that once a disaster declaration is approved then the federal funds can then be used to replace the funds that are set aside by the Nation.

The Nez-Lizer Administration will continue working FEMA and other officials to complete the reimbursement process for the Navajo Nation.

#

For the latest news from the Office of the President and Vice President, please visit <http://www.opvp.navajo-nsn.gov/> or find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.