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## **President Ben Shelly Testifies at Tribal Energy Development Hearing** *Prosperity is our people and our land*

**Washington, D.C.—** At the House Committee on Natural Resources on Friday, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly testified before the Subcommittee on Indian and Alaska Native Affairs. He joined other tribal leaders to voice their concerns about obstacles that delay energy development on Indian lands.



(L to R) Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and Chairman Tex Hall of the Three Affiliated Tribes of the Berthold Reservation testify on Capitol Hill.  
-Photo by Jared King, NNWO

During his testimony President Shelly told the Subcommittee the Navajo Nation's prosperity comes from the people and land.

"The key to our prosperity and self determination is our people and our land," said President Shelly. We hold significant renewable and non-renewable natural resources, including coal, oil and natural gas. The Navajo Nation is resource-rich and we want development of our resources, nevertheless we have been held back for many reasons. I feel that there is too much red tape on our projects.

Subcommittee Chairman Don Young said in his opening statement, "Regulatory obstacles such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs' approval of Rights of Way, the Bureau of Land Management's approval of Applications for Permit to Drill, and National Environmental Policy Act red tape are unjust to tribes."

He also reported that 56 million acres of Indian Lands in the Lower 48 States and 44 million acres of Native Corporation lands in his state of Alaska, Native American have enormous potential to contribute to the energy security of this country.

President Shelly also testified the Desert Rock Energy Project planned to utilize modern coal technology.

"Desert Rock will be one of the newest and cleanest coal generating plants in the country," he said. "It will provide one-third of the Navajo Nation's entire budget and allows us to head towards the path of self-determination."

Desert Rock Energy Project's permit was remanded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2009 and is currently under appeal by the Navajo Nation.

In his closing statement, President Shelly reaffirmed the Navajo Nation stands against Uranium Mining.

“We are asking Congress to do everything possible to continue the scientific research regarding the health impacts of uranium and put all federal agencies attached to the World War II efforts on notice to remediate continued hotspots on the Navajo Nation, to deal with this legacy of government sponsored uranium mining,” said President Shelly.

Rep. Young concluded, “We need to ensure that federal environmental laws do not impede energy development in Indian Country. I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Committee and tribes to identify unnecessary laws and regulations, and to write necessary legislation to allow tribes to pursue energy self-determination.”

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