Speaker’s 2012 Winter Session Speech
Speaker Johnny Naize
January 23, 2011

It has been my vision as Speaker of the twenty-second Navajo Nation Council to rejuvenate the Navajo Nation Legislative body by doing what we as Diné have always done with new beginnings; that is, remove the contents of our Hooghan, sweep the earthly floor, and eventually return our belongings to Hooghan with a renewed breath of life and offerings for a blessed future. Let our Hooghan reveal once again the strength of our people and signal to all, through a restored fire and ascending smoke, that the Navajo Nation Council has re-emerged with a ready shield to our left, prosperity to our right, and the principles of our ancestors as our guide: Nitsáhákees (Critical Thinking); Nahat’á (Strategic Planning); Iiná (A Way of Life); and Siihasin (Achieve Stability).

Through this knowledge, I have chosen the path of self-control, patience, and inclusion so as to welcome our friends, family, and colleagues back to our home to ensure meaningful communication carries forward. Amid a rapidly shifting government, the call for open lines of communication is greater than ever, and I believe our answer to this call will clear the path to better governance for our people. My door, as you know, is always open.

As your Speaker, I stand at the intersection of the people’s needs, between what we, individually and collectively, have to offer and the passion that we bring to respond to those needs. Upon taking office a year ago, resting before us was the call to transform the people’s code to reflect the consolidation of 88 communities to 24 districts.

As Council worked through this daunting, time-sensitive, and critical task, I observed each one of you, with your distinctive talents, weave together measures for the betterment of the people’s government.

This continues to stand as a profound and irrefutable demonstration of your leadership and as a strong indicator of your individual and collective potential. What emerged during this historical time was a formula that called for an unhindered Council, meaning that we must offer each of
our respective strengths, perspectives, and vantage points to achieve success. In the face of deeply concerning matters, each of you, if afforded the facilitated opportunity to spread your wings and exert your unique talents and abilities, will elevate Council to remarkable achievement in order to improve the health and welfare of the Navajo people. I have no doubt that the sum of each of your actions will prove to be a distinctive contribution to the history of our people.

Over the course of our first year, I have taken stock in lessons learned and applied this knowledge to our Council to get the most out of what we can possibly give. In doing so, I believe when the chapter of our Council is finally written, we will have honored the people’s vote of confidence and the people’s trust bestowed upon us as leaders to make a difference now as well as for our grandchildren’s grandchildren. With the consolidation of 88 regions to 24 districts, it is imperative we take full advantage of all we have to offer in order to remain responsive to our people. In short, “we must do more with less.” These words are not mine but rather they are the words of Shi’deezhi, Katherine Benally, which she expressed on January 11, 2011 during our inaugural address.

Council Delegate Katherine Benally set the tone for the year when she communicated to all that we will rise to the occasion and prevail through adversity to champion a better life for future generations. The past year shows this is precisely what we are doing. With an oppressed budget, our Navajo Nation Council is finding ways to do whatever it takes personally and professionally to aspire to new heights in legislative leadership. Moreover, what follows is testament to your accomplished work on behalf of the people and an encouraging introduction to what our nation has to expect from the 22nd Navajo Nation Council.

In order to begin to appreciate the work accomplished by the 22nd Navajo Nation Council thus far, it is necessary to understand the larger context from which we legislate. Furthermore, it behooves us as leaders to remind ourselves where we, as a nation, have been in order to identify the responsible path we ought to take going forward.

Since 1989, the Navajo Nation has grieved a wounded and divided government, quarreled through various philosophies, and aspired to new directions. As I watched presidents and councils come and go, I respected the struggle and admired the fight of all those who have contributed to the track the government has taken. Many of us in this Hooghan have directly or indirectly influenced this history I speak of. As such, I commend and thank you.

In this light, I want to acknowledge and thank the members of the Intergovernmental Relations Committee Transition Task Force of the 21st Navajo Nation Council, in particular Honorable Roscoe Smith and LoRenzo Bates, for their leadership in the transition from the prior council to
our current legislative body. As a member to this group, I can personally recall their foresight shared that manifested its value into the first days of the 22\textsuperscript{nd} Navajo Nation Council and even now. The guiding principles and framework they offered as starting points greatly benefited the discussions held in Council’s two week work session leading up to the 2011 Winter Session. Additionally, I want to thank Sharon Clahchischilliage, Eric Descheenie, Jarvis Williams, Leonard Chee, and Kraynal Alfred, all of whom assisted the IGR Transition Task Force then and still assist us now.

As we worked through our 2011 inaugural year, much of our dialogue, formally and informally, encompassed the work put into many monumental and complex initiatives taken up over the past two decades that make up our government today. We have examined and re-examined the work of prior generations and revolutions that have shaped our government as we know it. Further, we have recalled the teachings of our ancestors carried forward by our elders to help us answer critical questions now and for the future. In short, we have taken notice of the trials and errors of the past to better apply lessons learned to the pivotal, transformative, and historical 2011 year.

While it appears we have perfected Naa’bik’iyati’, I believe we have given sufficient and responsible dialogue to ensure thorough examination to legislation, in particular the Title II amendments per Council Reduction. Given the sensitivity and urgency to the type of groundbreaking legislation we have considered, I am confident we have considered every angle in the interest of minimizing error. In turn, I hope the prudence, patience, and poise we have applied with legislation instills confidence in you that we carried out our responsibilities as legislators to the fullest.

The level of dedication and hard work exhibited by this 22\textsuperscript{nd} Navajo Nation Council should not be measured by the amount of legislation introduced or resolutions produced. Rather it should be observed by the amount of concern expressed, the quality of deliberation, and the passion emitted day in and day out in the countless circles we participate in.

That said I commend you, the honorable members of the 22\textsuperscript{nd} Navajo Nation Council, as well as our support staff, for producing and passing the Navajo Nation Title II Amendments of 2011. The size and significance of this legislation cannot be adequately described with words. We accomplished so much in a relatively short amount of time.

With “Financial Independence and Solvency,” one of four top priorities as identified during Council’s Chinle Strategic Planning Session, the Navajo Nation Council played its part in wiping out the multi-million dollar deficit that has plagued the Navajo Nation over the past years. This
is yet another example of your actions reflecting the fiscal values and accountability that our people ask of us.

Moreover, I believe the other top three priorities identified by Council, “Responsive, Efficient and Accountable Government”, “Self Determination in Education”, and “Infrastructure Development” speak loudly and clearly through the major pieces of legislation the Navajo Nation Council passed this past year. Such legislation include the 2011 Navajo Nation HIV/AIDS Act, the Navajo Nation Peabody Lease Re-opener, the Navajo Nation Alchini Bi Beehazaannii Act of 2011, the Arizona Public Service 25-Year Lease Agreement, and the Navajo Nation Supplemental Appropriations Act.

Redistricting

One of the on-going initiatives the Navajo Nation has focused very closely on for the better part of 2011 has been the Congressional and State Redistricting efforts for the states of Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. As you know, upon the conclusion of each decade, these states redraw their respective congressional and legislative districts to more accurately reflect the new census. Early on, I directed the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission staff to ramp up our Nation’s influence on this matter while the Navajo Nation Council found its footing with respect to Title II amendments and council stability. Mr. Leonard Gorman and his staff at the Navajo Nation Human Rights Office responded with great competence and diligence. I commend this group of staff not only for their commitment to this matter, but also for their cooperation in working alongside my office and the emerging Naa’bik’iyati’ Subcommittee on Redistricting. The Human Rights staff’s technical competence paired with the leadership of Council Delegates Jonathan Nez, LoRenzo Bates, Alton Shepherd, Leonard Tsosie, and Kenneth Maryboy, proved to be the right combination to achieve success.

In New Mexico, we achieved, with near precision, redistricting lines consistent with the U.S. Voting Rights of 1965 and approved maps of the Naa’bik’iyati’ Redistricting Subcommittee. With respect to Arizona, the congressional and legislative maps have yet to be etched in stone, but we are near this point. The final draft maps as submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice by the Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission reflect primarily the wishes of the Naa’bik’iyati’ Redistricting Subcommittee. It preserves the majority-minority standard, in that if finally adopted by Arizona, Navajo people will retain the equal opportunity to elect a candidate of their choice, rather than be subject to dominant political party influence.
With respect to Utah, the Navajo Nation is currently taking issue with Utah county lines relating to the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment and the 1973 Voting Rights Act, both of which have been standing Navajo Nation goals on state redistricting. In due time, I am confident these differences will sort out favorably for the Nation. I commend all those who have contributed to the Nation’s efforts, including our attorneys who have represented us well.

As a result of this effort, the people of the Navajo Nation for the next ten years are situated better than before to cast their vote with greater meaning and value for the betterment of their own communities.

**Gaming**

The Navajo Nation this January 2012 celebrates the fruits of our labor with the recent grand opening of the Northern Edge Navajo Nation Casino in Upper Fruitland, New Mexico. This is yet another measure of our gaming efforts to generate revenue to improve the health and welfare of our Navajo people. I congratulate all of those whose actions are responsible for this development.

While we rejoice in such growth, let us remember those who have laid the political and legal infrastructure to make such projects happen. The Naa’bik’iyati’ Gaming Task Force of the 22nd Navajo Nation Council has picked up where our predecessor have left off to continue the Nation’s legacy in this form of economic development. Honorable Delegates LoRenzo Bates, Joshua Butler, Edmund Yazzie, and Jonathan Hale continue to volunteer their leadership as we pursue a renewed gaming compact with the State of New Mexico and preserve tribal gaming exclusivity in Arizona to ensure the success of the Twin Arrows Navajo Nation Casino development. These efforts involve long and steady focus to the critical issues surrounding our gaming interests, the right kind of diplomacy and tact, and sound strategy. I am confident our Council leadership, alongside other Navajo Nation officials, will emerge with extraordinary results.

**Fort Wingate Military Depot**

The negotiation of the Fort Wingate Military Depot has endured the past 10 years. As a result of a series of unsuccessful meetings between the Navajo Nation and Zuni Tribe pursuant to
a MOU task force, and questionable and exclusive activity from the Shelly-Jim administration, the 22nd Navajo Nation Council created the Naabik’iyyati’ Fort Wingate MOU Task Force to ensure legislative involvement with a comprehensive approach.

The Task Force consisting of executive and legislative branch members has ensured adequate and prudent communication on this matter to the interested parties, including the Zuni Tribe, BIA and New Mexico Congressional representatives. A recent push from New Mexico U.S. Representative Pearce to have legislation drafted to complete a land deal for the Fort Wingate lands was made but not completed as both sides have yet to come to an agreement. Going forward, I remain confident the Navajo Nation will deliver a resolution to this matter that respects and honors the concerns of our Navajo people.

Speaker’s Platform

As part of my platform, I focused primarily on four principles: Financial Literacy, Infrastructure, Family and Culture, and Participatory Government to revive our Hooghan and its surroundings. In order to diligently work within these principles, we first must lay a solid foundation and clean house. Early on I promised lay-offs to Council support staff due to Council reduction would not transpire primarily because it was my belief it would be our staff, particularly those who carry considerable institutional knowledge, who would keep “the car running” while Council focused on its restructure, and that is precisely what happened. The reduction of Council membership has given the legislative branch staff the opportunity to examine and identify flaws in the legislative branch’s administrative policies and procedures, as well as, undertaking the challenge to make necessary changes better serve a smaller and more efficient Council Delegation. I commend Council Delegates and my administration for taking the initiative to do more with less.

Over the last year, my administration worked hard to centralize the flow of information for better coordination between essential offices that primarily participate in the legislative processes and assist with Council Delegates’ significant duties. I instructed my staff working in the Offices of Speaker, Legislative Counsel, Legislative Services, and the Council Delegates to develop a Legislative Management Plan for the initial purposes establishing our fundamental infrastructure, so we may know the basic foundation upon which we shall strategize how we can construct a more effective and efficient support network for Council Delegates to help their represented communities and the Navajo Nation.
The Management Plan has been a tool used to successfully document current policies and procedures. Through hours and hours of discussions, writing, editing and revisions with experienced staff, a very useful resource tool was created for utilization by Council Delegates, the public and legislative staff. The Management Plan can be used as an educational tool for those who wish to know more about the inner workings of Council’s administrative offices and how to better participate in our government’s daily work.

I am proud to say that my staff have dutifully embodied the Navajo concept of Ke’ through this process, which was an essential contribution to successful release of the Management Plan. Key members of staff have dedicated many hours to participating in group work sessions and individual interviews, while developing areas of recommendations for better coordinating and realigning staff’s clerical and advising duties. In our work sessions, both management and staff continuously reexamined legislative and financial procedures in great detail. The result is a better functioning legislative branch that is able to efficiently process legislation, in accordance to Title II’s amendments.

The transition after the reduction of the Navajo Nation Council’s membership has not been easy; however, without the activities to produce a Legislative Management Plan by staff, the transition would have been a much tougher journey. Even though this transition period is almost over, it is important for staffs to continue to advance administrative procedures to not only modernize the legislative branch but to also promote effective, efficient and friendly services to whom requests assistance. The legislative management plan will continue to evolve with the continual assistance provided by the legislative staff.

With institution of stabilized administrative infrastructure, staff can better focus on assigned duties.

Going forward, you can expect from my office legislation aimed at reconciling the Navajo Nation Code in its entirety to reflect your Navajo Nation Title II Amendments of 2011. I have instructed my staff, in particular Anthony Peterman, to work in consultation with the Office of Legislative Counsel in carrying out this task. I look forward to presenting to you this legislation that will hopefully compliment the hard work already delivered by this Council.

**Limited Budget for Operations & Travel**

As I have mentioned previously, the line-item veto, as it currently stands and as it is practiced by the president, has created an imbalance of governmental powers. As an example, we only need to look to the president’s line-item veto of the 2012 budget, which eliminated the
funding for the Little Folks Day Care Program, five Navajo Area Agency on Aging offices, the Navajo Green Commission, the Resources and Development Committee, the Office of the Speaker, and the Office of Legislative Services.

My staff has conducted research on line-item veto authorities in other government entities and found that in every instance where a governor is granted the line-item veto authority the respective legislature is granted the power to override a veto with varying vote thresholds. There are some states that allow for a reduction in the amount rather than eliminating the budget entirely.

This matter concerns me deeply because of the ill effects such an authority has on our ability to appropriately and efficiently serve the people of our nation. Not having a budget could prevent any of us from advocating on behalf of the people; this is bothersome because it places one branch of government in an advocacy position higher than another. In principle, the branches of our government are equal in our advocacy work for our people.

I acknowledge that our government is relatively young and we are bound to make mistakes during its development into a government that fits the needs of our people. But, it is our responsibility as leaders of our nation to ensure that we are constantly working towards a mature government. Therefore, points of clarification will need to be made on the usage and applicability of the line-item veto. Of course, any changes to this authority will be brought before the people in a referendum.

As we move toward a mature government, we will also have to revisit the council delegates’ representation of significantly more chapters, which resulted from a reduced council size. We will need to adjust the allocated amounts so that delegates are not faced with the decision of having to decide which community issues are more important than another.

Ensuring the community voice is heard must be a top priority of our efforts. This is not possible when delegates are forced to decide between overlapping meetings. In order to alleviate this dilemma, I recommend we must make certain that Legislative District Assistants are made available to Council Delegates so that representation at the community level meets the expectation of the community.

Legislative District Assistant will allow delegates to hire qualified individuals who meet their needs and the needs of the communities they serve. Legislative District Assistants will complement the hard work of the Council. Legislative District Assistant positions will also create job opportunities for young Diné professionals seeking employment within their communities.
Health

Over the past year, I have monitored health care issues at the Navajo, state and federal levels. In our time of reformation, the Navajo Nation’s executive branch has also been experiencing its own administrative transition. In an effort to keep the executive branch apprised of the new legislative timelines, I send friendly reminders about deadline dates relating to important issues, such as my September memorandum regarding the much needed appointment of the Navajo Nation Division of Health Director, in which I reminded the President about the Council’s Fall Session when an appointment could be potentially confirmed.

On the state and tribal front, I am working to better coordinate with the Navajo Nation Vice-President’s Office to more prominently represent the Navajo Nation on health related issues. I have sent letters to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid and the U.S. Department of Health requesting for clarification regarding the Arizona’s tribal exemption request, which would allow for the optional programs to continue providing services at IHS and 638-tribally operated facilities. My staff has met with both state and federal officials about the matter. I shall keep you informed as the issue progresses.

Infrastructure

I am committed to providing support to the Resources and Development Committee in developing the 22nd Navajo Nation Council Energy Framework within the next six months that will guide the future development of energy. In order to do so, we must work together to align missions, purposes and duties of involved key players. The Navajo Nation is a resource rich and resource driven society. It is to the benefit of the Navajo Nation to develop a policy for the benefit of Nation building. I charge the Resources and Development Committee with creating a plan that will help to guide the development of energy policies for the next three years. Under Honorable Katherine Benally’s leadership, I trust the committee will develop the legislation.

At the same time, we must work on reforming our rules and regulations to address the land use and livestock care. I want to see Council make some significant headway to resolve this very sensitive issue. Livestock management regulations must be strengthened in order to help people who take care of their animals, educate people who don’t know how but are willing to learn how to care for their animals, and assist families to transfer animals into better environments. A generation gap is growing between traditional livelihoods where livestock is
the foundation of sustainability and modern living where livestock is seen as a means to dollars for modern conveniences. A shift in respect has occurred.

As livestock is inherited from generation to generation, the transfer of knowledge for how to care for herds is not so prevalent.

I am in full support of the enforcement of the existing laws and regulations. I understand the historical trauma that resulted from when the federal government imposed the slaughtering of herds of sheep. I am not suggesting for the Navajo Nation to adopt such a policy. However, what I am recommending is for the Navajo people to take better care of herds for the benefit of all of Navajo Nation. Overgrazing is detrimental to local communities and free roaming animals cause preventable motor vehicle accidents. As a Nation, we need to protect the safety of our livelihood.

In order to respond to this issue, I call on our Council to deliver a proposal on how to address this growing problem. With your assistance we can better support the grazing office’s mission to manage livestock. The Navajo Nation Council can be helpful by aligning regulations and eliminating conflicts. Let’s commit to fixing this problem plaguing our communities.

I know there are Navajo families practicing the traditional concept of stable corral leads to a stable life. They take the necessary time to plan and manage their corral. They know strategies for successful upkeep that keep their livestock safe and healthy. These families have knowledge that is disappearing from Navajo teachings. I challenge the Grazing Office to develop a resource center for families to access and to learn about how to take better care of their animals, help aging owners transfer care instructions to the next generation and maximize the rate of return for a grown livestock population.

Let us go back to the basics by aligning Regulations with Traditional Concepts and understanding.

The Navajo government should only be involved as far as the degree of irresponsibility. Free roaming livestock is irresponsible. Starving and uncared for livestock is irresponsible. We understand that increasing cost of food is putting strain on your ability to properly care for your animals. I suggest that you go back to your fields to build your feed barrels. Helps us help you.

Bennett Freeze

The Former Bennett Freeze Area (FBFA) covers 1.6 million acres in the Western Navajo Agency. It is approximately the size of the state of Delaware. It encompasses the following
nine chapters with a total population of about 6,700 Navajos. For over 40 years, the Bennett Freeze Law prevented all development in the identified areas which contributed to the deterioration of living conditions and the perpetuation of an inadequate standard of living for residents.

For decades, the Bennett Freeze has stifled growth for affected areas and sent relocated families into unfamiliar territories. The Navajo Nation must work to do a better job to support affected relocated families and remaining residents. In pursuant to this goal, I’ve hired four staff members whose families have been affected by the Bennett Freeze: Leonard Chee of Leupp, Arizona; Darrell Tso of Tuba City, Arizona; Jerome Clark of Tuba City Arizona; and Kraynal Alfred of Tuba City, Arizona. With my staff, I have made regular visits to the Western Agency.

The Bennett Freeze has affected housing, health and public safety programs serving relocated families. Essentially, without these programs, relocated families have suffered unnecessarily. Whereas families living near and remaining on disputed lands were prevented from accessing modernized infrastructure, including waterlines and power lines. These families where even prevented from performing routine maintenance on their homes, watching homes turn to shambles as the future of their land remained in unclear.

On May 8, 2009, President Barack Obama signed a law (S.39) that officially repealed the Bennett Freeze Law. This repeal now authorizes development and rehabilitation of the freeze area. The grand total for capital projects and infrastructure development was $4.8 billion, according to the 2008 White House Pacific Recovery Plan. Housing was a priority in the assessment. While we move forward, we must do more for these communities. We must move beyond comprehensive planning and into performing actions. I direct the Navajo-Hopi Commission to make great strides in implementing a plan of action that benefits remaining and relocated families.

$3.9 million is currently available for FBFA. Within the Escrow Account, $1.0 million of $3.9 million is designated for housing needs. For the remaining balance, the Navajo Nation needs to coordinate with chapters, commission and affected residents for the purposes of deciding how to allocate remaining funds.

As part of my effort to expedite activity for the people of the former Bennett Freeze area, I submitted a grant application early in the year to Stanford University for infrastructure development plans. Presently, our application is a finalist in the grant review and selection process.
Legislative Building Plan

Much like the Bennett Freeze areas, the Navajo Nation’s government infrastructure has been frozen in time. Our buildings should be considered dilapidated with continual discoveries of mold and rodent infestation. The health and safety of the government employee is at constant risk. Without a clean work environment, how can we expect our government to function in harmony?

By the end of this year, I want to propose a building design that will incorporate all three branches of government. As a government, we must come to terms with our often ignored capital improvement needs from the local governments and regional governments to the central government.

A well-designed government campus should be beneficial to not only the government employees, but also the public. It must be a place where the public can learn about the government and efficiently gather information. I am committed to doing my best to develop a place where grandma and grandpa can hang out, children can learn about culture, history and government, and adults can work? The building’s energy and environment ought to positively foster and encourage learning.

I pledge for master plans designed to meet the capital needs of our Navajo Nation’s government and constituents to be developed as soon as possible. I know the Honorable Katherine Benally was thinking about this and I want to work with her and anyone else, specially the other Branch chiefs.

An evaluation must occur to properly plan the building. With the reorganization of council and administrative support almost complete, an evaluation of meeting space and government officials’ needs can now occur. Sites have been identified.

Communications

The vision of communication in the Legislative Branch is to provide our people with adequate information on priorities, programs, and activities, which will ensure the legitimacy of our government and as a result stabilize the political situation in our nation. Therefore, it is our priority to communicate effectively about the work we do on behalf of our people. This can only be accomplished with timely, accurate, clear, objective and complete information.
Greater access to relevant government information will both empower and encourage community members to participate in a government that aims to improve the lives of all Diné people.

It is my goal to improve the timeliness of information so that our nation will be informed of the great work that takes place on daily basis. The first step toward more efficient communication with our communities is to create an infrastructure that will allow for the transmittal of information to all interested communities.

During the upcoming quarter, our Communications Department will create a new website to partially fulfill this purpose. More recently, information and communication technologies have been used as organizing and mobilizing tools. Such forms of communication have provided alternative mediums for debate, dialogue, and collective decision-making.

Information and communication technologies can have a positive impact on Legislative Branch transparency, responsiveness, and accountability, which in turn can only serve to empower our people by increasing the flow of information between government and communities.

But, we must also remember that our nation is unique in that not everyone in our communities have the capacity to access and use information and communication technologies.

In the next quarter, we also plan to increase our in-person communication with our communities. The information that is featured on our website will also be relayed through our community engagement events. I feel that two-way communication between our government and our people will produce governance outcomes that are of higher quality and more sustainable.

Interacting and engaging the public should not be limited to elections, crises, and politically risky issues. Showing our people we are listening is as important as actually listening. Over the long run, however, our people will need to see their input is taken seriously. And as my door is always open to you, we must also always be open to our people’s input.

Chapter Corrective Actions/Prevention of Future infractions

Today, I would like to commend my colleagues who are on the Budget and Finance Committee and the Resources and Development Committee for their work in addressing the ever more pressing issue of Chapter House sanctions.
The Committees have held two joint meetings (November 30 and January 9) to address this issue by convening staff from the Office of the Auditor General, the Office of Legislative Counsel, the Division of Community Development, the Office of the Controller, the Office of Ethics and Rules, and the White Collar Crime Unit with the Department of Justice.

It is the diligent efforts of these committees that more accountability measures will be put in place to ensure that Chapter funds are safeguarded against questionable expenditures. The intent of both committees has been to find solutions that are fitting for chapters and their emphasis has been on solutions rather than punitive actions that could potentially disrupt fund for chapters.

As of January 17, legislation 0417-11 was passed by both the Resources and Development Committee and the Budget and Finance Committee to allow the Auditor General to continuously monitor chapters through read-only access to their accounts.

I also recognize the importance of this matter and it is currently second on the priority list for supplemental appropriations.

I applaud the collaborative efforts of the council delegates and the Navajo Nation staff for addressing this matter immediately and efficiently. It is these types of cohesive efforts that display the power and will of our nation and its leadership.