23rd Navajo Nation Council
Office of the Speaker

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Delegate Filfred addresses Utah Navajo issues with Utah Governor

OREM, Utah – During the 13th Annual Governor's Native American Summit, Council Delegate Davis Filfred (Mexican Water, Aneth, Teecnospos, Tółikan, Red Mesa) met with Utah Gov. Gary Herbert to address several critical issues that impact Utah Navajo communities that include Mexican Water, Aneth, Teecnospos, Red Mesa, Naa'tsis'áán, Oljato, and Dennehotso, to strengthen intergovernmental relationships between the state of Utah and the Navajo Nation.

The annual Governor's Native American Summit provides the state of Utah's eight tribal sovereign nations to gather and discuss vital issues with Utah leadership and to strategically plan to develop policy solutions.

PHOTO: Council Delegate Davis Filfred and Utah Gov. Gary Herbert during the 13th Annual Governor's Native American Summit at the Utah Valley University on July 17, 2018 in Orem, Utah.

Delegate Filfred, who also serves as the Utah Tribal Leaders chair, provided Gov. Herbert with a position statement highlighting the support of S.664, the Navajo-Water Settlement Act of 2017, introduced by Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT). The position statement also included the request of road improvements, fiber optic infrastructure projects, water treatment plant projects, economic development within Navajo Utah communities, and others.

"In regards to the Utah water rights settlement, we appreciate Gov. Herbert for his active support and collaboration with Sen. Hatch. The enactment of the settlement would provide residential water and upgrade of living standards for Utah Navajo citizens. We respectfully request that the governor continue to maintain the momentum for the passage of the act," said Delegate Filfred.

Delegate Filfred also requested that the governor continue to work with the Utah Department of Transportation to include improvements of state roads including State Road 164 and 163, and for them to be considered on the priority listing.

“Road improvements continue to be a priority for Navajo Utah communities. Additionally, the community of Naa’tsis’áán, a rural community with one access road from Arizona, are requesting an additional paved road to Oljato due to public safety concerns and access to medical services,” said Delegate Filfred.

He added that the Navajo Nation requests Gov. Herbert to support initiatives in San Juan County such as the fiber optic infrastructure project which would serve schools and libraries, and to include Navajo citizens within the Governor’s 25K Jobs Initiative that was initiated by Gov. Herbert in 2017 to create 25,000 jobs throughout rural Utah.

During the meeting, Gov. Herbert recognized the significance of the 150th year anniversary of the Naaltsoos Saní - The Treaty of 1868, and acknowledged the passing of the late Navajo Code Talker Samuel Tom Holiday by declaring a “Samuel Tom Holiday Day” on June 15 for the year of 2018.

PHOTO: Council Delegate Davis Filfred providing the welcome address during the 13th Annual Governor’s Native American Summit at the Utah Valley University in Orem, Utah on July 18, 2018.

Delegate Filfred commended Gov. Herbert for recognizing the need to increase communication and support with the Navajo Nation and all Utah tribal nations.

On the final day of the Governor’s Native American Summit, Delegate Filfred and the Utah Division of Indian Affairs expressed their appreciation to the summit attendees and sponsors that work to strengthen communities, economies, and culture for Utah tribal nations.

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