



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MEDIA CONTACTS**

Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253

Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174

Crystalyne Curley (928) 286-7918

nnlb.communications@gmail.com

### **Office of the President was directly involved in Remington discussions**

**WINDOW ROCK** – Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland) issued a statement on Thursday, maintaining that Office of the President and Vice President cabinet members and the Navajo Nation Department of Justice were directly involved in meetings and discussions regarding a proposal to the owners of Remington – a manufacturer of firearms and ammunition.

“During his time in office, President Russell Begaye has consistently misled the Navajo people on numerous occasions for the purpose of political posturing,” said Speaker Bates. “President Begaye is simply attempting to point fingers at the Council when his Administration was in fact in attendance and directly involved in discussions over the Remington proposal.”

Speaker Bates stated that the proposal was brought forth by the Office of the Controller – under the Executive Branch – and presented to the Síhasin Fund Subcommittee, the Budget and Finance Committee, and members of President Russell Begaye’s Administration.

The Controller recommended to initiate discussions with Remington and to begin the due diligence on potential Navajo involvement, he added. Initial due diligence was conducted to initiate talks with the company, however, it was conveyed that the company is not currently entertaining such discussions.

“As a leader of the Navajo Nation, President Begaye should gather the facts and communicate with the Council and the Controller before reacting hastily through social media. Rather than sit down with me to talk about this situation, the President would rather jump to conclusions based on false rumors,” stated Speaker Bates.

When asked about the President’s press release issued on Thursday, Vice President Jonathan Nez said he was unaware of the development of the press release issued by the Office of the President and Vice President, and that he does not support the negative tone of President Begaye.

“We should come together and talk these matters out rather than issuing statements on social media without communicating with one another first,” said Vice President Nez.

In the press release from the Office of the President and Vice President, President Begaye stated that the Controller of the Navajo Nation “serves at the Navajo Nation Council’s pleasure,” when in fact, President Begaye hand selected and appointed the Controller to the position.

On Feb. 8, 2017, the Office of the President and Vice President issued a press release announcing the President's appointment of a new Controller in which President Begaye stated, "We are fortunate to have Ms. [Pearline] Kirk come aboard as our Controller. Her vast experience in Navajo Nation law, taxation and budget will greatly benefit our Nation as we move forward."

Speaker Bates reaffirmed that President Begaye is wrong in his accusations against Council members.

"There is clearly a lack of communication and effectiveness within President Begaye's Administration," added Speaker Bates. "The Navajo people deserve a president that is honest, one that upholds basic standards of integrity, and one that is willing to work cooperatively with the legislative body rather than disrespecting and demeaning our Nation's leaders."

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