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## President Shelly Offers Statement of Sovereignty

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly offered a statement about Navajo Nation Sovereignty Day observed today by the Navajo Nation.

“On this day, we must remember our leaders who fought to ensure our sovereignty as the Navajo Nation. We have always been a sovereign nation, and on this day we must think about how we are going to ensure our Nation’s sovereign strength in the future.

Most importantly, we are continuing to find new ways to exercise our sovereignty, which means becoming more independent in terms of revenue, services offered and keeping our cultural integrity.

The basis for Sovereignty Day came from an April 16, 1985 U.S. Supreme Court decision. In the case of *Kerr-McGee Corp. v. Navajo Tribe*, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the Navajo Nation’s ability to impose taxes.

These taxes, along with other revenues, allow our Navajo Nation employees, like social workers, police officers and health outreach workers, to provide direct services to our people. Being sovereign means being independent and having the ability to create our own path for the future. For the Navajo Nation, it also means protecting our lands and our resources, and becoming more self-sufficient.

We must use what we have to create a better future for our children and grandchildren. Today, the Navajo Nation celebrates Navajo Nation Sovereignty Day,” President Shelly said.

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