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President Shelly and Gov. Martinez sign tribal gaming compact with N.M.



President Shelly and N.M. Gov. Susana Martinez signed the tribal gaming compact this afternoon. Next is the U.S. Department of Interior for final approval. (Photo by Office of Gov. Martinez)

SANTA FE—The tribal gaming compact with the state of N.M. has officially cleared the office of Gov. Susana Martinez. The compact will be sent to the U.S. Department of Interior next for final approval.

This afternoon, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly met with Gov. Martinez and tribal leaders from the Acoma Pueblo, Jemez Pueblo, Jicarilla Apache and Mescalero Apache to officially sign the compact and advance to the final stage of the approval

process.

Today's signing ceremony comes three weeks after President Shelly and Speaker LoRenzo Bates hosted a signing ceremony for the Navajo Nation's approval of the compact.

"This is a historic day for the Navajo Nation. Gov. Martinez's approval of the tribal gaming compact with the state of New Mexico brings us one step closer toward securing our economic future for the next 22 years,"

President Shelly said. "We thank the Governor's Office and the N.M. State Legislature for supporting tribal sovereignty.

"And of course, this approval would not have been possible without the negotiations and support of our neighboring tribes in the compact. Thank you," he added.

He encouraged federal officials at the Interior Department to approve the compact for the self-determination of the tribes.

"We ask that the Department

of Interior approve and sign the gaming compact for the economic independence of our respective tribes," President Shelly said.

The signing ceremony took place at the Roundhouse, inside the cabinet room. The private event was closed to the public.

The Interior Department will have 45 days to review the gaming compact for approval.