



NAVAJO NATION OFFICE OF THE  
PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT  
RUSSELL BEGAYE | JONATHAN NEZ

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **President Begaye and Vice President Nez Lauds Council's Support**

**WINDOW ROCK, ARIZONA** - President Begaye and Vice President Nez applauded delegates for assisting their constituents during the current Gold King Mine contamination crisis.

“Thank you Council Delegates for coming alongside your chapter officials in securing basic human and livestock needs for your communities,” said President Begaye.

Delegate Amber Crotty worked with Gadiiahi Chapter in securing over 300 bales of hay for livestock, numerous water troughs for cattle, and 10,000 gallon tanks to provide water for livestock.

President Begaye and Vice-President Nez launched Operation Tó Łitso over a week ago and presented the Operation to the Division Directors Monday morning. Operation Tó Łitso is the strategic management operation addressing the Gold King Mine contamination spill.

President Begaye and Vice-President Nez invited the Navajo Nation Council to participate in Monday's update.

### **Timeline and Announcement of the Operation**

President Begaye presented a timeline of events that has occurred since the Gold King Mine spill on Wednesday, August 5, when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) accidentally released upwards of three million gallons of contaminated water into Cement Creek.

President Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez traveled to Silverton on Sunday, August 9, to see the spill firsthand. President Begaye issued a Declaration for State of Emergency addressing

the Gold King Mine spill on August 8 and an Executive Order establishing and ordering execution of Operation Tó Łitso on August 11.

Operation Tó Łitso addresses the immediate impacts of the Gold King Mine toxic spill and addresses the larger contamination issues facing the Nation, such as long-standing uranium contamination.

"It might seem like a simple term but it's a strategic title to raise awareness in addressing broader issues of contamination on the Navajo Nation, including of our over 500 abandoned uranium mines," President Begaye said.

### **General Updates**

President Begaye has prioritized the health of the people over any economic benefits that might come from prematurely opening up the San Juan River.

Director of the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency (NNEPA), Dr. Donald Benn, told the Council that the Nation is awaiting the results of river sample testing.

Harland Cleveland, Emergency Operations Center Manager, said there are 6 locations along the Nation's reach of the San Juan River where emergency water tanks have been placed for livestock and irrigation purposes. The water tanks range from 2,000 to 12,000 gallons in size and are the result of the Nation's coordination with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

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