



NOVEMBER 22, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mihio Manus, Sr. Public Information Officer
Office of the President and Vice President

The Navajo Nation
Phone: (928)871-7728
Fax: (928)871-4025

VICE PRESIDENT NEZ CALLS FOR MORE ATTENTION TO EXISTING NAVAJO ISSUES IN MEETING WITH SECRETARY JEWELL

WINSLOW-Prior to Secretary of Interior Sally Jewell's visit to the Winslow Residential Hall on Tuesday, Nov. 17, the Secretary met with Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez to discuss issues the Nation would like to have brought forth to President Obama's Administration.

The Begaye-Nez Administration would like to see more dialogue facilitated between President Obama's office and tribal nations. Specifically, he stated that Native American representation at a Federal Executive level would be very beneficial to tribes.

"We appreciate President Obama's creation of the White House Council on Native American Affairs. However, we would like to see a Native American representing us on this Council to voice our concerns" he said.

He also expressed the need for the Navajo Nation to be allowed additional representation during the annual White House Leaders Conference. As it stands, tribal nations are allowed only one representative to attend the conference whether their tribe consists of a dozen members or thousands.

"The Navajo Nation has over 300,000 constituents and we feel additional representation at the White House Leaders Conference is very justified on our part."

Vice President Nez advocated on behalf Navajo Indian Irrigation Project (NIIP), Navajo water settlements and support for the Native American Energy Act.

NIIP was authorized in 1962 under John F. Kennedy's Administration and still remains uncompleted, Vice President Nez told Secretary Jewell.

"It is ridiculous that the federal government



Vice President Nez said there needs to be more dialogue facilitated between President Obama's office and tribal nations.

made a promise to complete the project in 1962 and more than half a century later it's still not complete," he said.

Water holds great importance to the Navajo people. Yet still, the Nation has no quantifiable water rights.

Vice President Nez said now is the time for the federal government to ensure that fair water rights are given to the Nation for water that runs through its lands.

"Please work with us to negotiate fair and meaningful water rights settlements in both Arizona and Utah," he said.

He also called for support of Senator John Barrasso's Energy Bill that would allow the Nation more responsibility over its resources.

"We ask that the Department of Interior sup-

port this bill that contains provisions which are specific to the Navajo Nation and allow us to better manage our own resources," Vice President Nez said. "Please urge the White House to support Senator Barrasso's bill in the Senate if it comes to a vote."

Vice President Nez also provided an update on the Gold King Mine spill in which he asked the Obama Administration to continue to work with Navajo Emergency Management to re-invest in the communities devastated by the spill.

Vice President Nez continued to remind federal officials of the incomplete work and the necessary follow up of the spill.

###