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PRESIDENT RUSSELL BEGAYE PROMOTES STATE-TRIBAL COLLABORATION DURING THE NEW MEXICO LEGISLATIVE SESSION



Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye addressed the New Mexico Legislature in a joint session to promote sovereignty, protect natural resources and sustain infrastructure projects for the Navajo Nation.

SANTA FE, N.M. – Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye emphasized state-tribal collaboration to promote sovereignty, protect natural resources and sustain infrastructure projects during the joint legislative session for American Indian Day at the New Mexico State Legislature on Friday, Feb. 3.

“We need to work together to protect the quality of water, air and land for the state of New Mexico and the tribal nations. When we protect our natural elements and resources, we protect their sanctity for future generations,” said President Begaye.

The State of New Mexico is unique in that it works with the Navajo Nation to provide funding for infrastructure projects.

“Many tribes from Arizona have remarked that the New Mexico chapters on the Navajo Nation are blessed to be provided funding for chapter improvements, senior citizen centers and veterans buildings,” said President Begaye.

The Navajo Nation completed 62 projects in 2016. Last Nov., 30 families in Mariano Lake Chapter were provided water by the

Tribal Infrastructure Fund. Infrastructure development plays a vital role in the other four pillars of the Navajo Nation.

President Begaye addressed the need to develop more manufacturing companies to reduce unemployment rates on the Navajo Nation.

“This would help us hire more people and keep our money on the Nation to improve the economy. The Navajo Nation could also produce items in New Mexico and bring U.S. companies from overseas back to the states,” said President Begaye.

The Navajo Nation currently spends millions of dollars at many border towns of the Navajo Nation and about \$7 to \$8 million a year is provided to the state from the gaming revenue.

“We need the help of the New Mexico legislators to change the laws for dual taxation on the Navajo Nation,” said President Begaye. “Dual taxation negatively affects the consumer and economic development on the Nation.”

The Navajo Nation will also continue to fight for the reimburse-

ment from EPA due to the Gold King Mine Spill along-side New Mexico.

“Thank you for supporting anti-fracking in Chaco Canyon and helping us to protect this sacred site,” said President Begaye. “The Navajo Nation are descendants of those from Chaco Canyon and we are against fracking in that area.”

Representative Derrick Lente and Senator Patricia Roybal Caballero recently introduced House Joint Memorial 5 to request

the Federal Bureau of Land Management to consider issuing a temporary moratorium on all fracking-related lease sales and permit approvals in the Greater Chaco Area until the Resource Management plan amendment is completed.

“We sincerely appreciate the effective state-tribal relationship in New Mexico,” said President Begaye. “Together we can make the State of New Mexico and the Navajo Nation prosperous.”

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