



## The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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## Navajo leaders advocate for the Navajo Nation at the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Utah Governor's Native American Summit

**OREM, Utah** – Navajo Nation Vice President Myron Lizer, Second Lady Dottie Lizer, and members of the 24<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council met with Utah Gov. Gary R. Herbert at the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Utah Governor's Native American Summit on Thursday, to address critical issues and to strengthen the government-to-government relationship between the Navajo Nation and state of Utah.



**PHOTO: Navajo Nation Vice President Myron Lizer meeting with Utah Gov. Gary R. Herbert in Orem, Utah on July 11, 2019.**

Vice President Lizer had the opportunity to address road improvement needs, public safety, health care services, missing and murdered Indigenous relatives, direct services for veterans, southern Utah tourism, Buy Navajo Buy Local initiative, water rights, and renewable energy related to the seven Utah Navajo communities including Mexican Water, Aneth, Teecnospos, Red Mesa, Naa'tsis'áán, Oljato, and Dennehotso.

"We are very grateful to Governor Herbert and his administration for meeting with the eight tribes of Utah," said Vice President Lizer. "I have faith that we will work together and plan to move forward to address the concerns of Utah Navajo citizens and communities."

Vice President Lizer talked extensively about the Nez-Lizer Administration's "Buy Navajo, Buy Local" initiative to promote Navajo business owners and entrepreneurs. The discussion focused on potential partnerships with the State of Utah to promote tourism on the Navajo Nation, which would help to increase revenues for the local economy.

In response, Gov. Herbert stated that his administration is willing to work with the Nation to promote tourism opportunities that benefit the state and Navajo people, including entrepreneurs.

Council Delegate Mark Freeland, who is the chair of the 24<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council's State Task Force and Council Delegate Charlaine Tso, who represents several Navajo Utah communities and

a member of the State Task Force, also reported on the Council's priorities related to education, transportation, public lands, tribal state consultation, agriculture, and others.

"The State Task Force is committed to working collaboratively with the state of Utah on the many issues facing our Navajo people. From ICWA, water rights, transportation to the San Juan County Commission — these issues are vital and need to be addressed by working with Gov. Herbert and his administration," said Delegate Freeland.

Council Delegate Charlaine Tso stated, "I am looking forward to the new efforts by our current leadership. For years, we had been trying to successfully advocate for Utah Navajos. Governor Herbert is attentive to all of the issues that hinder our advancement in public safety, infrastructure, and jurisdictional boundaries. I look forward to more dialogue and input with our Utah delegation and Utah Tribal Leaders."

Vice President Lizer also thanked Gov. Herbert for supporting the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act to bring clean water to homes in Navajo communities in Utah and for recognizing the need to increase access to affordable health care for tribal nations in the proposed Medicaid exemptions.

Vice President Lizer also highlighted First Lady Phefelia Nez and Second Lady Lizer's efforts to address the epidemic of missing and murdered Diné relatives and the need for a data and research institute to resolve the problem.

"Our Administration realizes that for Navajo families to restore balance, love, and harmony after losing a loved one, there remains a great need for accurate data to secure more resources and assistance. Most importantly, there is a need to improve public safety services for tribal members," added Vice President Lizer.

Following the report, Gov. Herbert addressed the need to work together with not only the Navajo Nation, but all Utah tribal nations.

"This is the time to re-evaluate tribal issues. As leaders, we have the responsibility to care for our citizens, and the issues may be overbearing, however we must continue to take this journey together to achieve better outcomes," said Gov. Herbert.

The Nez-Lizer Administration thanks Gov. Herbert, the Utah Division of Indian Affairs, and the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah for hosting the summit and working together.

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