



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 6, 2019

Nez-Lizer strive to resolve longstanding issues with tribes

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez met with San Juan Southern Paiute Tribal President Carlene Yellowhair in Flagstaff, Ariz. on May 31, as part of the Nez-Lizer Administration’s efforts to address longstanding issues with other tribes to increase positive relationships and collaboration amongst tribal nations.

In the coming weeks, President Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer will meet with other nearby tribes to discuss issues related to natural resources, energy, water rights, and more.

“For tribes to move forward and address bigger issues, we need to come together and resolve matters that are decades-old in many cases. If we are able to move past these issues then that creates greater potential for presenting a much more united and influential voice at the federal level,” President Nez said.

The meeting focused on a 2000 treaty between the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe and the Navajo Nation that seeks to resolve longstanding land claims that are still in litigation between the two tribes in the Masayesva v. Zah case currently pending before the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.

The terms of the treaty were approved by the Navajo Nation Council in 1999 and signed by former President Kelsey A. Begaye in 2000. Later in 2004, the Nation’s Council and former President Joe Shirley, Jr. approved an addendum to the treaty. While the treaty has been previously negotiated and finalized between the two tribes, it still needs to be ratified by Congress. If ratified by Congress, the treaty would establish a permanent homeland for the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe in the western portion of the Navajo Nation.

Council Delegates Otto Tso and Thomas Walker, Jr. were also in attendance for the meeting and requested that the two tribes work in good faith and ensure that the Navajo Nation conducts its due diligence before proceeding with the matter.

President Nez said he will request that a report be provided to the 24th Navajo Nation Council from the Navajo Nation Department of Justice to inform many of the new members of this matter.

“The majority of the members on the current Council are new, so it’s very important that they become informed on this matter,” said President Nez.

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