



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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Nez-Lizer commends U.S. House approval of one-year moratorium on oil and gas drilling near the Chaco Culture National Historical Park

WINDOW ROCK – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer extend their appreciation to U.S. House Assistant Speaker Ben Ray Luján (D-N.M.) for securing a one-year moratorium on oil and gas drilling near the Chaco Culture National Historical Park, approximately 41-miles northeast of Crownpoint, N.M. The moratorium was included as an amendment in the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations package that passed on Tuesday.

Congressman Luján’s office stated that the amendment is a critical move toward securing a permanent ban on oil and gas drilling in the Greater Chaco Region.

“On behalf of the Navajo people, Vice President Lizer and I thank Assistant Speaker Luján for his support, leadership, and partnership with the Navajo people to protect our beautiful and sacred lands. Halting leases for one year is a step in the right direction,” said President Nez.

On June 5, Vice President Lizer also testified before the U.S. House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands in support of H.R. 2181: the Chaco Cultural Heritage Area Protection Act of 2019, sponsored by Congressman Luján, which seeks a permanent ban on oil and gas leasing within a 10-mile radius of the Chaco landscape.



PHOTO: (right to left) Navajo Nation Vice President Myron Lizer, U.S. House Assistant Speaker Ben Ray Luján, and President Jonathan Nez at the Chaco Culture National Historical Park on April 14, 2019.

The amendment approved by the House on Tuesday also prohibits federal funding to be used for future mineral development on federal lands near the Chaco Cultural National Historic Park for one year, but does not affect the mineral rights of any tribal member or tribe on trust or allotted land.

“The Greater Chaco Region is a living landscape, meant to be accessible for tribal communities to support the continuance of cultural practices vital to our present identity. The bill protects the land, structures, and environment from any unanticipated adverse effects associated with unchecked oil and gas development in the region,” stated Vice President Lizer.

The Nez-Lizer Administration thanks Rep. Luján, the House of Representatives, and others who played a vital role in supporting this amendment. President Nez and Vice President Lizer also request the support of the U.S. Senate and Trump Administration for the amendment.

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