



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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President Nez and Vice President Lizer advocate for the Navajo Nation on Capitol Hill

WASHINGTON D.C. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer met with House and Senate members on Thursday, to advocate for several issues on behalf of the Navajo Nation. Among the various issues discussed included the Navajo Utah Water Rights Act of 2019, the Chaco Cultural Heritage Area Protection Act of 2019, the Office of Navajo-Hopi Indian Relocation, the reauthorization of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act, and missing and murdered Indigenous relatives.

In a meeting with U.S. Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ), President Nez thanked the Congressman for supporting H.R. 2181 sponsored by U.S. Rep. Ben Ray Luján (D-N.M.), which will prevent the leasing or development of minerals on federal lands within 10-miles of the Chaco landscape, which includes many sites that are sacred and culturally important to Pueblo tribes and the Navajo people. On June 5, Vice President Lizer testified in support of H.R. 2181 before the U.S. House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands.



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and U.S. Rep. Ben Ray Luján (D-N.M.) in Washington, D.C. on June 13, 2019.

“The Nez-Lizer Administration strongly supports the protection of the Chaco landscape to preserve our cultural teachings and stories for future generations to learn from, and to prevent any potential health issues that may result from the extraction of oil and gas in the area,” said President Nez.

He also thanked Congressman Grijalva for scheduling a hearing later this month for House Bill 644, the Navajo Utah Water Rights Act, which seeks congressional approval of the agreement to resolve the water rights claims of the Navajo Nation in the state of Utah, and to provide federal

funding for water infrastructure projects in the Utah Navajo communities of Mexican Water, Aneth, Teecnospos, Red Mesa, Naa'tsis' áán, Oljato, and Dennehotso.

The water settlement agreement is co-sponsored by U.S. Sen. Martha McSally (R-AZ), who met with President Nez and offered her support to continue working together with the Nation on several matters related to the Office of Navajo-Hopi Indian Relocation. President Nez requested her support for the continuation of the office to fulfill its obligations to Navajo families that were relocated due to the Navajo-Hopi land dispute. He noted that many homes that were constructed by the ONHIR were not built properly and have become dilapidated, which should be reconciled by the federal government.

“We support the claims of the Navajo families who want their homes repaired or replaced. Many of the current homes have unstable foundations, deteriorating walls, and many other deficiencies,” stated Vice President Lizer, who also met with White House staff from U.S. Vice President Mike Pence’s Office to request their support for the continuation of the Office of Navajo-Hopi Indian Relocation.

In a meeting with Congresswomen Debra Haaland (D-N.M.) and Xochitl Torres Small (D-N.M.), President Nez reaffirmed the Nez-Lizer Administration’s willingness to address the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous relatives — an issue that has received growing attention in Congress thanks to the advocacy of Congresswoman Haaland and U.S. Rep. Sharice Davids (D-KS), the first Native American woman elected to serve in Congress.

“Congresswomen Haaland and Davids have championed many issues for Indian Country with the support of their colleagues such as Congresswoman Torres Small,” said President Nez. “Vice President Lizer and I are truly grateful for their leadership and guidance on these matters.”

The Office of the President and Vice President is co-sponsoring the Missing and Murdered Diné Relative Forum to be held at the Diné College campus in Shiprock, N.M. on June 27 and 28.

President Nez also had the opportunity to speak with Congressman and Assistant Speaker Ben Ray Luján (D-N.M.), about ongoing efforts to reauthorize the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act and to include compensation for Navajo people impacted by uranium mining post-1971. He thanked Congressman Luján for supporting the Navajo Nation on this issue along with many others.

On Friday, President Nez and Vice President Lizer met with Acting Director of Indian Service Service (IHS) RADM Michael D. Weahkee, MBA, MHSA at the IHS headquarters, to continue discussions of the new hospital facility to replace the decades-old Gallup Indian Medical Center in Gallup, N.M., which provides medical services for many Navajo people.

The Nez-Lizer Administration continues to advocate for a site that is feasible for the new hospital facility as well as new retail stores, residency options, professional offices, and more. The replacement of GIMC is one of two priorities for IHS along with the replacement of the Phoenix Indian Medical Center in Phoenix, Arizona.

Other meetings included discussions with the U.S. EPA on a proposed rulemaking on the definition of U.S. waters, the USDA on the passage of the latest Farm Bill, and the National Indian Health Board on health matters during the board's second quarterly meeting and discussions on the need to rebuild the Kayenta diversion dam.

President Nez also urged Principal Deputy of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army Ryan A. Fisher to expedite the ongoing flood plain study that is needed to rebuild the Kayenta diversion dam and two bridges in the community of Kayenta.

President Nez and Vice President Lizer thank all of the House and Senate members, their staff, and many others for meeting and supporting the Navajo people on these critical issues. The Nez-Lizer Administration looks forward to continuing to strengthen the partnership of the federal government and the Navajo Nation.



PHOTO: President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer meeting with Acting Director of Indian Service Service (IHS) RADM Michael D. Weahkee, MBA, MHA at the IHS headquarters in Rockville, MD, on June 14, 2019.

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