



The Navajo Nation  
Office of the President and Vice President

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**President Nez reports on energy development  
initiatives to the Resources and Development Committee**



**PHOTO:** Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez provides a report on energy initiatives to the Resources and Development Committee at the Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz. on Sept. 17, 2019.

**WINDOW ROCK** — On Tuesday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez presented a report to the 24<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council’s Resources and Development Committee in Window Rock, regarding energy development initiatives including renewable energy projects, the establishment of a new energy office, assets at the Navajo Generating Station site, and more.

In April, President Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer issued the “Navajo Háyoólkáá’ (Sunrise) Proclamation,” which states that the Nez-Lizer Administration will pursue and prioritize renewable energy development for the long-term benefit of the Navajo people.

In addition, the proclamation created the Háyoókááí Work Group to focus on energy initiatives and other issues. The work group is comprised of officials from the Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources, Department of Justice, Environmental Protection Agency, Division of Economic Development, Division of Community Development, Navajo Nation Washington Office, and the Office of the President and Vice President.

President Nez stated that the Nez-Lizer Administration continues to receive inquiries and proposals, particularly from potential developers who want to construct renewable energy projects on the Navajo Nation. The Háyoókááí Work Group continues to meet on a regular basis to hear proposals from potential developers, but the work group is not making any commitments or agreements.

During the report, President Nez was joined by Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources Dr. Rudy Shebala and Administrative Services Officer Michelle Henry, who reported that the Nation has until Dec. 23, 2019 to determine how 500 megawatts of transmission line capacity will be used. The transmission line capacity is part of several NGS assets that will be transferred to the Nation upon the closure of the power plant.

“We need to move on it quickly and make a decision so that we can benefit from the 500 megawatts. That’s why we have the Háyoókááí Work Group evaluating and vetting potential projects,” said President Nez.

In regards to a new energy office, President Nez thanked the Council members for supporting approximately \$664,000 in the FY2020 Comprehensive Budget to establish the office under the Division of Natural Resources to serve as the “clearinghouse” for energy development and initiatives. He also reported that the Office of the President and Vice President will contribute an additional \$100,000 for the new office.

In the state of New Mexico, President Nez said the Nation is in the process of selecting a developer to construct the Paragon Bisti Ranch solar project in the Navajo community of Huerfano, which will be partially funded by the \$2 million that was appropriated by New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham earlier this year.

President Nez said that he agrees with the members of the Resources and Development Committee that communication between the Executive and Legislative Branches would benefit the process of moving energy initiatives forward on a path to completion.

“Through the practice of working together, we can make the Navajo Nation a giant force in the renewable energy market,” said President Nez.

He also urged the Resources and Development Committee members to move forward with addressing Legislation No. 0073-19, which seeks to change the Navajo Nation Energy Policy and establish the membership of an energy task force – the bill was referred to the Resources and Development Committee by the Navajo Nation Council in July.

Several division directors from the Nez-Lizer Administration provided updates including Division of Economic Development Executive Director JT Willie who updated the committee on the decommissioning of NGS, Division of Community Development Executive Director Dr. Pearl Yellowman regarding community outreach efforts, Navajo Nation Department of Justice Attorney April Quinn regarding the shutdown of Kayenta Mine, and Navajo-Hopi Land Commission Office Executive Director Robert K. Black on the Paragon Bisti Ranch solar project.

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