



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

CONTACTS:
Jared Touchin, Communications Director
(928) 274-4275

Crystalyne Curley, Sr. Public Information Officer
(928) 274-2758

nnopvp.communications@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 28, 2020

**President Nez speaks in support of Navajo elders, students,
chapter projects, and renewable energy before New Mexico legislators**



PHOTO: President Jonathan Nez with Office of the President and Vice President Chief of Staff Paulson Chaco speaking before the New Mexico Senate Indian and Cultural Affairs Committee in Santa Fe, N.M. on Jan. 28, 2020.

SANTA FE N.M. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez was joined by Office of the President and Vice President Chief of Staff Paulson Chaco on Tuesday, as he spoke before the New Mexico Senate Indian and Cultural Affairs Committee in support of Impact Aid funding for Navajo students, the creation of a trust fund for elders, chapter project funding, and renewable energy development at the State Capitol in Santa Fe, N.M.

President Nez also met with several legislators one-on-one including State Sen. George Muñoz (D-Dist. 4) and Reps. Shannon D. Pinto (D-Dist. 5), Derrick J. Lente (D-Dist. 65), Anthony Allison (D-Dist. 4), Harry Garcia (D-Dist. 69), and House Appropriations and Finance Committee Chairwoman Patricia A. Lundstrom (D-Dist. 9).

During last year's legislative session, the Navajo Nation successfully advocated for \$28 million in capital outlay funds for chapter projects in New Mexico. On Tuesday, President reported to the

committee that all 2019 capital outlay projects funded by the state legislature have agreements in place, have met the five-percent encumbered threshold, and are well on their way to being completed on time.

“Our administration is committed to meeting all requirements included in each of the grant agreements for 2019 and previous years,” said President Nez. “We are doing our very best to move these projects toward completion.”

During his presentation, President Nez also requested the support of the legislators to change the funding formula for Impact Aid funding distribution to support 100-percent funding for school districts including those within the Navajo Nation.

“I believe the New Mexico funding formula needs to be re-evaluated. There are multiple Impact Aid bills this year with various proposals on how to return to the districts an amount that equals 100-percent of the funding, but how the legislature reaches 100-percent is in the hands of the legislature,” President Nez stated.

In New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham’s State of the State Address on Jan. 20, she proposed the establishment of an elder trust fund. President Nez said he fully supports this proposal to help provide much-needed services and assistance for Navajo Nation senior centers in the state of New Mexico.

“Our Navajo elders are always a high priority for our administration and with the creation of an elder trust fund, many opportunities and benefits would be afforded for our senior centers and elders,” added President Nez.

Last year, the state legislature adopted the Energy Transition Act, which established renewable energy standards including a mandate for utilities to provide 100-percent carbon free energy by the year 2045.

This measure also provided funding and benefits for employees impacted by the closure of the San Juan Generating Station, however, a majority of the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission members took a position that the funds and benefits under the Energy Transition Act do not apply to workers at the San Juan Generating Station where members of the Navajo Nation comprise over 60-percent of the workforce for the plant, mine, contractors, and vendors.

President Nez urged the lawmakers to seek a resolution that will allow funding to be used to assist displaced workers. In August 2019, President Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, and Resources and Development Committee Chair Rickie Nez went before the Public Regulation Commission to advocate for the Navajo workers.

The Nez-Lizer Administration will continue to meet with state legislators and the Office of the Governor throughout the remaining 30-day state legislative session to advocate for these and other issues for the benefit of the Navajo people.

###

For the latest news from the Office of the President and Vice President, please visit <http://www.opvp.navajo-nsn.gov/> or find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.