



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

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**Navajo Nation's renewable energy future takes step forward with
70-megawatt emissions-free energy project in Red Mesa community**



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez joined by Council Delegate Charlaine Tso, Red Mesa Chapter officials, Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish, and NTUA officials as he signs the lease agreement for the Red Mesa Tapaha Solar Generation Plant in Red Mesa, Ariz. on April 7, 2021.

RED MESA, Ariz. – On Wednesday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Council Delegate Charlaine Tso, and Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish gathered together to finalize a lease agreement with Navajo Tribal Utility Authority for the development of the Red Mesa Tapaha Solar Generation Plant, which will produce 70-megawatts of emissions-free solar energy once construction is completed in the community of Red Mesa, Ariz.

“This is another milestone for the Navajo Nation as we continue to transition to clean emissions-free renewable energy for our communities and in the open market. Our communities were once heavily dependent on fossil fuel energy, but now we are seeing change happen. When we took office in 2019, we had a vision to pursue and prioritize clean renewable energy development for

the long-term benefit of the Navajo people. We signed the Hayoókaał proclamation, which outlined our vision for a clean and renewable energy future for the Navajo Nation. Today, we take another step forward to fulfill that vision,” said President Nez.

He also recognized and thanked the Red Mesa Chapter, NTUA, and the 24th Navajo Nation Council for their commitment to the solar project and several others that are in the planning stages. On Tuesday, President Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer also finalized a lease agreement for a 200-megawatt solar project in the community of Cameron, Ariz.

The Red Mesa Tapaha Solar Generation Plant is anticipated to take one year to complete once construction begins. NTUA will be the majority owner of the project, which will provide power to the Navajo Nation residents and the Utah Associated Municipal Power Systems. Approximately 300 jobs will be created during the construction phase and generate over \$6 million in payroll.

“NTUA continues to make great progress in connecting homes and families to the electric grid and this project will help in that effort. With Light Up Navajo and the recent CARES Act funds, NTUA has connected hundreds of homes to the electric grid and improved the quality of life for Navajo families throughout our Nation. The Red Mesa Tapaha Solar Generation Plant will help close the gap on the number of homes that are in need of electricity in the Navajo Utah area. I thank everyone involved in this initiative and we look forward to continuing our support until this project is built and producing clean energy,” said Vice President Lizer.

Red Mesa Chapter President Herman Farley and Vice President Marilyn Holly were also in attendance to show their support for the solar energy project. The Red Mesa Chapter previously approved a resolution in support of the new development. President Nez also recognized and thanked the local grazing permit holder, Jimmie Tapaha, who agreed to the construction of the solar project in his grazing area and Council Delegate Charlene Tso for sponsoring legislation for the approval of the lease agreement by the Resources and Development Committee.

“The Red Mesa Tapaha Solar Generation Plant creates new opportunities for our community and for our men and women who want to return home to work here on the Navajo Nation. The project will create jobs and revenue that will benefit our residents and provide electricity to homes for families. I appreciate the hard work and commitment of everyone and I look forward to continuing my support for the development of the Red Mesa community,” said Delegate Tso.

NTUA Legal Counsel Arash Moalemi spoke on behalf of NTUA during the signing ceremony, and noted that the project will require infrastructure development and serve as an anchor tenant to promote economic development in Red Mesa. He stated, “NTUA is looking forward to this next phase in renewable energy development. The Red Mesa Tapaha Solar Project will bring outside dollars into the Navajo Nation to help benefit Navajo families and the Navajo Nation.”

In addition to the solar project, NTUA also acquired the electric system within the Utah portion of the Navajo Nation from Rocky Mountain Power in December 2016. At the time NTUA acquired the electric system, 288 homes within the Utah portion of the Navajo Nation did not have electricity. As of January 21, NTUA has connected 194 homes to the electric grid. NTUA’s goal is to connect the remaining 94 homes in the next few years.

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