



## 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](mailto:nnopvp.communications@gmail.com)

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## President Nez advocates for funding of the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, and the Navajo Nation Washington Office continue to work closely with state and congressional leaders to ensure that tribal nations benefit from the proposed \$1 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act currently being debated in Congress.

As details of the infrastructure bill continue to be debated, President Nez continues to work with Utah Gov. Spencer Cox, U.S. Sen. Mitt Romney (R-UT), U.S. Sen. Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ), and others to ensure that the billions of dollars allocated for tribal water projects remain in the bill. Specifically, the bill would create a \$2.5 billion "Indian Water Rights Settlement Completion Fund" to be used by the Secretary of the Interior to fund congressionally approved Indian water settlements. This means that the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act, which was passed by Congress last December, would be eligible for these funds. The bill would also provide \$3.5 billion for Indian Health Service water and sanitation projects, which would help bring more clean water to homes for Navajo families.

"We are deeply grateful for the bipartisan effort in the Senate to move infrastructure legislation that includes funding for the Navajo Utah Water Settlement Act. Funding this settlement will result in new infrastructure that will bring clean water to those that desperately need it in the Utah portion of the Navajo Nation where more than 40-percent of Navajo households lack running water and/or adequate sanitation. Given the issues we face as a country, we applaud those working in a cooperative manner to resolve complex challenges. We are grateful for the leadership of Gov. Cox, Senator Romney, Senator Sinema, and so many others who have worked with us to bring this to fruition. We hope the Congress will swiftly pass this legislation," said President Nez.

In addition to these key investments in water infrastructure for tribes, the bill includes billions of dollars in tribal eligibility for roads, bridges, broadband, climate resiliency, environmental remediation, and electric infrastructure, among other priorities. This bill reflects key Biden-Harris Administration infrastructure priorities and was negotiated between the Administration and a bipartisan group of Senators.

“In the last several years, the Navajo Nation has invested nearly half a billion dollars of our own funds for water, electricity, and other projects for our communities. Many of those projects are in progress, but we need more investment to reach rural areas and to reach more families. We are also in the process of reconciling and finalizing project listings for the \$1.8 billion through the American Rescue Plan Act to address more infrastructure needs. We have also developed a comprehensive project listing that includes over 9,000 projects at a cost of over \$20 billion, so it’s clear that \$1.8 billion will not meet all of the Nation’s priorities, but we have to do our best to leverage the funds to implement and complete projects,” added President Nez.

The Nez-Lizer Administration will continue to monitor the progress of the infrastructure bill as it moves through Congress and work together with state and congressional leaders to ensure that tribal nations benefit.

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