



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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President Nez advocates for infrastructure projects, COVID-19 vaccines, and road improvements in tribal leaders meeting with Utah Governor

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Speaker Seth Damon, and Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown participated in a virtual tribal leaders meeting with Utah Gov. Spencer J. Cox and Lt. Gov. Deidre Henderson, during the 2021 Utah American Indian Caucus Day hosted by the Utah Division of Indian Affairs on Wednesday.

President Nez thanked the State of Utah for their support and assistance for the passage of the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act in December, confirming the Navajo Nation's right to 81,500 acre-feet of water per year from the Colorado River Basin apportionment in Utah. He stated that now that the settlement has been approved by congress and the White House, the Nation, the state of Utah, and the federal agencies need to continue working together to ensure that the water resources are delivered to the Navajo people.

"I appreciate Gov. Cox, Lt. Gov. Henderson, and Utah Division of Indian Affairs Director Dustin Jansen's commitment to continuing the annual tribal caucus day, which began under former Gov. Herbert. We have many issues related to infrastructure development, water, electrical, and broadband resources, COVID-19 mitigation, and many others in the state of Utah. Our administration is committed to working with Gov. Cox's office, the Division of Indian Affairs, and all other entities to advance these issues to help empower our Navajo Utah residents and communities," said President Nez.

President Nez also spoke about the Navajo Area IHS and tribal health organization's success in administering the COVID-19 vaccines on the Navajo Nation and requested more support from the state of Utah for more vaccine allocations for the Utah Navajo Health System, Inc. to administer more doses to Navajo residents in Utah.

President Nez also spoke about ongoing work to deliver much-needed water and electricity lines for 27 Navajo families residing in a 120-acre area known as the Westwater Subdivision, near Blanding, Utah, which was purchased by the Navajo Nation in 1986. The Navajo Nation previously secured a \$500,000 allocation through the state legislature for power line extensions, however the funds were withdrawn by the state to help address the COVID-19 pandemic. President Nez said restoration of the funds in this year's state budget would help develop a three-phase power line to a water well and a single-phase power line distribution to the Westwater Subdivision.

President Nez also reported that fiber optic lines were recently installed in Montezuma Creek to serve the Whitehorse High School, Montezuma Creek Elementary, and Utah Navajo Health System, Inc. The Navajo Nation continues to work on permitting, including right-of-way approval for broadband expansion in the communities of Oljato and Navajo Mountain.

In regards to transportation issues, President Nez stated that the Utah Navajo Commission continues to seek assistance from the Utah Department of Transportation to address road deficiencies including the reconstruction of SR 162 between Aneth and Montezuma Creek, installation of a roundabout interchange in Montezuma Creek, right-of-way corridor fencing along SR 163 in Monument Valley, and the construction of a paved road between Oljato and Navajo Mountain.

The Nez-Lizer Administration, under the guidance of the Navajo Nation Division of Transportation, is also developing a road prioritization package for the recently confirmed U.S. Sec. of Transportation Pete Buttigieg and new Deputy Asst. Sec. for Tribal Affairs under the U.S. Department of Transportation, Arlando Teller.

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