



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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President Nez meets with the head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, the Navajo Department of Emergency Management, Navajo Department of Health Executive Director Dr. Jill Jim, Office of the President and Vice President Chief of Staff Paulson Chaco, Deputy Chief of Staff Milton Bluehouse, Jr., and other tribal leaders met virtually with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator, Deanne Criswell on Thursday, to request support and additional resources for emergency and disaster preparedness, response, and technical assistance on the Navajo Nation.

The Navajo Department of Emergency Management has worked closely with FEMA Region IX and VI to mitigate severe storms and emergencies in 2013, 2019, and 2020. During the COVID-19 pandemic, FEMA has played a vital role in the Navajo Nation Operations Command Center by stationing several emergency response experts at the command center to provide technical assistance, conduct assessments, and coordinate additional resources.



“The war against COVID-19 continues on the Navajo Nation, and we appreciate the assistance and support we received from FEMA. They have been instrumental in securing and coordinating resources for healthcare facilities, chapters, and our Navajo people. FEMA has also provided training and expertise to help build our Nation’s capacity to respond to emergencies and disasters. However, there is always room for improvement and coordination to reduce or eliminate long-term risks and losses caused by disasters or emergencies,” said President Nez.

During the meeting, President Nez spoke about the need for FEMA Disaster Reservists on the Navajo Nation to assist with FEMA’s reimbursement process, and most importantly, to help

disaster survivors and first responders. He also requested a stationed FEMA representative on the Navajo Nation to prepare for the inevitable impacts of future disasters.

“In regards to reimbursements under the FEMA Public Assistance Program, the process has improved from past emergencies, but technical assistance is simultaneously needed from Region 6 and 9 to ensure funds are reinvested back to the Navajo Nation’s local governments, programs, and departments,” added President Nez.

FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell thanked all tribal leaders for their input and recommendations and looks forward to working with tribal nations, including the Navajo Nation.

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