



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

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President Nez commends the Biden-Harris Administration for investing nearly \$1.6 million for the next 15 years to reclaim Navajo Nation mine lands

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, and Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency Executive Director Valinda Shirley commend the Biden-Harris Administration for investing nearly \$725 million annually over the next 15 years, through the President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, for the U.S. Department of the Interior to create jobs, and accelerate economic opportunities by reclaiming abandoned mine lands (AML) within 22 states, including the Navajo Nation. The Navajo Nation was the only tribal nation to be included among the states, and is set to receive \$1.6 million over 15 years to address reclamation needs.

"On behalf of the Navajo Nation, we appreciate the Biden-Harris Administration for prioritizing the well-being, health, and economy of our Navajo people impacted by mining activities. The fact that the Navajo Nation will receive funding along with other states sets precedence and demonstrates that we are viewed by the Biden-Harris Administration as a sovereign entity. Historically, the Navajo Nation's economy was largely dependent on natural resources. Since the closures of the coal mines, many Navajo families lost high-paying jobs, and surrounding communities were plagued with high unemployment rates. President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will help revitalize our local economies and families, and most importantly, address environmental impacts," said President Nez.

The Navajo Nation currently has four coal mines including Black Mesa Mine, Peabody Kayenta Mine, and McKinley Mine that are under reclamation.

"The Nez-Lizer Administration and the Biden-Harris Administration continues to strengthen the Nation-to-Nation relationship between the U.S. and the Navajo Nation with the allocation of funding for abandoned mine land reclamation for \$1.6 million in this fiscal year alone and the potential for millions more through the year 2036. Through the historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Nez-Lizer Administration is taking advantage of the Biden-Harris Administration's promise to restore tribal lands, address climate change, and expand economic opportunity in Navajo communities adversely affected by the recent closure of coal mines and powerplants on the Nation," said NNEPA Executive Director Shirley.

The AML reclamation projects will employ dislocated coal industry workers and support needed jobs for coal communities by closing dangerous mine shafts, reclaiming unstable slopes, improving water quality, and restoring water supplies damaged by mining. The projects intend to enable economic revitalization by reclaiming mine lands for future economic redevelopments.

"The Navajo Nation's Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Department and the Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources are grateful that the 2022 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will be providing funding to the Navajo Nation through the AML Reclamation. We thank the many partners that worked hard on this Bill. This funding will provide NAMLRD with a mechanism to continue to be the stewards of AML sites that historically impacted the Navajo Nation. With the dwindling AML funds, this will be an economic stimulus for the Navajo Nation," said Navajo Nation Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Department Principal Mining Engineer Melvin Yazzie.

Vice President Myron Lizer also commended the commitment of the Navajo Nation Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Department and Environmental Protection Agency for working together with federal partners. Since 2021, the Navajo Nation Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Department has been working with the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 with the assistance of the National Association of Abandoned Mine Land Programs and Interstate Mining Compact Commission to include Navajo AML sites in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill.

Under the leadership of U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, the Department will soon provide guidance to the Navajo Nation for the funding to address outstanding reclamation needs.

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