



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
Timothy Benally, Public Information Officer
(928) 871-7000
nnopvp.communications@gmail.com

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President Nez signs into law \$1 billion ARPA legislation for water, electricity, broadband, housing to benefit elders, youth, veterans, families



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, joined by Vice President Myron Lizer and members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council, signs Resolution CJN-29-22 into law in Crownpoint, N.M. on July 15, 2022.

CROWNPOINT, N.M. – On Friday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer were joined by members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council, Chapter officials, and community members as they signed into law Resolution CJN-29-22, to deliver over \$1 billion for water, electricity, broadband, housing, COVID-19 mitigation, E911/public safety, local chapter priorities, additional hardship assistance funds for new applicants, and other priorities through the American Rescue Plan Act. The ceremony was held at the chapter house in Crownpoint, N.M. and live-streamed and aired on local radio for the public.

The signing represents the largest ever investment in infrastructure development and improvements for the Navajo Nation. The legislation was sponsored by Council Delegate Mark Freeland and approved by the Council by a vote of 20-2, during a special session held on June 30.

“This historic investment in our communities and our people represents Nation building and better quality of life. More water, electricity, broadband, housing, and hardship assistance will be provided to elders, youth, veterans, students, families, and others. Elders will get water lines, electricity, housing, and other basic necessities – they are not left out. Keep in mind that the Navajo Nation successfully implemented \$714 million in CARES Act funds that the Navajo people received in 2020 – those funds provided the first round of hardship assistance, electricity to over 730 families, \$60 million in direct financial relief for Navajo artisans and business owners, hazard pay for frontline warriors, and many other infrastructure improvements. The ARPA funds will build on the success of the CARES Act, provide more jobs, and help build our nation for future generations,” said President Nez.

During his remarks, President Nez also acknowledged Office of the President and Vice President Chief of Staff Paulson Chaco, the Division Directors, and the 20 members of the Council who voted in support of the legislation. Chief of Staff Paulson Chaco was also in attendance and commended the work of the Nation’s technical experts that played an instrumental role in developing the legislation based on many meetings at the local level and numerous work sessions held by the Council since last year.

Resolution CJN-29-22 provides the following:

- \$215 million for water/wastewater
- \$96.4 million for home electricity connections
- \$120 million for broadband
- \$130 million for housing
- \$120 million for new hardship assistance applicants
- \$150 million for bathroom additions
- \$210 million for local chapter priorities
- \$35 for E911 and public safety
- \$19.2 million for health care
- \$5 million for cyber security
- \$15.5 million for former Bennett Freeze area housing

“It’s a historic because our people have gone through a lot because of COVID-19. Our eight regional chapters were hit hard and they have significant needs for water, electricity, broadband, and bathrooms and that’s why I wanted to sponsor this legislation. This is for all of the families that have to haul water and use generators, especially those who live in the very remote areas. We are going to change lives forever beginning today. Lives will be forever changed because of this resolution,” said Delegate Freeland, who also acknowledged each of his chapter leaders and Council colleagues, including Crownpoint Chapter President Rita Capitan who spoke in support of the legislation to help residents.

Speaker Seth Damon also thanked the 24th Navajo Nation Council and President Nez for working through the challenges and coming together to deliver the \$1 billion through the final resolution. The Office of the President and Vice President worked closely with technical experts to craft the legislation based on meetings held in many communities, along with supporting resolutions from chapters and agency councils.

“There is no specific allocation for economic development in this particular bill, but our economy will get a boost through the creation of jobs and revenue from the infrastructure projects. This is a step forward for the Navajo people and our quality of life in all communities. I thank everyone who laid their hands to this great work for our Nation,” stated Vice President Lizer.

President Nez also notes that the Navajo Department of Health has developed a proposal to fund senior centers across the Navajo Nation to provide improved services for Navajo elders. He also noted that the Navajo Department of Justice successfully secured over \$30 million in settlement funds for the Judicial Branch that can be used to reopen courts and address cases for the Navajo people. In 2021, President Nez also signed a separate resolution that allocated \$30 million in ARPA funding to provide direct financial relief for Navajo artisans and business owners. For Navajo farmers, the Navajo Nation recently established the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund Program under the Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture to support Navajo livestock owners, farmers, and agriculture users. The resolution also provides \$8.8 million for each of the 24 Council Delegate regions, which can be used for senior centers, warehouses, and other local priorities.

In 2020, the Navajo Nation successfully implemented \$714 million in CARES Act funds that provided electricity to 737 homes and investments in water resources, hardship assistance for the Navajo people, telecommunications towers, COVID-19 relief, and much more. Friday’s signing ceremony is available to view online at: <https://www.facebook.com/NezLizer2018>.

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