



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

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**President Nez addresses state leaders
at the New Mexico State Tribal Leaders Summit**



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez speaks during the New Mexico State Tribal Leaders Summit in Albuquerque, N.M. on June 2, 2022.

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — On Thursday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez attended the New Mexico State Tribal Leaders Summit, hosted by the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department, which is an annual government-to-government meeting focused on pressing issues affecting the state's 23 tribal nations. New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, Indian Affairs Secretary Lynn Trujillo, and the state's cabinet members were in attendance to engage with and hear directly from tribal leaders. This year's event was the first in-person summit held since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

President Nez's remarks highlighted the Navajo Nation's progress in mitigating the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of upholding and expanding tribal consultation on critical matters including water resources, educational issues, funding processes, and renewable energy.

He also provided a written document to Gov. Lujan Grisham outlining requests to expedite right-of-way clearances for road improvements and construction and to eliminate certification requirements that often delay road projects. Among many issues, President Nez also outlined specific needs to support the implementation of basic amenities for Navajo families including running water, electricity, and broadband connectivity.

“The summit is critical to strengthening the government-to-government relations between tribes and the state. I appreciate Gov. Lujan Grisham and Secretary Trujillo’s commitment to working with tribal nations to resolve issues and partner to build stronger communities. We had a productive dialogue with the Governor and her cabinet members,” said Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, who was joined by Office of the President and Vice President Chief of Staff Paulson Chaco and Navajo Nation Washington Office Executive Director Lashawna Tso.



PHOTO: (left to right) Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President Chief of Staff Paulson Chaco, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, and Council Delegate Mark Freeland.

President Nez also reflected on the Navajo Nation Treaty Day recognized on Wednesday, which marked 154 years since the signing of the Navajo Treaty of 1868 with the federal government.

“It is a time to reflect on our ancestors, those who were forcefully removed from our homelands and taken to Fort Sumner where they were held captive. They endured so much, they grieved and pleaded to return home. Through their combined strength and prayer, they negotiated the Treaty of 1868 which was signed on June 1, 1868. So, we honor and show our appreciation for the strength and resilience of our people, and all Indigenous communities, who have overcome so much to be where we are today,” added President Nez.

Council Delegate Mark Freeland spoke on behalf of the Navajo Nation Council during the summit, and advocated for Navajo citizens who have been waiting years for basic infrastructure. Council Delegates Jamie Henio, Eugenia Charles Newton, and Daniel Tso were also in attendance.

“Navajo people are a large population within the state of New Mexico, but so many of our people still live without running water and electricity. It was an honor to speak on their behalf to ensure that the voices of our elders and youth are heard by state leaders. It’s important to keep an open dialogue with Gov. Lujan Grisham and her cabinet as we move forward,” said Delegate Freeland.

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