



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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President Nygren and Speaker Curley express disappointment regarding Department of the Interior Secretary Deb Haaland's decision to withdraw lands surrounding Chaco Culture National Historic Park from future leasing and mining claims

“Despite the Navajo Nation’s position, Secretary Haaland proceeded to issue this decision one day after the Navajo Nation commemorated our Treaty Day, which recognizes the Treaty of 1868 and the start of the government-to-government relationship between the Navajo Nation and the United States. The Secretary’s action undermines our sovereignty and self-determination,” President Nygren said. “Despite my concerns and denunciation, the Department of Interior has move forward which is highly disappointing. Secretary Haaland’s decision impacts Navajo allottees but also disregards the tribe’s choice to lease lands for economic development. Ultimately, this decision jeopardizes future economic opportunities while at the same time placing some 5600 Navajo allottees in dire financial constraints,” said President Nygren.

“The Navajo Nation strongly disagrees with the new public land order and the Department of the Interior’s assertion that there was significant consultation with tribal nations prior to today’s announcement. The current resolution and position of the Navajo Nation supports no land withdrawal. In the past, the Navajo Nation attempted to compromise by proposing a five-mile buffer as opposed to the 10-mile. The Biden Administration has undermined the position of the Navajo Nation with today’s action and impacted the livelihood of thousands of Navajo allotment owners and their families. While we explore our options, we remain open to discussing a path toward compromise,” said Speaker Crystalyne Curley.

President Nygren and Speaker Curley urge President Joe Biden and Secretary Haaland to reconsider this decision as it is a breach of trust between the Department of the Interior, the federal government, and the Navajo Nation; the decision is unjust and may violate individual landowner rights (Navajo allottees). President Nygren respectfully requests the Biden Administration work towards a solution that respects the rights and dignity of the Navajo people due to the long-lasting consequences to the Navajo People.

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