



25th Navajo Nation Council

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Navajo Nation Council members meet with first Native American U.S. Treasurer Marilynn Malerba



PHOTO: 25th Navajo Nation Council Delegates who attended the Coalition of Large Tribes meeting in Washington D.C., had the honor of meeting the first Native American Treasurer of the United States, Marilynn Malerba.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — On Wednesday in Washington D.C., 25th Navajo Nation Council Delegates Vince James, Germaine Simonson, Eugenia Charles-Newton, and Nathan Notah had the honor of meeting with Marilynn Malerba, who was appointed by U.S. President Joe Biden last year to serve as the very first Native American Treasurer of the United States.

Members of the Coalition of Large Tribes (COLT) were also present for the meeting to share concerns and input regarding economic development, taxation issues, and the expenditure of funding through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). COLT is comprised of members from large Indian tribes throughout Indian Country, who serve as an advocacy group for issues facing American Indian tribes with land bases exceeding 100,000 acres.

Prior to her appointment, Malerba became the 18th Chief of the Mohegan Tribe in 2010 and is the first female Chief in the tribe's modern history. She previously served as Chairwoman of the Tribal Council and as Executive Director of Health and Human Services for her tribe.

Treasurer Malerba oversees the Office of Tribal and Native Affairs under the U.S. Treasury, which houses staff who are dedicated to communication with tribal nations and the hub for

tribal policy. In addition to leading the Office of Tribal and Native Affairs, the Treasurer directly oversees the U.S. Mint, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Fort Knox, and is a key liaison with the Federal Reserve. Treasurer Malerba also serves as a senior advisor to the Secretary of the Treasury in the areas of community development and public engagement.

During their discussion, the Delegates and leaders of COLT tribes spoke about the progress in expending the ARPA funds and the need for federal regulatory changes to allow tribal nations to expend federal funds quicker. Federal regulations and duplicate requirements are creating barriers for many tribes across the country, which are often more stringent than other governmental entities.

“It is important that the Treasury Department understand that Indian Country is unique. The ARPA funds each tribe received were accepted with the intent that families would be assisted with basic needs such as water. However, because of federal constraints and barriers like right-of-ways, an obstacle created by the federal government, improving communities and lives will not happen by the deadline imposed by Congress. We need both Congress and the Treasury Department to take this into consideration and work with tribes to spend ARPA dollars. All tribes agree, we do not want to see one penny returned to the federal government,” said Law and Order Committee Chair Eugenia Charles-Newton.

The Navajo Nation has expended over 50-percent of its ARPA funds and has until the end of 2024 to obligate or expend all of the funding, in accordance with the federal deadline.

Council Delegate Vince James, chair of the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee, added that the Navajo Nation Council and COLT leadership remain committed to working with the Treasurer’s Office, the White House, and congress to expedite the use of federal funds and develop solutions that support the efforts of all tribes.

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