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25th Navajo Nation Council advocates for capital outlay efficiency, education equity, and infrastructure projects in New Mexico

The 25th Navajo Nation Council met with New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, legislative leaders, and cabinet secretaries at the New Mexico State Capitol

CORRECTION: The status of construction and location of the Navajo Code Talker Museum are currently undetermined.

SANTA FE, N.M. – On Feb. 6, the 25th Navajo Nation Council, led by Speaker Crystalyne Curley, met with New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, legislative leaders, and cabinet secretaries at the New Mexico State Capitol to discuss key legislative priorities, including an efficient capital outlay process, equitable education funding, and critical infrastructure improvements.

During discussions with Governor Lujan Grisham, Speaker Curley addressed the exclusion of the Navajo Nation from the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department's (IAD) $30 million capital outlay funding. The governor stated that the Navajo Nation had not submitted project proposals that met the state's funding criteria, emphasizing the need for better communication and coordination between the Nation's executive branch and the state government.

"The Navajo Nation deserves equitable access to these funds," Speaker Curley said. "Our communities need better infrastructure and education investments, and it's critical the state government works with the 25th Navajo Nation Council to streamline these projects."

Council members along with Speaker Curley met with Senate President Pro Tempore Mimi Stewart and Speaker of the House Javier Martínez to discuss legislative efforts that could benefit the Navajo Nation. The 25th Navajo Nation Council advocated for equitable education funding and urged the state to work collaboratively with the Council in addressing disparities in the Navajo Nation.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council and Speaker Curley met with New Mexico Speaker of the House Javier Martínez

During a meeting with the Public Education Department, officials shared the success of the summer reading program, which showed increased literacy rates among tribal students. Council Delegate Eugenia Charles-Newton inquired about incorporating the Diné language into the program, and officials suggested a full-day summer school program with language, science, and cultural education components to fully utilize funding and resources with the department.

Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez advocated for additional resources for Head Start facilities, while the Department of Diné Education Interim Superintendent Roy Tracy emphasized the need for culturally designed school buildings.

Delegate Dr. Nez met with Governor Lujan Grisham to advocate for road improvements, particularly the Indian Service Route 321 in Crystal, N.M., and the Red Lake Chapter House road project. During the meeting, Governor Lujan Grisham expressed her support for Delegate Dr. Nez's road initiatives and asked that he prioritize one of his two projects for the state to move forward on.

"These road projects will make a significant impact on our communities," said Delegate Dr. Nez, "Indian Service Route 321 has never been paved before, it is 7.7 miles of unpaved road that Crystal uses a daily basis, similar to the streets in Navajo, NM and Whiteface Mountain Road in Coalmine, NM - these are routes used on a daily basis for the benefit of all populations"

Additionally, Governor Lujan Grisham lent her support to establishing the Navajo Nation Code Talker Museum, recognizing its importance in preserving the legacy of the Code Talkers.

Despite the challenges surrounding funding allocations, the 25th Navajo Nation Council remains committed to advocating for resources and ensuring the needs of Navajo communities are addressed. The Council will continue working with state leaders and legislators to push for equitable funding, improved infrastructure, and economic development.

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