



25th Navajo Nation Council

# 25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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## **Council members address clean energy initiatives at the 2024 Navajo Nation Energy Summit**



**Chair Brenda Jesus (Oaksprings, St. Michaels) delivered a leadership address at the 2024 Navajo Nation Energy Summit**

**ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.** – On Tuesday, Resources and Development Committee (RDC) Chair Brenda Jesus (Oaksprings, St. Michaels) delivered a leadership address at the 2024 Navajo Nation Energy Summit, encouraging partnerships and innovative strategies to assist the Navajo Nation in addressing climate change and sustainable clean energy.

Chair Jesus spoke on behalf of Navajo Nation Council Speaker Crystalyne Curley who was in Washington, D.C., advocating on behalf of the Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement.

“When we look at the timeline from when the first trading post opened on the Navajo Nation in 1906, through the signing of the Navajo Treaty of 1868, and onward to the Indian Self Determination Act, we see the different impacts that the Navajo Nation has experienced,” Chair Jesus said. “As we stand in the 21st Century, the Nation is talking about moving away from fossil fuels toward clean energy. One of the main RDC initiatives is to discuss renewable energy like solar, wind, geothermal, hydropower, ocean energy and bio energy.”

One objective of the 2024 Navajo Nation Energy Summit was to provide foundational knowledge

of energy resources that would help departments and agencies understand energy-related proposals and to offer support in the decision-making process.

The summit agenda hosted live and virtual keynote addresses by U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Jennifer M. Granholm and U.S. Office of Indian Energy Director Wahleah Johns who talked about the State of the Energy Industry and Office of Indian Energy Initiatives respectively.

“Our office has been working hard to stand up projects for funding. We want to make sure that we are supporting your sovereignty,” Johns said. “President Biden is dedicated to fixing challenges when it comes to funding. We want to make it more accessible to tribes.”

Secretary Granholm touched on the Department of Energy’s recent \$366 million funding for 17 projects across 20 states and 30 tribal nations to accelerate clean energy deployment in rural and remote areas. One of the projects awarded focused on energizing rural Hopi and Navajo communities with solar powered battery-based systems.

“This funding directly invests in Navajo Nation households and fosters job creation and growth. The sheer magnitude of these funding opportunities is overwhelming,” Secretary Granholm said.

Chair Jesus touched upon the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 as federal resources that assist tribal nations as they transition to renewable clean energy.

“The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law invests into safe drinking water and wastewater infrastructure for our tribal communities. The Inflation Reduction Act is one of the largest investments into climate resilience in our Nation’s history that provides much needed resources to enhance resilience to drought and climate change,” Chair Jesus said.

The 2024 Navajo Nation Energy Summit also hosted presentations by representatives from the U.S. Department of the Interior, Division of Energy & Mineral Development, Sandia National Laboratories, and pertinent Navajo Nation Departments such as the Division of Natural Resources, Minerals Department, and the Department of Water Resources.

Budget and Finance Committee Vice Chair Carl Slater facilitated a breakout session regarding Chapter Perspectives and Grant Opportunities. He spoke about utilizing the 2023 Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Department of Energy and the Navajo Nation that focuses on transitioning coal-centric economies to clean energy economies utilizing federal funding for a wide range of infrastructure and economic development projects.

“The DOE provided technical assistance in grant writing for projects initiated by the chapters I represent. We were able to implement two solar projects that produce five megawatts of power each that is utilized by local communities,” Vice Chair Slater said. “This summit is a great convening of a diverse set of stakeholders from chapters, consultants, developers, attorneys and grassroots organizations. It’s inspiring to see professionals who aren’t necessarily affiliated with the Navajo Nation, but who are providing objective analysis to our people.”

As the Navajo Nation moves toward implementing clean energy initiatives, Chair Jesus said partnerships remain critical.

“The Navajo Nation must work alongside these agencies and enterprises. We need equity across the board when it comes to renewable energy that will subsidize our three-branch government operation. That’s the core purpose of moving toward renewable energy,” Chair Jesus said.

Council Delegates Casey Allen Johnson, Danny Simpson, Rickie Nez, Helena Nez Begay, and Speaker Crystalayne Curley were also in attendance.

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