25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

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OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

MEDIA CONTACT:
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

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New Mexico Caucus addresses funding for Navajo Nation Code Talker Museum

New Mexico Caucus State Task Force Subcommittee Chair Amber Kanazbah Crotty addressed communication issues that are impacting funding for the Navajo Nation Code Talkers Museum.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — A longstanding project to honor and memorialize the Navajo Nation Code Talkers could lose funding from the State of New Mexico if the Navajo Nation is unable to justify another reauthorization.

On Wednesday, New Mexico Sen. Shannon Pinto, District 3, virtually presented a report to the Navajo Nation Council's New Mexico Caucus State Task Force Subcommittee, calling for progress on the critically stalled Navajo Code Talker Museum. Pinto emphasized that previously allocated funds could revert to the state, including up to $9 million appropriated through Capital Outlay and New Mexico taxpayer funds.

"Capital Outlay is a major issue. Funding for the museum has been appropriated and reauthorized several times, and the project hasn't moved at all," Pinto said. "I told the state that if I don't see a hard letter for reauthorization of a new fiscal agent for McKinley County, I'll start the process myself, and it won't reflect well on the Nation."

Obstacles related to a land withdrawal for the proposed museum site have repeatedly delayed the construction timeline. Ongoing communication issues have also hindered progress.

During the meeting, New Mexico Caucus Chair Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Cove, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Red Valley Tse'alnaozt'i'i', Sheepsprings, Beclabito, Gadiiahi/To'Koi) called on Office of the President and Vice President Executive Assistant Dwight Largie to confirm that President Buu Nygren met with New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham regarding not moving the project forward.

Chair Crotty said the Navajo Nation Capital Project Management Department (CPMD) provided similar information during a previous caucus meeting, reporting that President Nygren did not support the project and had redirected appropriated funds to Tohatchi public safety structures. Additionally, CPMD reported that up to $28 million in Capital Project funds are expected to expire this fiscal year.

"The Division of Community Development needs to send a memo to the Caucus explaining the decision to reallocate $8 million from the New Mexico Tribal Infrastructure Fund for the Navajo Code Talker Museum to the Tohatchi public safety structures," Crotty said. "Without this document, we're all left in the dark about what was said."

Chair Crotty said she would continue consulting with Sen. Pinto on the Navajo Code Talker Museum ahead of the 2026 New Mexico State Legislature, which convenes Jan. 20, 2026.

"Because of the budget, the state is prioritizing New Mexico health care and is increasingly resistant to further reauthorizations," Pinto warned. "As the state faced federal funding cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, they assessed sitting funds to support the program. If it's sitting there, they will scoop it up."

The New Mexico Caucus State Task Force Subcommittee committed to obtaining the necessary documentation to clarify the Nation's path forward and to support efforts to preserve funding and secure the legacy of the Navajo Nation Code Talkers.

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