



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 27, 2015

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**Council Delegates take members of the U.S. House
Appropriations Committee on tour of areas affected by relocation**



Photo: The Congressional Delegation at the Navajo Nation Veterans Memorial Park in Window Rock, Ariz. (From left to right: Delegate Walter Phelps, U.S. Rep. Mike Simpson, U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum, U.S. Rep. Ken Calvert, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly, U.S. Rep. Tom Cole, and Delegate Amber Crotty.)

WINDOW ROCK – Last Saturday, Council Delegates from the 23rd Navajo Nation Council welcomed members from the U.S. House Appropriations Committee’s Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, to the Navajo Nation to take a tour of areas affected by relocation. The Subcommittee is the oversight for the Office of Navajo and Hopi Indian Relocation.

Congressional leaders in attendance included U.S. Reps. Ann Kirkpatrick (AZ), Ken Calvert (CA), Betty McCollum (MN), Mike Simpson (ID), and Tom Cole (OK). The delegation was accompanied by President Obama’s senior policy advisor for Native American Affairs Jodi Gillette, and

Department of Interior principal deputy assistant secretary of policy, management and budget Kristin Sarri.

The delegation began their tour in Jeddito, Ariz., an area heavily affected by the Navajo-Hopi Land Dispute that resulted in the relocation of many Navajos. Relocation and benefits were to be met within a 5-year time frame, however for a variety of reasons it did not occur, which spurred the visit by the congressional delegation.

Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi To'ii), chair of the Navajo-Hopi Land Commission, said that it was an eye-opening experience for all who attended the tour to understand the complex issues facing Diné Citizens who were relocated or are living in the HPL areas.

“The goal of the delegation between our congressional leaders and council delegates was to illustrate the needs of not only Navajo relocatees, but to remind the federal government of their trust responsibilities with our Nation,” said Delegate Phelps, and added, “It is necessary for them to see that we are in need of additional funding to aid these communities at the federal level.”

Council Delegate Jonathan Nez (Shonto, Naatsis'áán, Oljato, Ts'ah Bii Kin) voiced his concern to the delegation regarding Navajos currently living in the HPL areas.

“Navajos living in the HPL areas are under Hopi jurisdiction, so it is hard to get services out to our Diné Citizens,” said Delegate Nez. “They need roads, infrastructure, power lines, and some type of assistance to help them with these issues. So far Hopi has not delivered on these basic necessities.”

The delegation made its way from Jeddito to Window Rock, where they met with President Ben Shelly and Navajo leaders to discuss other matters affecting Navajo people, such as education, health care, human rights, and veterans assistance.

Delegate Phelps, along with Council Delegates Amber Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gad'i'í'áhi/To'Koi, Red Valley, Sheepsprings, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tsé a'náoz't'í'í) and Otto Tso (Tó Nanees Dizi), joined the delegation and toured the Nahata Dziil community, where many relocatees live as a result of the relocation from their traditional lands, which are now under the jurisdiction of the Hopi Tribe.

At the conclusion of the tour, Delegate Phelps led the congressional delegation to Little Singer Community School in Bird Springs, Ariz. to provide a glimpse to the leaders of the need for additional funding for educational programs and infrastructure.

“I would like to thank our congressional leaders and representatives from the White House and Department of Interior for experiencing a piece of Navajo culture, as well as taking the time to visit and understand the many challenges Navajo people are facing,” said Delegate Phelps.

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