



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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### **State task force members meet with Arizona Governor in first ever Tribal Leadership Roundtable**

**PHOENIX** – The Navajo Nation State Affairs Task Force met with Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey during the first ever Governor’s Tribal Leadership Roundtable meeting on Wednesday at the state’s capitol. The gathering focused on building a relationship between the Navajo Nation and the state, as well as conveying the Nation’s priorities to Gov. Ducey such as economic development, water rights, infrastructure, and the continuation of energy development.

Task force chair Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) and Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichíí, Steamboat) presented a written letter to Gov. Ducey outlining important issues and goals from Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland).

“I was thankful of the opportunity to express our diverse issues. Your recognition of the twenty-two tribes in Arizona says a lot about your administration. The Navajo Nation Council is moving forward to address its challenges in the realm of building our Nation’s energy development, water resources, economic and infrastructure development, education, and health,” said Delegate Shepherd.

Delegate Shepherd also made a request for Gov. Ducey to meet with the Navajo Nation one-on-one for a two-hour discussion regarding specific issues pertaining to critical economic and social concerns of the Navajo people.

Arizona Sen. Carlyle Begay (Dist. 7 – D) coordinated the roundtable discussion with Gov. Ducey’s office to provide Arizona tribes the opportunity to meet with the governor and discuss important issues affecting their respective communities.

“Gov. Ducey showed true leadership today during his first Tribal Leaders Roundtable, committing to a new partnership between the State of Arizona and Arizona’s 22 Indian Tribes. I appreciate his vision to forge a new history as partners in the future of our State,” said Sen. Begay. “I believe any solid, lasting partnership requires a mutual recognition, of not only our respective rights as governments, but also our obligations to each other as governments and as leaders.”

Since taking office in January, Gov. Ducey said he understood it was important to reach out to Arizona tribes and acknowledge their contributions to the state's economy, and said he hopes the roundtable discussion formed a positive foundation for future collaborations.

Speaker Bates was unable to attend Wednesday's discussion, however in a letter to Gov. Ducey, he stressed the importance of a partnership between the Navajo Nation and the state.

"A growing Navajo Nation will provide for the needs of the Navajo people and act as a positive economic engine for Arizona. We need the assistance of the state to achieve that quickly, or as Gov. Ducey says, 'at the speed of business.' I believe we can make progress working together as partners," said Speaker Bates.

Other state task force members in attendance were Council Delegates Mel Begay, Nathaniel Brown, Tom Chee, Jonathan Hale, Seth Damon, and Walter Phelps. In addition, Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez also participated.

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