



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **State Task Force gains benefits for Navajo Nation through stronger partnerships with Arizona state leadership**

**PHOENIX** – The Navajo Nation Council’s State Task Force, chaired by Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) along with vice chair Council Delegate Tom Chee (Shiprock), supported the efforts of Arizona State Sen. Carlyle Begay (Dist. 7 – R) in working with key Arizona lawmakers during the 2016 Arizona Legislative Session, to secure major gains for the Navajo Nation in several areas including education, health care, social services, veterans, and others.

The Arizona Legislature adjourned after an all-night final session Saturday morning at 5:00 am. A summary report listing legislative actions that benefit the Navajo Nation is available on the Navajo Nation Council’s website at [navajonationcouncil.org](http://navajonationcouncil.org).

“We made real gains for the Navajo people in the education of our children, for our Navajo veterans, health care, energy and infrastructure while respecting Navajo rights,” said Delegate Begay, who has worked with his task force colleagues to build stronger partnerships with state legislators and other key leadership officials in the states of Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico.

Over the last several months, task force members have held meetings with top state officials to advocate for certain legislations and funding including Sen. Begay. The task force’s efforts are part of Council’s overall priority of building stronger relations and influence at the state and federal levels of government.

“Building a stronger relationship of trust and understanding between Arizona and Navajo leaders resulted in a new level of responsiveness from Arizona leadership to Navajo needs. As Navajo grows so does the economy of northern Arizona,” stated Sen. Begay.

The task force along with Sen. Begay advocated for the passage of S.B. 1220, extending the Diné College-Navajo Technical University Compact for 20 years, with a 20-term extension possible after a state review. As a result, the two tribal colleges will receive up to \$52.5 million over the next 20 years. Diné College receives \$1.75 million a year for capital construction and building rehab, while NTU receives \$875,000 annually from the Arizona Transaction Privilege tax revenue generated on the Navajo Nation.

Through coordination and support from Delegate Begay, Sen. Begay, State Rep. Albert Hale (Dist. 7 – D), and Navajo County Supervisor Jessie Thompson, the recently approved state budget

includes \$1.5 million for BIA Highway 60, which is a regional transportation corridor that links multiple Navajo communities including Pinon, Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Tachee/Blue Gap, Whippoorwill, and Low Mountain.

“Navajo Nation leadership has achieved benefits for our people with the establishment of the State Task Force and their concerted effort in building a more responsive relationship with Arizona’s leaders. We are appreciative of Senator Begay’s leadership in advocating for the Navajo Nation,” said Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland).

To view the summary report in its entirety, please visit:

[http://www.navajonationcouncil.org/pressReleases/2016/May/2016\\_AZ\\_Legislative\\_Session\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org/pressReleases/2016/May/2016_AZ_Legislative_Session_Summary.pdf)

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