



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 28, 2017

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Council supports Congressional bill to name U.S. Navy ship “USNS Navajo”

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On Wednesday, U.S. Sen. John McCain (R – AZ), chairman for the U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Forces, and ranking committee member Jack Reed (D – RI), announced the completion of the committee’s markup of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018, according to a release from Sen. McCain’s office.

The NDAA contains report language that would support the naming of a new class of Navy tug ships, beginning with the “USNS Navajo.” The U.S. Navy has had a longstanding tradition of naming Navy tug and salvage ships after Native American tribes.

In Nov. 2014, the 22nd Navajo Nation Council’s Naabik’íyáti’ Committee unanimously passed resolution NABIN-63-14, which urged the U.S. Navy to name a T-ATS Class Tug and Rescue-Salvage ship the “USNS Navajo.”

Speaker for the 23rd Navajo Nation Council LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland) stated that the efforts of the 22nd Navajo Nation Council was vital in the ship-naming initiative, and that the current Council remains in full support for the proposed “USNS Navajo.”

“The Office of the Speaker issued letters requesting Congressional members to support the name designation through the Navajo Nation’s supporting resolution, and Council is very thankful that our voices were heard by our nation’s leaders,” said Speaker Bates.

The U.S. Navy will be decommissioning eight ships, four remaining T-ATF Powhatan Class fleet ocean tugs, and four Rescue-Salvage T-ARS Safeguard Class ships. The eight existing ships will be replaced with a single class of about eight or nine vessels to be designated as “T-ATS Tug and Rescue-Salvage” ships.

Speaker Bates expressed gratitude to Sen. McCain for advocating on behalf of the Navajo Nation and Acting Secretary of the Navy Sean Stackley for providing the name recommendation for consideration within the bill.

“With the diligent advocacy of Sen. McCain and Sec. Stackley, the Navajo Nation thanks them for their continued support. Without their efforts this initiative would not have been possible, and we are sincerely grateful for their assistance,” stated Speaker Bates.

The Senate Committee voted unanimously today to pass the bill, which authorizes \$700 billion in funding for the U.S. Department of Defense and the national security programs of the U.S. Department of Energy. During the markup, 277 amendments were considered and adopted, and the legislation moves forward to the full senate for consideration.

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