Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. advocates for collaboration with Senator-elect Mark Kelly on Navajo Nation and local priorities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 10, 2020

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Tachee/Blue Gap, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tselani/Cottonwood, Low Mountain) shared information with the Navajo Nation Council and Senator-elect Mark Kelly’s team members on Monday regarding a visit to the Navajo Nation in September 2019. Kelly observed issues faced by the residents of Pinon, Tachee/Blue Gap and the Burnt Corn communities.

“Now that the election has revealed the widespread support of Senator-elect Kelly, we are confident in continuing to build on the discussions we took part in to make good progress for the Burnt Corn and surrounding communities,” said Delegate Begay.

Specifically, Delegate Begay focused on five areas discussed during Senator-elect Kelly’s Sept. 8, 2019, visit:

1. Navajo Partitioned Lands (NPL)
2. Central abandoned uranium mine (AUM) region
3. Establishment of Veterans direct services
4. FirstNet and telecommunication infrastructure
5. Broken Promises Report by the US Commission on Civil Rights
Senator-elect Kelly received input from local leaders, including local Pinon and Blue Gap Chapter leaders, Pinon Health Center staff, Pinon Unified School District staff and community members. The group also undertook a tour of the surrounding community, including the nearby Burnt Corn Valley region and the Navajo Partition Lands portion of the Former Joint Use Area.

Navajo people living within the NPL continue to struggle with a lack of access to basic services, including housing, piped waterline service, power line connections, telecommunication, paved roads and other essential services.

The tour also included a visit to the Tachee/Blue Gap ‘Claim 28’ uranium mine, where long-standing federal neglect of wartime uranium activities have contaminated the surrounding environment and resulted in health effects in local community members.

Delegate Begay noted local community members, including elder Helen Nez, have been long-time advocates for proper reclamation. It was a demonstration of how badly the help of federal partners is needed to get help for local community members that continue to be impacted by the historical mining and processing of uranium in the community.

“I appreciate Senator-elect Kelly’s visit to the Navajo Nation and hope to see strong advocacy on Navajo Nation issues within the United States Congress,” said Delegate Begay.

During the coming weeks, the Navajo Nation Council will begin coordinating between key transition figures and Navajo leaders. This week, the Council’s standing committees are initiating updated legislative priorities ahead of changes in federal and state legislatures and executive administrations. Those will be shared with national legislators directly from the Navajo Nation Office of the Speaker.

PHOTO: Tachee/Blue Gap Chapter Community Service Coordinator Ella Kaye, Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. and Senator-elect Mark Kelly during a visit to the Navajo Nation in September 2019.

###

MEDIA CONTACTS: communications@navajo-nsn.gov, (928) 287-2085
Byron C. Shorty, INT Communications Director
Timothy E. Benally, Public Information Officer