



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL  
Office of the Speaker

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **U.S. Representative Tom O'Halleran Delivers Report from Congress to Council Delegates**

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Aug. 16, 2019 – United States Congressman Tom O'Halleran addressed members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council on Friday, Aug. 16, 2019, at the Navajo Nation Council Chamber in Window Rock. Congressman O'Halleran's report included updates on increasing federal funding for tribal projects, improving veterans' services and his recent visits with Navajo communities.



PHOTO: Council Delegates Kee Allen Begay, Jr., Rickie Nez, Wilson Stewart, Jr., Eugene Tso, Thomas Walker, Jr., Speaker Seth Damon, Congressman Tom O'Halleran, Council Delegates Otto Tso, Eugenia Charles Newton, Vince James and Charlaine Tso in front of the Navajo Nation Council Chamber after Congressman O'Halleran's address on Friday, Aug. 16, 2019.

"Your voice is being heard. Is it heard to the level that I want to see it? No, not yet. But we will continue in that direction," said Congressman O'Halleran.

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Congressman O'Halleran stated that funding for chapter priorities, including infrastructure and roads, has been included in various House bills. The congressman explained that federal tax cuts, which he voted against, are projected to decrease federal revenues by over \$5 trillion in the next 10 years. He assured Council members that he wants to see tribal projects prioritized and expressed his disappointment that they are not being properly addressed by federal agencies.

Congressman O'Halleran also shared that he has been working to improve veterans' services offered through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

"We wanted to build a veterans home on the Navajo Nation. We found out the rules and regulations of the VA don't allow that on any tribal land. So we have a bill in Congress to change that," said Congressman O'Halleran.

Congressman O'Halleran stated that he reintroduced the Nursing Home Care for Native American Veterans Act to address the issue.

Congressman O'Halleran's work for veterans also includes widow's tax legislation, support for the dependents of homeless veterans, legislation to assess the VA's suicide prevention program and expansion of support for Vietnam War veterans exposed to Agent Orange.

Over the past week, Congressman O'Halleran has been touring Navajo communities to hear local and regional priorities. His tour included a visit on Thursday with the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency.

Regarding the U.S. EPA, Congressman O'Halleran stated that his office has been putting more pressure on Region 9 to increase support for uranium cleanup projects on the Navajo Nation. He shared that his recent visit to the Navajo Nation EPA revealed ongoing difficulties the Navajo Nation is experiencing in working with the U.S. EPA, which funds many Navajo projects.

"If the EPA doesn't approve of a cleanup and you go through with it, then the burden is off the EPA in the future for that site, potentially. I don't want to see that occur. They need to be held accountable," said Congressman O'Halleran.

Council Delegates praised Congressman O'Halleran for his continued support in keeping the Office of Navajo and Hopi Indian Relocation open and for his efforts to increase funding for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bureau of Indian Education for Navajo services and facilities.

Congressman O'Halleran will continue his visit with Navajo chapters tomorrow with Delegate Charlene Tso at the Teec Nos Pos Chapter and surrounding communities.

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