



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL  
Office of the Speaker

## Delegates Daniels, Tso Receive Utah State Reports

WENDOVER, Utah – Nov. 8, 2019 – Council Delegates Herman Daniels, Jr. and Charlaine Tso represented the Navajo Nation at the Utah Tribal Leaders meeting hosted by the Utah Department of Heritage and Arts and the Division of Indian Affairs on November 8, 2019. Eight programs and organizations provided reports to the leaders on their tribal initiatives.



PHOTO: Utah Tribal Leaders from the eight federally recognized tribes of Utah, gathered November 8, 2019 to hear state reports from eight programs and organizations. Wendover, UT, 11/8/19.

The Utah Department of Health reported that it continues to develop changes to the state's Medicare program under Utah Senate Bill 96. Director of Medicaid and Health Financing Nate Checketts shared that the program is pushing for exemptions for tribal members to new requirements in an application to the federal government that would allow for a 90%-federal/10% state match rate.

The leaders also received a report from the Utah Department of Public Safety outlining recent department work and opportunities to work directly with tribes.

The Utah Department of Human Services Division of Child and Family Services shared that the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals will rehear a challenge to the Indian Child Warfare Act.

The State of Utah wrote portions of an amicus brief for the previous challenge in consultation with tribal nations. The division offered tribal leaders further coordination on the rehearing as well as partnership in updating intergovernmental agreements and assistance in obtaining Federal Foster Care Program funding.

Flint Timmons of the Utah Tourism Office shared program information that included opportunities to partner on developing community-based tourism initiatives. Timmons said the State of Utah experienced ‘over-tourism’ in some parts of the state, which the office began addressing by shifting from increasing the number of visitors to Utah towards improving the quality of tourist experiences.

Curators from the Natural History Museum of Utah also shared that the museum is beginning to revisit its policies as a new museum director is brought on board. The museum offered to begin developing tribal input and tribal leaders recommended consultations be carried out on a tribe-by-tribe basis.

Federal Bureau of Investigation Tribal Liaison Melinda Nakai for the Salt Lake Field Office shared an overview on the FBI’s community outreach programs available to tribal communities and members. Nakai encouraged the tribal leaders to reach out to the field office to learn about the ways the bureau and tribal nations can work together.

The Utah Diné Bikéyah organization shared several areas of focus, including the revision of the Manti-La Sal National Forest Plan, intertribal resolutions, and issues with water access. The group is also tracking the Bears Ears Expansion And Respect for Sovereignty Act (H.R.871) and the ANTIQUITIES Act introduced by US Representative Debra Haaland (H.R.1050).

Coordinator of Advocacy and Public Policy Moroni Benally for the Restoring Ancestral Winds Coalition reported that it is currently tracking Utah state legislation on sexual assault and domestic violence. Benally also shared that State Representative Angela Romero will be introducing a bill to begin addressing the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The group is working with legislative offices to set up a model for tribal involvement.

Delegate Daniels and Delegate Tso both shared information with the tribal leaders from the Navajo Nation. With regard to the Utah portion of the Navajo Nation, they highlighted the ongoing focus on improving San Juan School District achievement rates, lobbying efforts with the State of Utah, the San Juan County Special Election, and the process of bringing opposing views on energy development together as the Navajo Nation addresses the closures of a generating station and a coal mine.

The tribal leaders will follow-up with programs and organizations over the next few months and gather again in February.

The eight federally recognized tribes of Utah comprise the Utah Tribal Leaders. They are the Navajo Nation, the Confederated Tribes of Goshute, Skull Valley Band of Goshute, Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, Northwestern Band of Shoshone Nation, San Juan Southern Paiute, the Ute Indian Tribe, and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe.

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