



24th Navajo Nation Council

Office of the Speaker

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MEDIA CONTACT
Carl Slater, Director of Communications and Government Affairs
Bronson Peshlakai, Sr. Public Information Officer
(928) 871-6815
nlnb.communications@gmail.com

NAABI Approves Resolution Allowing Nation to Receive Original Copy of Treaty of 1868, Nation Holds Ceremony



Navajo Council Speaker Seth Damon thanks Clare P. Weaver (at right) who gifted a copy of the 151-year-old Treaty of 1868 to the Navajo Nation May 29, 2019. The document is one of three originals, one of which is at the National Archives.

CORRECTION: A previously issued version of this press release erroneously contained content intended for separate press releases. This release has now been clarified to contain only the appropriate subject matter.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – One of the original copies of the Treaty of 1868 between the Navajo people and the US Government was gifted to the Navajo Nation at a press conference held at the Navajo Nation Museum in Window Rock May 29, 2019.

The rare original copy of the Treaty of 1868 was on display inside a vault at the museum and Navajo leadership offered their thanks to Clare P. Weaver who gifted the document. The Navajo Nation is thought to be the only Indian tribe to have ownership of their own treaty.

"We as Navajo people have a piece of history that has not only burdened our people but has given life, strength and hope to our people," said Navajo Nation Council Speaker Seth Damon (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí, Rock Springs, Tsayatoh). "We came back to the four sacred mountains and it's because of our ancestors that signed that document. It's because of those individuals that fought and bled for us to come back."

Three copies of the Treaty were made at Fort Sumner, N.M., on June 1, 1868. The U.S. government has a copy at the National Archives in Washington. A second copy was given to Navajo leader Barboncito, and its current whereabouts are not definitively known. A third copy was given to Indian Peace Commissioner Samuel F. Tappan who kept his copy at his home in Manchester, Mass. About a decade ago, his great grand-niece, Clare P. Weaver, found the copy among documents in their home. Weaver and her husband agreed to return that copy to the Navajo Nation for safe keeping at the Navajo Nation Museum.

"I thank you very much, Ms. Weaver, and you're an inspiration to give this document back to us and nobody else," stated Speaker Damon. "No other museum in the world will have this and that's something that's going to be remembered forever."

The document is worth \$10,000, according to an appraisal. The Navajo Nation President cannot accept gifts worth more than \$1,000 without legislative approval, so the 24th Navajo Nation Council Naabik'íyáti Committee considered a resolution at a special meeting held May 28.

"This is a strong reminder of what was promised to us by the federal government," said Manuelito Wheeler, Navajo Nation Museum director. "During that time our leaders did not fully understand what was being signed. Now we have this treaty in our possession and each and every one of you can see a part of the history of our people."

The treaty legislation passed with unanimous consent, and the committee served as final authority. Legislation 0124-19 was sponsored by Delegate Otto Tso (Tó Nanees Dizí) and co-sponsored by Delegate Herman Daniels (Shonto, Naa'tsis'áán, Oljato, Ts'áh Bii Kin).

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