



Joint Press Release

Navajo Nation Office
of the President and the Vice President
and Navajo Nation Office of the Speaker



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Jared Touchin (OPVP) 928-871-7000
Byron Shorty (OOS) 928-871-7160

Navajo Nation will strengthen federal advocacy with investment in land and property near Capitol Hill

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On Sunday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer signed Resolution No. CJA-07-21, approving approximately \$4.8 million from the Navajo Nation’s Land Acquisition Trust Fund principal to acquire land and two separate buildings that will serve as the Navajo Nation Washington Office, create revenue generating opportunities, and strengthen the Navajo Nation’s advocacy efforts at the federal level.

“It’s a historic investment that will establish the Navajo Nation’s presence near Congress and build equity for many years to come. We will be the only tribal nation to own land and property near Capitol Hill and it will allow us greater access to meet with members of Congress and other federal partners to advocate for the Navajo people. If you look back at the role that the Navajo Nation Washington Office over the years and recently, they along with our Nation’s leaders have successfully lobbied for the recent Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act that was signed into law in December, \$53 million for fiber optic internet service through the FCC’s E-Rate Program, the recent approval of at least \$150 million for the Special Diabetes Program for Indians, hundreds of millions of dollars for uranium mine clean-up efforts, the COVID-19 vaccine doses that we have received, and of course the \$714 million in CARES act funds that directly helps our Navajo people,” said President Nez.

In response to recent concerns brought forth by some members of the Navajo Nation, President Nez noted that the Land Acquisition Trust Fund has its own policy and guidelines that require the funds to be used only for these types of acquisition of land and property and cannot be used for COVID-19 relief or other types of direct services such as housing. He also stated that the administration continues to work with the 24th Navajo Nation Council on a housing manufacturing initiative, more COVID-19 resources, and other services to help the Navajo people.

“We have many more issues that we continue to advocate for including the ongoing efforts to restore the Bears Ears National Monument to its original size, the remediation of uranium mines and benefits for former uranium mine workers and downwinders, more funds to supplement our own investments in infrastructure, COVID-19 relief, and many more. The Navajo currently spends over \$25,000 per month in rent, not including utilities, totaling \$300,000 each year that will never be recouped. By acquiring

property near Capitol Hill, the Navajo Nation will not only save money in rent, but build equity in property that will appreciate over time. The property's prime location and features also create the potential to rent space and create revenue for our Nation," added Vice President Lizer.

"This purchase will catapult the Navajo Nation Washington Office's advocacy by improving our access to Congress, with whom we work every day to ensure that the United States lives up to its treaty and trust obligations to all American Indians. When the Navajo Nation Council created the Navajo Nation Washington Office in 1984, Navajo leaders envisioned someday planting the Navajo flag on Capitol Hill. Located across the street from Spirit of Justice Park, behind the House of Representatives, the property has been a family home since it was built and the Navajo Nation will be just its third owner. This is an investment for our future generations," said Navajo Nation Washington Office Executive Director Santee Lewis

"In working with federal representatives and members of Congress, the Navajo Nation has made significant steps towards improving the number and size of resources sent to our Nation from the federal level. The Council provided the discussion on this purchase and has approved this initiative because it provides a long-term vision for those efforts to continue long into the future. The acquisition of property in Washington, D.C., is an important milestone for our Navajo People, and we continue to look forward to sending our children to Washington to advocate a strong position for our Nation," said Council Delegate Wilson Stewart, Jr.

Council Delegate Rickie Nez stated: "The Navajo Nation Washington Office has been a voice for the Navajo People in the US Capitol since 1984. Nearly four decades later, it's time we made a permanent place from which we can lobby and advocate for our Navajo Nation there in Washington. We have planted a seed that will allow our issues and our voice to be firmly presented and expressed within the halls of our national government. That is part of the vision we have, as leaders, for this administration and all those that follow."

"The Navajo Nation's position has always been to build and enhance tribal sovereignty and self-determination. With the purchase of property in Washington, D.C., in close proximity to the US Capitol building, the Navajo Nation looks now to build our position from a permanent place alongside Congressional and federal leadership. We look ahead to our future generations and we pray this action will create a better place for them to lead our Nation," said Speaker Seth Damon.

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