



Joint Press Release

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



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Arizona-Tribal gaming compact amendments finalized extending compact duration up to 2048 and expanding scope of gaming



PHOTO: Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey signs the Arizona-Tribal gaming compact amendments during a signing ceremony at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Ariz. on April 15, 2021.

PHOENIX — On Thursday, Navajo Nation leaders were in attendance as Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey signed off on an amended gaming compact between the State of Arizona and gaming tribes, which protects gaming exclusivity for tribes and extends the duration of the gaming compact to 2048. He also signed into law Arizona Senate Bill 1797, to expand the scope of gaming to include mobile and retail sports betting.

Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, Speaker Seth Damon, and members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council represented the Navajo Nation during the signing ceremony hosted by Gov. Ducey's office at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Ariz., which also included leaders from other Arizona gaming tribes.

"The amended gaming compact is a win-win for gaming tribes and the State of Arizona. The agreement modernizes the gaming compact to expand the scope of gaming to include opportunities for sports betting and fantasy sports wagering. Another key component is the protection of gaming exclusivity for gaming tribes for the next 25 to 27 years. I am thankful to the Arizona State Legislature, Governor Ducey, the 24th Navajo Nation Council and its Naabik'íyáti' Committee Gaming Sub-Committee members, Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise and all of the past leaders who laid the foundation years ago for this gaming compact including former Speaker LoRenzo Bates," said President Nez.

On April 10, the 24th Navajo Nation Council approved Resolution No. CAP-19-21, supporting the amended gaming compact with the State of Arizona. President Nez and Vice President Lizer later signed the resolution into law supporting the gaming compact amendments.

Speaker Seth Damon stated: "The Navajo Nation extends its appreciation to both our state and tribal leaders for supporting these important updates to our gaming compacts. With Governor Ducey's action today, Arizona has followed through on its commitment to bolster the economies of Tribal Nations in the state. This updated gaming compact also supports industry and job creation by providing certainty for greater investments in gaming properties and the communities they contribute towards. The Navajo Nation is ready to move forward with gaming in Arizona and today's signing of these legislation provides the important next step we have pushed for over the past six years."

Naabik'íyáti' Committee Gaming Sub-Committee Chair Eugenia Charles-Newton (Shiprock), who sponsored CAP-19-21, indicated the gaming compact negotiations were successful in creating a better agreement for Arizona gaming tribes.

"The future opportunities for all gaming tribes in Arizona are now secured with the signing of the gaming compact. We, as Navajo leaders, have strived to make this agreement better for the Navajo People. This means we have successfully advocated for better revenue shares, continued tribal exclusivity, expansion into online gaming and more. Now, we look to our gaming enterprise to push forward with these opportunities for the betterment of our people," said Charles-Newton.



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, joined by Vice President Myron Lizer, Speaker Seth Damon, and Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr., signs the Arizona-Tribal gaming compact amendments during a signing ceremony at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Ariz. on April 15, 2021.

Charles-Newton also recognized the Navajo Nation Department of Justice and the Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise's legal counsel Lewis Roca Rothgerber Christie for their contributions to the Gaming Sub-Committee's renegotiation process.

Vice President Lizer represented the Office of the President and Vice President during the compact negotiations and spoke in support of the gaming amendments during Thursday's signing ceremony.

"This is going to catapult gaming opportunities for patrons, sports fans, and tribes across the state while creating revenue that will benefit the education system through shared revenue and create many more jobs for years to come. The agreement was years in the making and it took a lot of collaboration and cooperation among many parties to reach this moment. I thank Naabik'íyáti' Committee Gaming Sub-Committee Chair Charles-Newton, Speaker Damon, Governor Ducey, and all of the Arizona gaming tribes that remained committed to getting this agreement through the State Legislature and signed today," said Vice President Lizer.

Negotiations for the 2021 Compact commenced in 2016. Over the past several years the tribes of Arizona came together and worked collectively to negotiate the terms of the 2021 Compact with the State of Arizona. This effort by the tribes of Arizona is historic and first of its kind. By working together, the tribes were able to negotiate a compact that benefits all tribes within the state, rather than elevating one tribe's interest above others.

The Navajo Nation's leadership was instrumental in leading these discussions among tribal leaders, attorneys, and with the State of Arizona. The Nation looks forward to continuing the relationships that have been established with the State of Arizona and the other Arizona tribal nations.

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