



## RDC and Speaker Damon request meeting state leadership to discuss Chaco Canyon National Heritage Monument Field Hearing

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** May 25, 2021

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — On Thursday, 24th Navajo Nation Council Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh) requested an in-person meeting with Utah Senator Mike Lee and Nevada Senator Catherine Cortez (D-NV) to discuss continued state partnerships surrounding the Chaco Canyon National Monument.

“Since time immemorial, our sacred ceremonial and clan origin historical connection to Chaco Canyon has, and continues to be, the center points of what Chaco Canyon is today,” said Speaker Damon. “Through our Navajo language, oral histories, as stated in much of the statements within the CCHAPA, speak to our history as mentioned are indeed, ‘invaluable and irreplaceable cultural resources.’”

The Chaco Canyon Heritage Area Protection Act of 2017 (CCHAPA) initially identified and established rules of conduct around the region for all tribal nations to share. In particular, the CCHAPA highlights the potential impacts Navajo citizens could face with the ongoing oil and gas occurring within the Eastern Agency of the Navajo Nation.

The Navajo Nation currently supports all Navajo allottees with direct stakeholderships within and around the Chaco Canyon National Heritage Monument and their rights to develop their land and any leasing they wish to undergo as landowners.

Earlier this year, Resolution No. NABIJA 05-20 had solidified the cultural, spiritual, and cosmological connection that the Navajo Nation and the people have to the greater Chaco Canyon region area.

Furthermore, NABIJA 05-20 also settled a 5-mile buffer zone within and around the greater Chaco Canyon National Heritage Monument area to protect natural resources and allow Navajo allottees to potentially further advance development.

In a May 21 letter to Congressional leadership, Speaker Damon added, “The 24th Navajo Nation Council’s Resources and Development Committee therefore respectfully and rightfully request that the Navajo Nation Legislation 0366-19 be adhered to as the official position and continued efforts to collaboratively manage Navajo Nation lands, and minerals, while also respecting the allottees rights to develop their land.”

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### **MEDIA CONTACTS**

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