



Council Delegate Herman M. Daniels and Paul Begay Join Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez in the Signing of Legislation 0104-21

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PHOTO: Delegate Begay and Daniels join Navajo leaders in support of Legislation 0104-21 signed by President Nez.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — On Tuesday, Council Delegate Herman M. Daniels (Ts'ah Bii' Kin, Navajo Mountain, Shonto, Oljato) and Council Delegate Paul Begay (Coppermine, K'ai'biit'ó, LeChee, Tonalea/Red Lake, Bodaway/Gap) of the 24th Navajo Nation Council joined Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Navajo Nation Vice President Myron Lizer in the signing of resolution CJN-36-21.

In front of a crowd of Navajo business owners and concerned Navajo citizens, Delegate Begay expresses, "With the signing of this legislation, our Navajo People and businesses within the Navajo Nation boundary can now pick themselves up, recover, and get back on the road."

Among those resolutions being repealed, resolution CMA-16-20, which enacted the closure of all Navajo Nation-owned and maintained roads to visitors and tourists, was rescinded to promote economic growth for businesses.

Prior to today's signing, Legislation 0104-21 was unanimously approved by the Navajo Nation Council with a vote of 23 in favor and 0 opposed, and was then delivered last week to President Nez, awaiting his approval or veto.

In early June, the Naabik'iyati' Committee approved Legislation No. 0076-21, which would have reopened 8 Navajo tribal parks at full capacity with COVID-19 safety protocols enforced.

President Nez responded then by vetoing Legislation 0076-21, citing that Tribal Parks be reopened at 50% capacity due to the unknown of visitors' health when they travel to the Navajo Nation.

Additionally, in his memo to Speaker Damon, President Nez stated that with the spread of COVID-19 variants, it is critical that leadership follow the advice of health experts in order to protect Navajo citizens.

In response, the Navajo Nation Council held a Navajo Nation Council special session to draft Legislation No. 0104-21 that rescinded language repealing COVID-19 related legislations implemented at the beginning of the pandemic.

"After today, this signage ceremony has solidified the reopening of the tribal parks by working with each division and programs to make sure there is a re-opening plan in place," said Delegate Daniels. "Thank you to the business owners for assisting with that plan and making sure you still wear your mask and that you are adhering to CDC guidelines."

Tuesday morning, Legislation 0104-21 supporters marched their way to the Navajo Nation Veterans Memorial Park, across from the Office of the President and Vice-President to share their continued stress on the closure of the Navajo Nation, and to urge President Nez to approve the legislation and reopen the Navajo Tribal Parks.

At approximately 9:00 A.M. (MDT), it was announced from the Office of the President and Vice President (OPVP), that President Nez would sign the legislation. Event planning then swiftly went into effect to organize a signing ceremony in front of the Veteran's Memorial Park where multiple supporters were situated. Among those in attendance were many supporters from various Navajo tour companies.

"We have a long way to go to help rebuild Navajo-owned businesses in the tourism industry and the Navajo Nation Council has been aware of how much these businesses have suffered during the pandemic and closure," said Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown (Dennehotso, Kayenta, Chííłchinbii'tó). "It is up to leadership to hear from businesses and community members to learn how much it would cost and what type of assistance would be needed to boost their revenue."

President Nez expressed his gratitude to Council Delegate Carl Slater (Round Rock, Rock Point, Tséché'izí, Lukachugai, Tsaile-Wheatfields) for sponsoring the legislation. Legislation 0104-21 will also authorize in-person instruction for Navajo schools with a required safety plan, and reopen the Navajo Nation to Tourists/Visitors at 50% occupancy.

"On behalf of the 24th Navajo Nation Council, I want to thank the collaborative work that the Office of the President and Vice President have done to progress our Nation forward in these uncertain times," said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh). "As we reopen, it is crucial that we remain vigilant by wearing masks, socially distancing ourselves, and washing our hands to protect our Diné People as businesses reopen."

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