



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

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Proposed Road Projects in the Western Navajo Agency toured by Resources & Development Committee

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 28, 2021



PHOTO: Resources and Development Committee members Rick Nez, Mark Freeland, and Herman M. Daniels, Jr. on tour for proposed Paiute Mesa roadway.

TONALEA, Ariz. — The Resources and Development Committee (RDC) of the 24th Navajo Nation Council hosted a leadership meeting with federal, county, and chapter officials from the Western Navajo Agency with a tour of proposed road projects for the communities of Oljato, Paiute Mesa, and Navajo Mountain. The preliminary estimated cost for this three-phase road project is over \$113 million.

In 2016, former Utah Governor Gary Herbert met with the 23rd Navajo Nation Council to begin the planning phase of securing allocations for this much-needed chapter project. At the time, the State of Utah agreed to meet the Navajo Nation halfway with matching funds.

“Over the last 30 years, our Chapters in the region have advocated connecting a road from Oljato to Navajo Mountain,” said Delegate Herman Daniels, Jr. (Ts’ah Bii’ Kin, Navajo Mountain, Shonto, Oljato). “Many of our families have to travel between two and three hours one-way to reach a community. We are going to partner with our federal and state officials to seek the money to complete this roadway in a timely manner.”

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The proposed Oljato to Navajo Mountain road would link local communities with medical and education services in the Utah area. The construction of this corridor will provide connectivity and open the region to tourism and economic development opportunities.

“Another leadership meeting with the State of Utah allows us to know rather Governor Cox supports paving this road,” said Delegate Mark Freeland (Becenti, Lake Valley, Náhodishgish, Standing Rock, Whiterock, Huerfano, Nageezi, Crownpoint). “The Council has to bring in federal partners like DOT Deputy Assistant Secretary Arlando Teller for a conversation on investing additional federal dollars into Navajo roads. Our communities need all the assistance we can get from our state and county governments.”

Key stakeholders for this proposed project include the Navajo Mountain Chapter, Ts’ah Bii’ Kin Chapter, Shonto Chapter, Oljato Chapter, Navajo Division of Transportation, Navajo Parks & Recreation Department, the State of Utah, San Juan County, and the Seven County Infrastructure Coalition.

“This is a large infrastructure project where we need to include federal officials from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to assist in the Rights-of-Way procedures and navigating the National Environmental Policy Act process,” said Chairman Rickie Nez (T’iistsoh Sikaad, Nenahnezad, Upper Fruitland, Tsé Daa K’aan, Newcomb, San Juan). “The Resources and Development Committee supports constructing this roadway for Navajo families to have easier access to grocery stores, shopping centers, and schools in the western agency.”

In attendance for the leadership meeting included RDC Chairman Rickie Nez, Delegate Mark Freeland, Delegate Herman Daniels, Jr., and several chapter, county, and state officials.

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