



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL  
Office of the Speaker

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## \$1.2 Trillion Infrastructure Bill fully funds Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement, \$11 Billion invested in Indian Country

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PHOTO: Speaker Seth Damon addressing MMIW walkers at the Navajo Nation Council Chamber earlier this year.

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — The 24th Navajo Nation Council applauds the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act passed by Congress on Friday, approving a key part of President Joe Biden’s economic agenda during this pandemic.

The infrastructure bill will deliver \$550 billion in new federal investments across the country in the span of five years for bridges, roads, broadband connections, water, and new energy systems.

“Indian Country will get over \$11 billion in new infrastructure projects to begin construction on broadband internet lines, roadways, bridges, and water pipelines,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh). “The bipartisan infrastructure bill sends a clear message to Sovereign Nations around the country that we are a top priority. \$214 million will be used to bring running water to 40 percent of Navajo families because the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement is fully funded. The Navajo Nation Council commends our Congressional representatives and President Biden for pushing this historic bill forward.”

President Joe Biden plans to sign the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act this week. The new law will be the largest investment in Tribal Nation infrastructure projects to include:

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- \$3.5 billion for the Indian Health Service (IHS) sanitation facilities construction
- \$3 billion for the U.S. Department of Transportation tribal transportation program
- \$2.5 billion to address Indian water rights settlements previously approved
- \$2 billion for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration for the tribal broadband connectivity program to expand broadband access

“For decades we have been advocating for the water rights of our Utah Navajo families and this infrastructure bill provides full funding to begin connecting our water lines,” said Delegate Charlene Tso (Mexican Water, Tólikan, Teec Nos Pos, Aneth, Red Mesa). “Many of our Navajo homes will now have access to water, our main life source. It matters a lot to us that grandma and grandpa drink safe water, and our families in Utah can turn on the faucet for clean water. The next step is for the Navajo Nation to work with President Biden and Congress to pass the Build Back Better Act.”

The Senate passed the bill in August with bipartisan support by a vote of 69-30. The House of Representatives passed the bill, with 215 Democrats and 13 Republicans voting in favor on Nov. 5.

“Several months ago, a group of five Republicans and five Democrats came together to see if we could find a way to find common ground on a true infrastructure bill,” Utah Senator Mitt Romney said. “Today’s vote is the culmination of those many months of work. I’m proud to have helped negotiate this bill which includes funding to provide water to the nearly half of the Navajo Nation in Utah who don’t have running water and expand broadband into rural Utah. This legislation represents a historic investment that delivers for Utah - without raising taxes and adding to the national debt.”

Council Delegate Herman Daniels, Jr. (Ts’ah Bii’ Kin, Navajo Mountain, Shonto, Oljato) representing portions of Navajo chapters in Utah added that the Navajo Nation needs a comprehensive plan to address all areas of need for the Navajo people; “This infrastructure bill is the largest investment in the Navajo Nation so far and these funds need to go back to our communities 100 years from now, we envision our great grandchildren inheriting a more prosperous Navajo Nation and our language and way of life is strong.”

The infrastructure bill is a historic investment that is fully paid for and will not increase taxes - a concern for many Congressional Republicans.

The White House added, “We took a monumental step forward as a nation. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act is a once-in-generation bipartisan infrastructure bill that will create millions of good-paying jobs that can’t be outsourced. In addition, the Build Back Better Act will be a once-in-a-generation investment in our people. The President looks forward to signing both of these bills into law. Generations from now, people will look back and know this is when America won the economic competition for the 21st Century.”

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