



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

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Road Infrastructure Projects Highlighted, Transportation Secretary welcomed to Arizona by Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr.

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PHOTO: Senator Mark Kelly, Secretary Pete Buttigieg, Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr., and Senator Kyrsten Sinema at Mesa Community College.

PHOENIX, Ariz. — Earlier today, Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr., of the 24th Navajo Nation Council joined Senator Mark Kelly (D-AZ) and Senator Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ) to officially welcome Department of Transportation (USDOT) Secretary Pete Buttigieg to Arizona.

Secretary Buttigieg is visiting western states to champion the recent \$1 trillion Infrastructure Bill signed into law by President Joe Biden earlier this week at the White House.

“It is an honor to represent the Navajo people to officially welcome Secretary Buttigieg to Phoenix, Arizona and the homeland of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community,” said Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Tachee/Blue Gap, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tselani/Cottonwood, Low Mountain). “We heard from the Secretary about investments that will be made towards transit and airport infrastructure as part of the bill. Over \$11 billion in new infrastructure projects will be funded around Indian Country to begin construction on broadband internet lines, roadways, bridges, and water pipelines. These funds will employ our Navajo people and create good paying jobs for tribes around the United States.”

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The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act is the largest amount of funding allocated to Tribal Nations for infrastructure projects in history.

Senator Kyrsten Sinema and Senator Mark Kelly played key roles in getting the infrastructure package passed through the Senate.

“Secretary Buttigieg and the U.S. Transportation Department are focused on innovating our roadways and for construction to begin across Indian Country,” said USDOT Deputy Assistant Secretary Arlando Teller. “We look forward to working with the Navajo Nation to ensure roads are upgraded and new infrastructure projects create good jobs. Our tribal partners are a top priority for the Biden Administration and the infrastructure bill is a reflection of this.”

Earlier in the day, Delegate Begay provided testimony to the Arizona State Transportation Board on much needed road improvements and a smart highway proposal for U.S. Highway 191.

“Over 14,000 or more miles of roads expand across the Navajo Nation including 6,000 miles of BIA roadways,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh). “Billions of dollars for road infrastructure projects and improvements was approved by the Biden Administration. This means immediate construction of roadways, bridges, broadband lines, and water pipelines will begin with a Navajo workforce. Delegate Begay continues to be a champion for many of these projects in Arizona and we commend him for his leadership.”

Following his visit with Secretary Buttigieg, Delegate Begay hosted a roundtable discussion on the Navajo Nation Broadband Initiative to bring high speed internet to rural areas of the Navajo Nation.

On Monday, Arizona Governor Doug Ducey announced a \$100 million investment to expand high-speed broadband to unserved and underserved areas of the state - paving the way for critical services like e-commerce, telehealth, and online education.

“The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is historic for many reasons, including its investments that will deliver better, safer transportation infrastructure in Indian Country,” said Secretary Pete Buttigieg. “My Department looks forward to working closely with our Tribal partners on a range of infrastructure projects that create good jobs, protect our environment, and build a foundation for economic opportunity that will last for generations.”

Highlights of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law includes large investments for tribal communities that include:

- Establishment of the Office of Tribal Government Affairs
- \$3 billion for the Tribal Transportation Program
- \$1 billion in dedicated bridge investments for tribal lands
- \$229 million for tribal transit projects with the Federal Transit Administration
- Eligibility for USDOT’s new \$6 billion Safe Streets and Roads for All competitive grant program
- Elevation of Tribal Government Affairs leadership to the rank of Assistant Secretary within the Department of Transportation

In the coming weeks, the USDOT will announce additional resources, including financial, technical, and legal assistance, designed to create jobs and promote safety and equity through infrastructure investment directly to Tribal Nations.

An official invitation letter from the 24th Navajo Nation Council was provided to Secretary Buttigieg to visit the Navajo Nation in the coming months.

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