



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

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Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project inspected by Navajo Nation Council

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PHOTO: Members of the RDC on tour of the San Juan Lateral of the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project.

NEWCOMB, N.M. — U.S. Bureau of Reclamation representatives joined the Resources and Development Committee (RDC) of the 24th Navajo Nation Council for a tour of the San Juan Lateral of the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project (NGWSP) from Newcomb to Yatahey, N.M.

The tour included inspection of a water treatment and pumping plant that will incorporate seven ultrafiltration units, seven ultraviolet (UV) disinfection units, two sediment drying beds, and two wastewater ponds.

“The Eastern Agency of the Navajo Nation has a depleting groundwater supply that cannot meet future water needs of more than 43 Navajo chapters,” said RDC Chairman Rickie Nez (T’iistsoh Sikaad, Nenahnezad, Upper Fruitland, Tsé Daa K’aan, Newcomb, San Juan). “It is estimated that around 40 percent of Navajo households rely on hauling water to meet their daily needs. We are working to correct this problem so that future generations have access to clean water.”

The Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project is a major infrastructure initiative that, when constructed, will provide a reliable water supply from the San Juan River to the eastern section of the Navajo Nation.

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Other service areas for the project include the southwestern portion of the Jicarilla Apache Nation and the city of Gallup, N.M.

“There is an anticipated funding shortfall of \$350+ million to complete this vast infrastructure project,” said Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Tachee/Blue Gap, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tselani/Cottonwood, Low Mountain). “We will need to return to Congress for this additional allocation. It is Navajo aquifers that will provide long-term sustainable water for 250,000+ people by 2040. That is why it is important that we complete this pipeline for our Navajo communities first.”

In 2012, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation started construction of approximately 280 miles of pipeline, several pumping plants, and two water treatment plants - with a completion date set for 2024. The total investment from all stakeholders towards the project is estimated to be around \$1 billion.

“Authorization was finally granted for the Navajo-Gallup water pipeline after the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act was signed into law by President Barack Obama, said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh). “This Act settled 25 years of dispute concerning the amount of clean water to be distributed to our Navajo families and residents of New Mexico. The Council is working diligently to finish this infrastructure project so our Navajo people can finally drink clean running water in their homes.”

Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Cove, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Red Valley, Tsé’áhnáoozt’íí, Sheepsprings, Beclabito, Gad’ii’áhí/Tó Ko’i) is the sponsor of Legislation No. 0209-21 approving \$68 million from Síhasin Funds to complete twelve water connection projects for the eastern and northern agencies of the Navajo Nation.

“We need to remember that this is Navajo water that is flowing to homes across New Mexico,” said Delegate Wilson Stewart Jr. (Fort Defiance, Crystal, Red Lake, Sawmill). “Our elders need safe potable water first as we continue to work with NTUA to connect more homes across the Navajo Nation. Livestock owners will benefit greatly as well during another year of record drought conditions.”

Legislation No. 0209-21 passed the Naabik’íyáti’ Committee and will be considered by the Council in a few weeks.

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