



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

MEDIA CONTACTS

Alray Nelson, Communications Director
Kyrin Hardy, Public Information Officer
E-mail: nnlb.communications@gmail.com
Phone: (928) 565-0440

Navajo Nation Council meets with Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham to discuss Capital Outlay Projects & Infrastructure Priorities

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PHOTO: Madam Chair Eugenia Charles-Newton, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, Council Delegate Pernell Halona, and Chairman Rickie Nez meet at the Roundhouse in Santa Fe to discuss top priorities for the Navajo people of New Mexico.

SANTA FE, N.M. — Last week, the 24th Navajo Nation Council met with Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham at the Roundhouse in Santa Fe to discuss the top priorities of the Navajo people for New Mexico. Resources and Development (RDC) Chairman Rickie Nez, Law and Order (LOC) Chairwoman Eugenia Charles-Newton, and Council Delegate Pernell Halona were in attendance.

Topics of discussion included support for capital outlay projects invested to Navajo chapters, development of clean hydrogen, and the cross commissioning of police officers on state and tribal land.

“The last few weeks, the Navajo Nation Council successfully worked with New Mexico lawmakers for the allocation of \$14.8 million in new capital outlay funds for our Navajo chapters. We appreciate Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham for meeting with us to hear our concerns and have requested she immediately sign Senate Bill 212 into law. The Navajo Nation looks forward to working with the governor as we begin construction on electric power lines, bathroom additions, water system improvements, roadways, and additional funds for senior centers and veteran services. Our partnership with New Mexico will create hundreds of new jobs while rebuilding and enhancing our infrastructure during this pandemic,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatch).

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State Senator Nancy Rodriguez (D-NM) is the sponsor of Senate Bill No. 212 that was passed earlier this week by the New Mexico Senate and House of Representatives allocating around \$14.8 million for Capital Outlay Funds for the Navajo Nation.

The legislation will now be considered by the Office of the Governor to appropriate millions for bathroom additions, construction of electric power lines, broadband internet lines, and water system improvements.

“COVID-19 has caused massive job loss for the Navajo people that has led families to relocate off the Navajo Nation. We have to do what we can to ensure our economic future is secure after this pandemic. The victims and survivors of the uranium legacy were left behind by the federal government and the clean-up of the over 500 abandoned uranium mines on our land needs to happen immediately. Governor Lujan Grisham is supportive, especially to designate New Mexico as a clean hydrogen hub for the United States. The Navajo Nation wants the southwest region to be a clean energy hub as we transition to a carbon-free future. The challenges ahead may be daunting but working in collaboration with New Mexico, we can create hundreds of new jobs and bring clean drinking water and electricity to our elders. It is my belief the Navajo people are resilient and will overcome this time in history,” said Chairman Rickie Nez (T’iistsoh Sikaad, Nenahnezad, Upper Fruitland, Tsé Daa K’aan, Newcomb, San Juan).

The 27,000 square miles of the Navajo Nation sits at the intersection of hydrogen development for New Mexico and Arizona, where both states share an interest in making the Four Corners region a clean energy hub.

If signed into law, Senate Bill No. 212 will provide \$700,000 to the Shiprock Chapter for parking lot repairs at the senior center, construction funds for the multipurpose veterans center, and an incident command center for law enforcement.

“We appreciate how Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham has been proactive in making decisions during this pandemic to save thousands of lives. Because of her advocacy, chapter capital outlay projects for infrastructure development will bring water, electricity, broadband and much more to the Navajo Nation. In my community of Shiprock we are grateful for the governor’s support to provide funds for new solar-powered street lights on our highway. In addition, her willingness to work with the Law and Order Committee on the cross-commissioning of police officers was a welcome discussion. It was great to hear how we can work across jurisdictional lines to protect our elders, women, children, and those most vulnerable,” said Madam Chair Eugenia Charles-Newton (Shiprock).

In January, the Navajo Nation Council passed Resolution No. CJA-08-22 overriding the presidential veto of CO-56-21 that reaffirmed the Navajo Nation’s request to the Governor of New Mexico to activate the Naat’aanii Development Corporation and Molina Healthcare, Inc. to increase medical resources available to the Navajo people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It is estimated that 30 percent of the Navajo people lack access to running water and must haul water to meet their needs. This has become more of a public health emergency with the spread of COVID-19 to ensure our Navajo families have clean drinking water. We appreciate Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham for supporting our capital outlay requests that will build much needed bathroom additions for our elders and veterans. President Jonathan Nez needs to work

with the Navajo Nation Council to ensure we activate the Naat'aanii Development Corporation to establish an accountable, efficient and innovative health care management system for our people during this pandemic. The governor is committed to working with us on this initiative," said Council Delegate Pernell Halona (Coyote Canyon, Mexican Springs, Naschitti, Tohatchi, Bahastl'a'a').

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham shared her appreciation to Navajo leaders for taking proactive measures to protect the health and wellbeing of families during the pandemic. She added, "The Navajo Nation is resilient and continues to be a leader for Indian Country as American Rescue Plan Act funds are allocated to rebuild communities across New Mexico. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law invests over \$2 billion in new funding sources for New Mexico that can help upgrade roads, bridges, construct new water lines, and bring electricity to our rural areas. As governor, my commitment to Navajo chapters is clear - there will be no cuts to capital outlay project funding. New Mexico will continue to work with the Navajo Nation to ensure all our families are protected."

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