



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

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The Navajo Nation applauds executive order by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham to further the New Mexico hydrogen economy

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PHOTO: Members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council join New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham for a roundtable discussion on important priorities for the Navajo Nation.

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Resources and Development Committee (RDC) Chairman Rickie Nez of the 24th Navajo Nation Council joined Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham and state leaders for a roundtable meeting on expanding the New Mexico hydrogen economy. Chairman Nez was joined by Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and leaders from the Jicarilla Apache Nation.

Gov. Lujan Grisham signed Executive Order 2022-013, establishing the Clean Hydrogen Development Initiative to cultivate an economy for hydrogen development in the state.

Last November, President Joe Biden signed the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, allocating \$8 billion to establish four national clean hydrogen hubs in the United States by 2026. In February, a memorandum of understanding was signed between New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming to compete jointly for a portion of this funding.

“It is important we plan for a new energy future that creates hundreds of new jobs and designates the southwest as a hub for hydrogen. Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham agrees that the Navajo Nation and New Mexico should be partners for the emerging hydrogen economy for the Four Corners region. The Navajo Nation Council is committed to a more carbon-free future that uplifts businesses, tribal enterprises, and the Navajo economy,” said Speaker Seth Damon

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(Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh). “Right now, our focus is to help our communities through this pandemic and those economically impacted by the closure of power plants and coal mines. We are prepared to invest over \$1 billion into infrastructure projects that will construct new Navajo water pipelines, roads, electric lines, and expand broadband for our families this year.”

The executive order directs the Economic Development Department, Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, Taxation and Revenue Division, and the Indian Affairs Department to collaborate on pursuing funding and economic opportunities related to a robust and environmentally responsible economy for hydrogen.

“The 27,000 square miles of the Navajo Nation sits at the intersection of hydrogen development for the Four Corners region, where all states share an interest in making the southwest a clean energy hub. The Navajo people support a future for solar, wind, helium, and hydrogen that will create thousands of jobs and bring new revenue into the Navajo economy,” said Chairman Rickie Nez (T’iistsoh Sikaad, Nenahnezad, Upper Fruitland, Tsé Daa K’aan, Newcomb, San Juan).

Hydrogen is just one piece of the New Mexico energy portfolio. A total of 1,395 megawatts of renewable power generation came online between March 2019 to the end of 2021. Earlier this year, Gov. Lujan Grisham celebrated the completion of the largest wind initiative in the United States called the Western Spirit Wind Project.

“New Mexico is a state that believes in bold, innovative solutions that address our climate challenges while creating green jobs and diversifying our economy,” said Gov. Lujan Grisham. “We are truly in a position to have it all – and this administration is leading the charge toward making New Mexico a national clean and no-carbon hydrogen hub.”

In February, Chairman Rickie Nez and the Resources and Development Committee hosted meetings in Washington D.C. engaging federal agencies, which included a commitment by the U.S. Department of Energy to engage in proper tribal consultation with the Navajo Nation on future hydrogen hubs.

Indian Affairs Secretary Lynn Trujillo added, “Building a clean hydrogen economy in New Mexico will help tribal communities develop a new workforce to build out hydrogen-related infrastructure and attract new economic development.

The Governor’s Office shared that a robust portfolio of clean energy solutions is being developed, including solar, wind, geothermal, energy storage, and zero-carbon hydrogen for New Mexico.

“Leveraging the knowledge and research from the national labs in our own backyard and partnering with our mountain west states is the right path to achieve our climate goals in New Mexico and the U.S. while growing our economy. The signing of this executive order further clarifies how we will build a clean hydrogen future in New Mexico,” said Environment Secretary James Kenney.

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