



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Navajo Nation Council members meet with Marilynn Malerba, the first Native American U.S. Treasurer

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On Wednesday, Navajo Nation Council Speaker Crystalyne Curley and Budget and Finance Committee Chair Shaandiin Parrish and Vice Chair Carl Slater had the honor of meeting with Marilynn Malerba, who was appointed by U.S. President Joe Biden last year to serve as the very first Native American Treasurer of the United States.

Members of the Coalition of Large Tribes (COLT) were also present for the meeting to share concerns and input regarding federal regulatory requirements that many tribes are challenged by. COLT is comprised of members from large Indian tribes throughout Indian Country, the coalition serves as an advocacy group for issues facing American Indian tribes with land bases exceeding 100,000 acres.

Prior to her appointment, Malerba became the 18th Chief of the Mohegan Tribe in 2010 and is the first female Chief in the tribe's modern history. She previously served as Chairwoman of the Tribal Council and as Executive Director of Health and Human Services for her tribe.

"On behalf of the 25th Navajo Nation Council, it was an honor to congratulate Treasurer Malerba on her historic appointment and outline some of the priorities and concerns that center on federal funding. To be the first Native American to have her name printed on U.S. currency is very meaningful for all tribal nations. I also commend my Council colleagues and COLT for conveying their concerns but also for putting forth recommendations to resolve barriers for tribes," said Speaker Curley.

Treasurer Malerba oversees the Office of Tribal and Native Affairs under the U.S. Treasury, which houses staff who are dedicated to communication with tribal nations and the hub for tribal policy. In addition to



leading the Office of Tribal and Native Affairs, the Treasurer directly oversees the U.S. Mint, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Fort Knox, and is a key liaison with the Federal Reserve. Treasurer Malerba will also serve as a senior advisor to the Secretary of the Treasury in the areas of community development and public engagement.

During their discussion, Chair Parrish and Vice Chair Slater and leaders of COLT tribes spoke about the Navajo Nation's progress in expending federal funds through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act, the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, and the need for federal regulatory changes to allow tribal nations to expend federal funds quicker. Federal regulations and duplicate requirements are creating barriers for many tribes across the country.

"I am grateful we had a one-on-one conversation with the Treasurer of the United States. We took this opportunity to impress challenges the Navajo Nation is facing when attempting to expend the federal dollars which include the length of time to process rights of way, NEPA assessment, and achieve archeological clearances. Our ARPA dollars are a once and a lifetime federal allocation that our Nation needs to improve our infrastructure and it's the red tape that slows our progress. The Budget and Finance Committee of the 25th Navajo Nation Council is closely monitoring unexpended funds and asking what the hold ups are. In this case, we asked the Treasurer of the United States to work with the U.S. OMB, BIA, and other agencies to help us reduce the red tape," stated Chair Parrish.

The leaders of the tribes also requested the Treasurer's support to preserve Emergency Rental Assistance Program funding to assist eligible households with financial assistance, provide housing stability services, and as applicable, to cover the costs for other affordable rental housing and eviction prevention activities.

"With our COLT partners, we shared our Diné people's need for reauthorization of the emergency rental assistance program number one (ERA1). Unlike states, tribes did not benefit from the second round of rental assistance funding, though our need is immense and we were implementing novel programs with tight timelines. We also shared that any clawback of ARPA funding, as proposed in the Republican debt limit fiscal plan, is unacceptable to the Navajo Nation. I'm confident Chief Malerba is an ally to the Navajo Nation and tribal interests concerning ARPA clawback and the issues before the treasury," said Vice Chair Slater.

Speaker Curley added that the Navajo Nation Council and COLT leadership remain committed to working with the Treasurer's Office, the White House, and congress to expedite the use of federal funds and develop solutions that support the efforts of all tribes.

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