



25th Navajo Nation Council

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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25th Navajo Nation Council members speak in support of road funding, traditional healing services, and voting rights measures with Utah State lawmakers



PHOTO: (L to R) Delegate Cheryl Yazzie, Delegate Shawna Ann Claw, Utah State Representative Doug Owens, Speaker Crystalayne Curley, Delegate Curtis Yanito, and Utah State Representative Tyler Clancy.

SALT LAKE CITY, UT - Members of the 25th Navajo Nation Council delivered legislative priorities to Utah Lt. Governor Deidre Henderson and state legislators this week, during discussions held in Salt Lake City, UT, prior to the official start of the Utah State Legislature's 2024 General Session, which is scheduled to begin on Monday.

Speaker Crystalayne Curley was joined by Council Delegates Shaandiin Parrish, Shawna Ann Claw, Curtis Yanito, and Cheryl Yazzie on Thursday, as they discussed several key legislative bills with Utah State Reps. Tyler Clancy (R-Dist. 60), Tim Jimenez (R-Dist. 28), and Doug Owens (D-Dist. 33).

The Council continues to advocate for \$2.9 million from the state to partially fund an Environmental Impact Study to advance the process of constructing a roadway between the communities of Navajo Mountain and Oljato. The total cost of the study is \$4 million. The Navajo Nation has committed \$1 million and \$100,000 was secured from the Navajo Revitalization Fund.

Delegates Parrish and Yanito stated that the roadway would help many Navajo residents who currently travel long distances through rough terrain to and from their homes, improve emergency response times for first responders, and increase economic opportunities for businesses, residents, and tourism.

Council members also urged state lawmakers to support a bill that would allow Indian Health Service (IHS) and tribal health facilities to receive reimbursement for qualified traditional medicine services provided for Medicaid beneficiaries, who reside in the state of Utah.

Delegate Yazzie explained that traditional healing methods provided by Navajo medicine persons can be more effective at a lower cost than medication prescribed by doctors at hospitals, and may save funds for the state. Delegates also noted that a similar measure was successfully implemented in the state of Arizona in 2016.

Speaker Curley also addressed voting rights and asserted that state lawmakers should support measures that increase voter participation, especially for elders who may not be fluent in the English language and for those who reside in rural tribal communities.

“The Navajo Nation will strongly oppose any bills or measure that attempt to restrict the voting rights of Navajo people. Every eligible citizen of the Navajo Nation residing in the state of Utah should have full access to voter registration and voting in every election,” said Speaker Curley.

On Jan. 5, the 25th Navajo Nation Council’s Naabik’iyati Committee adopted the Navajo Nation’s legislative priorities for the state of Utah, available online at <http://dibb.nnols.org/publicreporting.aspx> (<http://dibb.nnols.org/publicreporting.aspx>)

Speaker Curley and the Council members will continue meeting with Utah lawmakers throughout the Utah State Legislature’s 2024 General Session, which is scheduled to conclude on March 1.

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