

# NAST'ÁJÍ NAHAT'Á HANE'

## LEGISLATIVE BRANCH NEWS



**2024 SPRING SESSION** | **25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL**

THE OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER



**P.O. BOX 3390  
WINDOW ROCK, AZ 86515  
(928) 871-7160**

Manuel Rico  
*Chief of Staff*  
[mrigo@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:mrigo@navajo-nsn.gov)

Jared Touchin  
*Deputy Chief of Staff*  
[jared.touchin@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:jared.touchin@navajo-nsn.gov)

Mary Nez  
*Executive Assistant*  
[mary.nez@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:mary.nez@navajo-nsn.gov)

Sonlatsa Jim  
*Legislative Staff Assistant*  
[sonlatsa.jim@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:sonlatsa.jim@navajo-nsn.gov)

Clarissa Begay  
*Legislative Staff Assistant*  
[crbegay@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:crbegay@navajo-nsn.gov)

Marcarlo Roanhorse  
*Legislative Staff Assistant*  
[marcarloroanhorse@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:marcarloroanhorse@navajo-nsn.gov)

Shayla A. Draper  
*Legislative Staff Assistant*  
[shayladraper@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:shayladraper@navajo-nsn.gov)

Mihio Manus  
*Communication Director*  
[mihio.manus@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:mihio.manus@navajo-nsn.gov)

Jason John  
*Sr. Public Information Officer*  
[jasonajohn@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:jasonajohn@navajo-nsn.gov)

Tatyana Billy  
*Sr. Public Information Officer*  
[tatyana.billy@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:tatyana.billy@navajo-nsn.gov)

Jacquelyn Morgan  
*Senior Office Specialist*  
[jacquelynmorgan@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:jacquelynmorgan@navajo-nsn.gov)

Emerson Notah  
*Computer Operations Manager*  
[emersonnotah@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:emersonnotah@navajo-nsn.gov)

Clarinda Begay  
*Legislative Financial Advisor*  
[clarindabegay@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:clarindabegay@navajo-nsn.gov)

Gayle Neboyia  
*Legislative AMS*  
[gayle.neboyia@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:gayle.neboyia@navajo-nsn.gov)

Davina Begaye  
*Legislative AMS*  
[dbbegaye@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:dbbegaye@navajo-nsn.gov)

JoAnne George  
*Legislative AMS*  
[joanne.george@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:joanne.george@navajo-nsn.gov)

Rychelle Locaspino  
*Legislative Assistant*  
[rtllocaspino@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:rtllocaspino@navajo-nsn.gov)

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## SPEAKER CURLEY ADDRESSES WATER RIGHTS AND ARPA IN SPRING SESSION REPORT

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** - On Monday, April 15, the 25th Navajo Nation Council convened for the opening day of the 2024 Spring Session held at the Navajo Nation Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz.

Before the opening session, 25th Navajo Nation Council Speaker Crystalyne Curley, Council Delegates Amber Kanazbah Crotty, Cherilyn Yazzie, and Dr. Andy Nez led a Sexual Assault Awareness Month Walk from the Navajo Nation Museum to the Navajo Nation Council Chamber.

The annual event brought together many volunteers, advocates, victims and survivors to raise awareness on behalf of the safety and dignity of all individuals, including the Navajo Nation's most vulnerable members. The theme color for the opening day was turquoise to acknowledge Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

Students from Sanders Valley High School provided the Color Guard service while Ganado High School Students recited the Pledge of Allegiance and performed the National Anthem in the Diné language. Ganado Unified School District Superintendent Dr. Leandra Thomas provided the invocation and blessed the Chamber for the day's session.

Council Delegate Steven Arviso recognized students from Chuska Community School for engaging with tribal leaders and the Navajo Nation government. Students from The Little Red School House in New York City, N.Y., were also recognized for attending the opening session.

Before the Council adopted the agenda, Council Delegate Lester C. Yazzie took his Oath of Office as the Council Delegate representing District 6 (Baahaali, Chilchiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tsayatoh).

"I'd like to thank my constituents in District 6 for putting their confidence in me to represent them on the 25th Navajo Nation Council. Thank you to my wife, my son, and my family for supporting me in this effort," Delegate Yazzie said. "I look forward to representing my Chapters and the whole Navajo Nation in moving legislations forward that will benefit the entire Nation."

During the opening day, Navajo Nation President Dr. Buu Nygren delivered the State of the Navajo Nation address focusing on economic development, housing, veteran's issues, uranium remediation and transport issues, and projects funded by the American Rescue Plan Act Fiscal Recovery Funds.

"I want to build as many quality homes as possible. My focus remains to improve our Nation," President Nygren said.

The Council received reports from Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne on the Judicial Branch and a Financial Report from the Controller Sean McCabe from the Office of the Controller.

Speaker Crystalyne Curley delivered the Speaker's Report highlighting the Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Right Settlement Agreement, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, uranium and radiation issues, federal budget advocacy, primary and general elections, and protection of sacred sites.

Regarding the water rights settlement, Speaker Curley said the Council is fighting for a settlement that will justify federal funding to provide potable water to unserved Navajo communities.

"Despite being the largest tribe in the United States, the Navajo Nation has historically been marginalized in discussions surrounding water rights, leading to disparities in access and infrastructure," Speaker Curley said. "Now is the time for decisive action and meaningful dialogue to ensure that the Navajo people have access to the resources we need to thrive."

As the Nation nears the Federal Treasury deadline for fundamental obligation of ARPA funded projects on December 31, 2024, the 25th Navajo Nation Council has been working on a proposed legislation that will secure unexpended chapter ARPA projects from being reverted back by U.S Department of Treasury deadlines.

According to Speaker Curley, the Council is working to address the urgency to expend ARPA funds, especially for infrastructure projects that will deliver water, housing, and other needs for communities and residents.



Above: Speaker Crystalyne Curley said the Council is addressing the urgency to expend ARPA funds.



The Sanders Valley High School performed color guard duty during the opening day of the 2024 Spring Session.

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**SPEAKER'S REPORT CONTINUED**

“As we move forward, we will do our best to inform our Navajo people and ensure that the funds are expended for the benefit of our people and communities,” she said.



On the first day of the 2024 Spring Session, Ganado High School Students recited the Pledge of Allegiance and sang the National Anthem in Diné Bizaad.



Superintendent of Ganado School District and former Miss Navajo Nation, Dr. Leandra Thomas gave the invocation for the first day of the 2024 Spring Session.

The Speaker's Report also addressed advocacy against uranium ore transport on Navajo lands, from the Pinyon Plain Mine located south of the Grand Canyon, protecting Dook'o'oshííd, also known as the San Francisco Peaks, from ecological and cultural impacts of snowmaking with reclaimed water, and fraudulent sober living homes that have victimized and displaced many tribal members who seek addiction counseling.

“On behalf of the 25th Navajo Nation Council, we thank our Diné people for joining us during the 2024 Spring Council Session,” Speaker Curley said. “As we

move into the next quarter, the 25th Navajo Nation Council will continue to serve as the governing body of the Navajo Nation and work to improve the quality of life for our Navajo people. We appreciate your continued support and prayers as we move forward together.”

The Speaker's Report and all written reports for the 2024 Spring Council Session are available online on the Navajo Nation Council's website by clicking on the following link: <https://www.navajonationcouncil.org/committees>.



In memory and recognition, Delegate Vince James presented the Navajo Nation Flag to the wife and family of the late Paul Dokey, the original writer of the song, "Treaty of 1868".



Lester C. Yazzie poses with family members outside the council chambers moments after taking the Oath of Office at the start of the 2024 Navajo Nation Council Spring Session.

# THE 25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL HOSTS WALK TO BRING AWARENESS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** - The 25th Navajo Nation Council was joined Navajo Nation Vice President Richelle Montoya and members from the Missing Murdered Diné Relatives Task Force, as they marched to strengthen recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month on the opening day of the 2024 Spring Council Session.

The walk started at the Navajo Nation Museum and ended at the Navajo Nation Council Chamber. Speaker Crystalyne Curley (Tachee/Blue Gap, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tselani/Cottonwood, Low Mountain) and Council Delegate Amber

Kanazbah Crotty (Cove, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Red Valley Tse'alnaotz'i'i', Sheepsprings, Beclabito, Gadiiahi/To'Koi) led the walk and highlighted the Council's solidarity with victims and survivors of sexual assault.

The annual event brings together volunteers, advocates, and Navajo Nation employees to raise awareness and advocate for the safety and dignity of all individuals, especially the Navajo Nation's most vulnerable members.

Speaker Crystalyne Curley remarked, "Today we walked to highlight Sexual

Assault Awareness Month at the start of the 25th Navajo Nation Council Spring Session. We aim to create a safe space for victims and survivors to speak, heal, and support each other. It's crucial for our Nation to unite and be the voice for our children, grandchildren, and elders."

Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty said that the annual walk emphasizes the importance of prevention, especially for our children.

"We are working diligently with schools to teach them that their bodies

are sacred. Despite challenges in our criminal justice system, our task force strives to restore the body, mind, and soul of our people," Council Delegate Crotty said.

The Sexual Assault Awareness Walk is part of the 25th Navajo Nation Council's ongoing efforts to address and prevent violence against its members. The Council, along with the Office of the Speaker remains committed to safeguarding all Diné people, reinforcing the message of resilience and communal support.



Delegate Dr. Andy Nez, Delegate Cherilyn Yazzie, Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty, Speaker Crystalyne Curley, and Vice President Richelle Montoya with her daughter holding the Sexual Assault Awareness Month Banner.



Navajo Nation Missing Murder Diné Relatives Task Force and Advocates walking towards the Navajo Nation Council Chambers



Navajo Nation Missing Murder Diné Relatives Task Force, Ganado High School Students, members from the Family Advocacy Center, and the 25th Navajo Nation Council.



Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty and the MMIW flag group approach the Navajo Nation Council Chambers to kick start the 2024 Spring Session.

## 25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL APPROVES EXTENSION FOR CROP INSURANCE



RDC Chair Brenda Jesus sponsored Legislation 0246-23 to extend the annual premium reserve for crop insurance.

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** - During the second day of Spring Session on Tuesday, the 25th Navajo Nation Council voted to extend the Síhasin Fund reserve of over \$10.9 million for the annual premium for the crop insurance program administered through the Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture.

“Crop insurance is a critical resource for our farmers in years of drought. It provides funding back to our producers and farmers,” said legislation sponsor and Resources and Development Committee Chair Brenda Jesus (Oaksprings, St. Michaels).

Crop insurance is designed to provide coverage on pasture, rangeland, and forage acres, and is based on a rainfall index that determines precipitation within an area.

The program was initially implemented by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Pasture, Rangeland, and Forage Pilot Insurance Program. The Navajo Nation has participated in this program since 2016.

The legislation extends the Síhasin Fund guarantee to reserve the annual premium for the crop insurance program to 2028. The legislation originally sought \$19,835,612 from the Síhasin Fund for the annual premium.

According to the Department of Agriculture, the Navajo Nation has received over \$110 million through the program since 2016. Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty questioned why the legislation requests the Navajo Nation to subsidize the annual premium when the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) has funds to available.

“I need to see a breakdown of how our ranchers and farmers are benefitting from the AIF and why you’re asking the government to subsidize these costs. How much funding does the Department of Agriculture have and what is

eligible for use for their insurance premium?” Council Delegate Crotty asked.

RDC Chair Jesus said that approximately \$51.3 million of the AIF is currently committed to 54 chapter agriculture projects. Chair Jesus also indicated that since 2016, the Navajo Nation has received an average of \$12.5 million annually equaling about a 65 percent of return.

Controller Sean McCabe noted that investing in the AIF is a solid decision for the Nation.

“It turns a profit. Interest and revenues do exceed expenditures,” McCabe said.

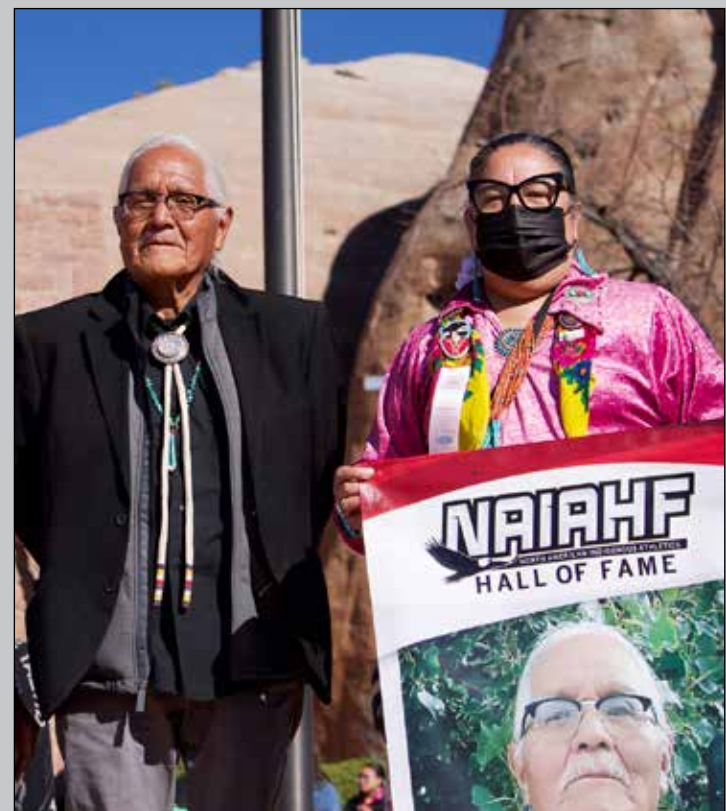
Budget and Finance Chair Shaandiin Parrish (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) proposed an amendment to reserve approximately \$10.9 million from the Síhasin Fund for the annual premium. \$9 million will be subsidized from AIF Premium set aside for the remainder of the total.

Many Council Delegates agreed that one goal of the AIF is to use the indemnity payments to cover the annual premium, making the AIF self-sufficient.

“Out of a \$19 million investment, we’ve now seen five times the return that has subsidized income to our farmers. These funds are critical when the Nation experiences decreases in precipitation that impacts our farmers and ranchers. Thank you for assisting our Navajo farmers and ranchers,” Chair Jesus said.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council voted 20 in favor and two opposed for Legislation No. 0246-23, which required two-thirds approval, or 16 supporting votes. Once the resolution is certified by the Legislative Branch and delivered to the Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President, the President will have ten calendar days to consider the resolution.

## 25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL RECOGNITIONS



Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty recognized Larry Foster for being inducted into the North American Indigenous Athletics Hall of Fame.



Council Delegate Carl R. Slater honored and recognized Taya Hosteen, a Tsaile Public School 8th Grader who was runner-up in the regional spelling bee.

## 25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL APPROVES SÍHASIN FUND ALLOCATION FOR NEW CAMERON CHAPTER HOUSE

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — In a move to strengthen the heart of community activity in Cameron, Ariz., the 25th Navajo Nation Council under the sponsorship of Council Delegate Casey Allen Johnson (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Birdsprings, Leupp, Tolani Lake), approved Legislation No. 0039-24 on Tuesday, allocating \$4.8 million from the Navajo Nation’s Síhasin Fund for the construction of a new Cameron Chapter House.

Delegate Johnson stated that the new facility will serve as a hub for gatherings, cultural events, and administrative operations,

strengthening community spirit and governance.

“Cameron is proactive in protecting their home, community, and especially the youth. Utilizing the chapter house for celebrations, ceremonies, and local government meetings is pivotal for the cultural and civic vitality of our people,” said Delegate Johnson.

“This community is taking charge to make effective changes within their community. Tourism is a big initiative in Cameron, with thousands passing through to the Grand Canyon. This new chapter house represents a wonderful opportunity for economic and social

development, marking Cameron as a prime tourism destination,” stated Delegate Germaine Simonson (Hard Rock, Forest Lake, Pinon, Black Mesa, Whippoorwill).

The Council also approved an amendment put forth by Council Delegate Danny Simpson (Becenti, Lake Valley, Nahodishgish, Standing Rock, Whiterock, Huerfano, Nageezi, Crownpoint) to include a Cameron Chapter resolution acknowledging the chapter’s contribution of \$80,000 toward the project.

Delegate Johnson added that the new facility is not merely a building, it is

a beacon of hope and progress, a safe place for healing and unity.

Speaker Crystalyne Curley also thanked her Council colleagues and recognized the legislation as a significant investment that underscores the Council’s commitment to all communities.

The Council approved the legislation during the second day of the Spring Council Session by a vote of 20-0. Once the resolution is certified and delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President, the Navajo Nation President will have ten calendar days to consider the funding request.



Above: Council Delegate Casey Allen Johnson advocated for \$4.8 million for the construction of a new Cameron Chapter House. Below: Delegate Johnson stands with his approved legislation in front of the Chamber.



## NAVAJO WOMEN LEADERS RECOGNITION DAY



Former Council Delegate Carol W. Bitsoi was honored as a Diné Woman Leader during the 2024 Spring Council Session.

## 25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL CONFIRMS MICHAEL ANDERSON AS PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — On the second day of the Spring Session, the 25th Navajo Nation Council confirmed the appointment of Michael Anderson to serve as the Division Director for the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety (NNDPS).

Anderson, who has dedicated his career to public safety was confirmed following a rigorous review of his background in law enforcement, judicial roles, and community leadership. Before the vote, Council Delegates questioned Anderson about his vision and goals related to making communities safer, increasing accountability, allocating resources, and overall efficacy within the Division of Public Safety.

Council Delegate Brenda Jesus (Oaksprings, St. Michaels) highlighted the need for improved data reporting stating, “It is essential that we have accurate data to secure the necessary resources for our communities. I trust that Director Anderson will prioritize this.”

Council Delegate George H. Tolth (Littlewater, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake, Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Ojo Encino, Counselor) asked Director Anderson why the NNDPS has not proposed or increased the number of substations across his region. He emphasized that an increased law enforcement presence is needed to impact the increase in crime, drugs, and abuse on the Nation. Delegate Tolth said that often community calls for a

police officer go unanswered.

Delegate Simonson (Hard Rock, Forest Lake, Pinon, Black Mesa, Whippoorwill) stressed the importance of providing proper equipment to law enforcement.

“Understanding the needs and issues of law enforcement is critical—we need to take better care of our officers by providing adequate protection and equipment,” Delegate Simonson said.

Upon his confirmation, Director Anderson shared his vision for a unified and robust Division of Public Safety stating, “My goal is to bring all departments under one umbrella to foster a strong, communicative, and cooperative environment. We also aim to elevate our police officers to federal officer status to effectively tackle serious crimes across our Nation.”

Additionally, Anderson addressed the pressing issue of sexual assault, a critical concern within many communities.

“Addressing sexual assault cases is paramount,” he said. “We must refocus our efforts and ensure that our women and communities are safe. This will be a priority for my team.”

The Council approved Legislation No. 0059-24 with a vote of 10 in favor and four opposed.



Council Delegate Helena Nez Begay sponsored Legislation 0059-24, confirming the appointment of Michael Anderson as the Director of of the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety (pictured above).

## LEGISLATION 0075-24 PASSES, BRINGING NATURAL GAS LINES TO HOMES IN GANADO

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** - The Navajo Nation Council approved Legislation 0075-24 sponsored by Delegate Vince James, which will facilitate the extension of natural gas service lines to homes within the Ganado community.

The legislation, co-sponsored by Delegate Brenda Jesus, Speaker Crystalyne Curley, and Delegate Rickie Nez, addresses the critical need for access to natural gas infrastructure in the Ganado Chapter. The legislation stemmed from a letter received by Ganado resident from the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority (NTUA) who outlined plans for a gas service line extension project, at a cost of \$17,628. By extending the gas service line, NTUA is able to connect approximately 13 additional neighboring homes.

Delegate Vince James emphasized the importance of providing essential services to Navajo Nation residents, stating, “We have to always think about how we can provide better service. Just even providing one family, the necessities, we’ve accomplished something as council.”

The legislative journey of 0075-24 culminated in a

series of committee approvals, demonstrating broad support for the initiative

The project is funded partially by the Sihasin Fund and partially by the Ganado Chapter who allocated \$8,500 to the project.

This initiative represents a factual improvement in the quality of life for residents, providing access to a reliable energy source.

In his closing remarks, Delegate Vince James commended the efforts of the 25th Council in supporting families and addressing their basic needs. He emphasized the significance of the legislation in enhancing community well-being and reaffirmed the Council’s commitment to serving the Navajo Nation.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council approved Legislation 0075-24 with 17 in favor and one opposed. Once the resolution is certified and delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President, the Navajo Nation President will have ten calendar days to consider the funding request.



Council Delegate Vince James and his agent Gladys Jones discussed how the gas service line extension will benefit the community.



## 25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL ALLOCATES \$2.5 MILLION IN SIHASIN FUNDS TO PROVIDE WATER TO OVER 130 HOMES

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** - On Tuesday, April 16, the 25th Navajo Nation Council passed Legislation 0076-24 approving over \$2.5 million from the Sihasin Fund to provide waterline extensions to 16 homes in Kin Dah Lichii Chapter and approximately 130 homes in Rough Rock and Rock Point Chapters.

Health, Education, and Human Services Committee Chair Vince James sponsored Legislation 0076-24 approving \$1,386,000 from the Sihasin Fund to the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority to fund two miles of waterline extensions to 16 homes in Kin Dah Lichii chapter. The project will extend waterline infrastructure and has been partially funded by the Navajo Area Indian Health Services (IHS).

“Many of these families are still hauling water. They’re still purchasing water tanks and traveling to border

towns on weekends when the chapters are closed,” said Chair James.

Council Delegate Carl R. Slater proposed an amendment to a related expenditure plan requesting \$1,155,000 from the Sihasin Fund to the Navajo Area IHS for the completion of two projects in the Rock Point Chapter and Rough Rock Chapter. The amendment funds the completion of waterline extensions in the Rock Point Chapter for \$849,000 and completes a well project in Rough Rock Chapter for \$306,000.

Council Delegate Slater’s amendment to the expenditure plan will provide water to over 120 homes in Rock Point and Rough Rock Chapters.

“We’re in a similar predicament to Delegate James where we have projects that have funding but are being

held back by shortfalls that support the costs of material increases,” Delegate Slater said.

Regarding material costs, Delegate James noted that the pipe sizes increased in his waterline extension projects.

“The goal is to connect to the Gallup Navajo Waterline,” he said.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council unanimously supported Legislation 0076-24 with a vote of 16 in favor and none opposed. Once the resolution is certified and delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President, the Navajo Nation President will have ten calendar days to consider the funding request.

## COUNCIL URGES PRESIDENT BIDEN TO HALT URANIUM TRANSPORTATION

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** - On Tuesday, April 16, the Navajo Nation Council has passed Legislation 0082-24, reinforcing the Council’s stance against uranium transportation through Navajo Nation lands.

Sponsored by Delegate Casey Allen Johnson, the legislation calls upon President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., The White House, members of Congress, and relevant federal agencies to halt the transportation of uranium across Navajo Nation territories.

The urgency of this request stems from the recent surge in uranium mining activity at the Pinyon Plain Mine, nestled in the heart of the Kaibab National Forest in Arizona. This activity has raised concerns among the Navajo leadership regarding the potential environmental and health hazards posed by transporting uranium ore and waste materials across Navajo lands via Arizona State Route 89 and Highway 160 to the White Mesa Mill in Utah.

The Navajo Nation President and Speaker of the 25th Navajo Nation Council issued a joint letter on March 12, 2024, asking President Biden to deploy all available federal resources to prevent uranium mining transportation through Navajo territories. The Navajo Nation is committed to safeguarding its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Uranium mining holds a destructive history on Navajo lands, marked by environmental contamination and health hazards for the Diné people. The legacy of operations without adequate environmental safeguards has left a trail of contamination, affecting land, water, and public health. Tragically, high rates of cancer and other illnesses among Navajo uranium

miners and their families serve as a stark reminder of the toll exacted by irresponsible mining practices.

In 2005, the Navajo Nation enacted the Diné Natural Resource Protection Act, which prohibits uranium mining and processing on Navajo lands. Similarly, the Radioactive and Related Substances Equipment, Vehicles, Person and Materials Transportation Act of 2012 reaffirms the Navajo Nation’s opposition to the transportation of radioactive materials across Navajo lands, except under specific circumstances.

Delegate Casey Allen Johnson, the driving force behind Legislation 0082-24, emphasized the Navajo Nation’s duty to protect the interests, rights, and traditions of the Navajo people. “We cannot allow history to repeat itself,” stated Delegate Johnson. “The Navajo Nation stands firm in its resolve to uphold our laws and safeguard our land, water, and health.”

The Navajo Nation Council urges President Biden and federal authorities to heed this urgent call and take decisive action to halt the transportation of uranium through Navajo lands. The consequences of inaction are too dire to ignore, as they threaten not only the present well-being of the Navajo people but also the future of generations to come.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council unanimously approved the legislation with a vote of 16 in favor and none opposed. Once the resolution is certified by the Legislative Branch and delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President, the Navajo Nation President will have ten calendar days to sign the legislation.



Council Delegate Vince James sponsored Legislation 0076-24, approving over \$2.5 million to provide water extensions to over 140 homes in total.



Council Delegate Casey Allen Johnson sponsored Legislation 0082-24, calling upon President Biden to halt the transportation of uranium across the Navajo Nation.

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL CELEBRATES THE STRENGTH OF DINÉ WOMEN LEADERSHIP

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – On Tuesday, April 16, the 25th Navajo Nation Council recognized the resilience and leadership of Diné women who have served the Navajo people as previous members of the Council.

25th Navajo Nation Council Speaker Crystalsyne Curley (Tachee/Blue Gap, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tselani/Cottonwood, Low Mountain) said many of the women leaders expressed that they have never received any official acknowledgement or appreciation from the Navajo Nation following their years of service.

“We’re here now to thank you and your families. They have sacrificed so much so that you could serve your people,” said Speaker Curley. “You laid the foundation for myself and other woman council delegates to serve on the 25th Navajo Nation Council. I would not be here today, in this position, without you all.”

Council Delegates Germaine Simonson, Eugenia Charles-Newton, and Amber Kanazbah Crotty attended a breakfast recognition ceremony, where the women leaders gathered to share their experiences and the challenges they faced as they forged a new path for Navajo women as elected leaders.

In 2023, the Navajo Nation celebrated the centennial of the Navajo Nation government. It’s been 78 years since Lilakai Julian Neil was the first woman to be elected as a Council Delegate. Since 1946, the Navajo Nation has elected 30 women Council Delegates.

Last year, the Navajo Nation made history by electing Richelle Montoya as the first woman to serve as Navajo Nation Vice President. History was also made when the 25th Navajo Nation Council elected Crystalsyne Curley as Speaker of the Council.

Vice President Montoya said that when she decided to run for her position that she sought the advice of other woman leaders like former Council Delegate Katherine Benally (Dennehotso, Chilchinbeto, Kayenta).

“She’s very knowledgeable and very outspoken. That’s how our delegates are meant to be. Thank you all so much for blazing the trail,” Vice President Montoya said. “It’s not only in tribal politics. It’s also in local, state, and county politics. We listen

to you, and we watch what you’ve done.”

Benally said that in 2003, there were many double standards in place that held women leaders back. She feels that women were belittled at that time and were not allowed to speak their minds.

“I don’t see that anymore. I see a lot of respect and I must credit the nice gentlemen that are holding seats in the council chamber,” Benally said.

LaVern Wagner was the first woman to represent her chapter region in 2003, and she remains the only woman to have represented the communities of Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, and Whitehorse Lake.

Wagner said that women delegates work 24 hours a day in their responsibilities to both family and work, and that today’s women leaders still face the same challenges.

“We face a lot of hardship. We go back to our traditional teachings from our grandparents of how to stay strong. That’s where I connect with the women leaders of the past to the present. It’s all our duties to keep the Navajo Nation going strong. I’m happy to have served at the time I did,” Wagner said.

Former Shiprock Council Delegate GloJean Todacheene said that politics is the art of influence.

“That’s what you ladies have. Along the way, we’ve influenced a lot of people. We influence the young ones who are coming up. With the power of women leadership, you don’t ignore each other. You bring each other up,” Todacheene said.

At the start of Tuesday’s Council session, 30 former woman Council Delegates were honored and acknowledged in the Council Chamber for their leadership and contributions to the prosperity of the Navajo Nation.

Council Delegate Eugenia Charles-Newton said the power of women’s leadership encompasses love, compassion, and self-identity.

“These women being honored today are so important to what our government has become. They laid the foundation for many of us and cleared the path to make it possible for us to be here today,” Delegate Charles-Newton said.



Speaker Crystalsyne Curley joined the family of the first woman Council Delegate Lilakai Julian Neil who brought news articles that were written about Neil.



Council Delegate Eugenia Charles-Newton (left) and Speaker Crystalsyne Curley (right) stand beside the “Matriarch of Women Delegates” Lena Manheimer.



The former women Council Delegates enjoy a laugh together as they take a group photo.



Council Delegate Eugenia Charles-Newton greets and hugs former Council Delegate Genevieve Jackson.



Former Council Delegate Evelyn Acotley.

Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty hugs former Council Delegate GloJean Todacheenie.

# DINÉ WOMAN LEADER RECOGNITION PHOTOS



Left to right, Former Delegates Harriet K. Becenti, Ida M. Nelson, and Roselyn John.



Former Council Delegate GloJean Todacheenie.



Former Council Delegate Katherine Benally.



Former Council Delegate Genevieve Jackson.



Current and former women Council Delegates, and their families gather for a photo with Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne.



Council Delegate George Tolth shakes hands with former Council Delegate LaVern Wagner.

## 25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL HONORS COMMUNITY LEADERS AND ACHIEVERS IN 2024 SPRING SESSION

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – On April 17, the 25th Navajo Nation Council held a special recognition ceremony to honor outstanding community members and groups for their exceptional contributions to the Navajo Nation and beyond.

The session began with Delegate Brenda Jesus (Oaksprings, St. Michaels) recognizing Air Force Veteran Mr. John Hale on his 100th birthday. Mr. Hale, celebrated for his dedicated service to both the Navajo Nation and the United States, was honored by the Oakspring and Pinespring Veterans Organization with a traditional men's robe rug donated by Perry Null. The Council expressed their gratitude to Mr. Hale and all veterans for their unwavering dedication to protecting the people of the Navajo Nation.

Following this tribute, Delegate Jesus (Oaksprings, St. Michaels) acknowledged the St. Michaels Basketball team for their outstanding performance in the AIA Girls Basketball State Championships (AZ)

Conference 1A, having advanced to the final game. The coaches extended their thanks to the families for their vital support, and Assistant Coach Ms. Sandra Delegai gave special thanks to the team's bus driver, Mr. Curley, for his commitment to the safety of the student-athletes.

Delegate Shawna Ann Claw (Chinle) honored two retirees and both the Girls and Boys Basketball Teams from Navajo Preparatory School. Ms. JoAnn Dedman was recognized for over 40 years of service to the Navajo Nation, and Retiring EMT Supervisor, Dennis R. Charley, was acknowledged for his valor and dedication in leading the EMT Department. Both were celebrated for their long-term commitments and impact.

The celebrations continued as Delegate Claw, along with Delegates Andy Nez (Crystal, Fort Defiance, Red Lake, Sawmill) and Germaine Simonson (Hard Rock, Forest Lake, Pinon, Black Mesa, Whippoorwill), recognized

the Navajo Nation spelling bee champion, Shanell Joe, for her academic dedication. While Joe was absent due to educational commitments, the Council wished her success in the upcoming national spelling bee competition in Washington DC.

The session concluded with Delegate Rickie Nez (T'iistoh Sikaad, Nenahnezad, Upper Fruitland, Tse' Daa' Kaan, Newcomb, San Juan) recognizing students from Farmington High School and Piedra Vista High School for their efforts in studying and practicing Navajo culture and traditions. These students were recognized for going beyond their academic pursuits to learn and integrate new skills and ideas into their lives.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council extends its heartfelt appreciation to all honorees for their hard work and dedication that significantly contributes to the strength and resilience of the Navajo community.



Speaker Crystalyne Curley (left) and Delegate Shawna Ann Claw (right) place a shawl around JoAnn Dedman (center) in appreciation of 40 years of service to the Navajo Nation.



Grandma Alice Joe working nearly 60 years for Navajo communities, was recognized on the third day of the 2024 Spring Council Session.



100 year old Korean War Vetern John Hale received a special recognition for his service to his country and to the Navajo Nation.



Navajo Preparatory School Class 3A Girls Basketball State Champions receive recognition for their accomplishment during the 2024 Navajo Nation Council Spring Session.

RECOGNITION PHOTOS CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

# 2024 SPRING COUNCIL SESSION LEGISLATION RESULTS

**LEGISLATION 0246-23:** An Action Relating to the Budget and Finance, Resources and Development, and Naabik'íyáti' Committees, and to the Navajo Nation Council; Amending CMY-54-18 to Extend Through Crop Year 2028 the Síhasin Fund Guarantee for the Navajo Nation's Annual Premiums for the "Rainfall Index Pasture, Rangeland, and Forage Pilot Insurance Program" Administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture

**SPONSOR:** Honorable Brenda Jesus

**CO-SPONSOR:** Honorable Shaandiin Parrish

**ACTION:** Passed

**YEA:** 20

Arviso, Steven R.  
Aseret, Lomardo  
Begay, Helena Nez  
Begay, Norman M.  
Charles-Newton, Eugenia  
Claw, Shawna Ann  
Curley, Crystalyne  
Daniels Jr., Herman M.  
Jesus, Brenda  
Johnson, Casey Allen  
Nez, Andy  
Nez, Rickie  
Notah, Nathan  
Parrish, Shaandiin  
Simonson, Germaine  
Simpson, Danny  
Slater, Carl R.  
Tolth, George H.  
Yanito, Curtis  
Yazzie, Lester C.

**NAY:** 2

Yazzie, Cherilyn  
Crotty, Amber K.

**EXCUSED:** 1

Tso, Otto

**NOT VOTING:** 0

**PRESIDING SPEAKER:** James, Vince R.

**LEGISLATION 0046-24:** An Act Relating to Law and Order, Resources and Development, and Naabik'íyáti' Committee, and the Navajo Nation Council; Amending 2 N.N.C § 503, Meeting Day for the Resources and Development Committee.

**SPONSOR:** Honorable Brenda Jesus

**ACTION:** Passed

**YEA:** 22

Arviso, Steven R.  
Aseret, Lomardo  
Begay, Helena Nez  
Begay, Norman M.  
Charles-Newton, Eugenia  
Claw, Shawna Ann  
Crotty, Amber K.  
Daniels Jr., Herman M.  
James, Vince R.  
Jesus, Brenda  
Johnson, Casey Allen  
Nez, Andy  
Nez, Rickie  
Notah, Nathan  
Parrish, Shaandiin  
Simonson, Germaine  
Simpson, Danny  
Slater, Carl R.  
Tolth, George H.  
Yanito, Curtis  
Yazzie, Cherilyn  
Yazzie, Lester C.

**NAY:** 0

**EXCUSED:** 1

Tso, Otto

**NOT VOTING:** 0

**PRESIDING SPEAKER:** Curley, Crystalyne

**LEGISLATION 0040-24:** An Action Relating to the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee, the Resources and Development Committee, the Budget and Finance Committee, the Law and Order Committee, the Naabik'íyáti' Committee and the Navajo Nation Council; Amending Rule 9(A) of the Rules of Order for Standing Committees of the Navajo Nation Council.

**SPONSOR:** Honorable Amber K. Crotty

**CO-SPONSOR:** Honorable Danny Simpson

**CO-SPONSOR:** Honorable Cherilyn Yazzie

**ACTION:** Passed

**YEA:** 22

Arviso, Steven R.  
Aseret, Lomardo  
Begay, Helena Nez  
Begay, Norman M.  
Charles-Newton, Eugenia  
Claw, Shawna Ann  
Crotty, Amber K.  
Daniels Jr., Herman M.  
James, Vince R.  
Jesus, Brenda  
Johnson, Casey Allen  
Nez, Andy  
Nez, Rickie  
Notah, Nathan  
Parrish, Shaandiin  
Simonson, Germaine  
Simpson, Danny  
Slater, Carl R.  
Tolth, George H.  
Yanito, Curtis  
Yazzie, Cherilyn  
Yazzie, Lester C.

**NAY:** 0

**EXCUSED:** 1

Tso, Otto

**NOT VOTING:** 0

**PRESIDING SPEAKER:** Curley, Crystalyne

**LEGISLATION 0048-24:** An Action Relating to Law and Order, Resources and Development, and Naabik'íyáti' Committee and the Navajo Nation Council, Approving an Amendment to 21 N.N.C. § 9 (A) Replacing the Government Services Committee with the Resources and Development as the Standing Committee that Appoints Members to the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority Management Board.

**SPONSOR:** Honorable Shawna Ann Claw

**ACTION:** Passed

**YEA:** 22

Arviso, Steven R.  
Aseret, Lomardo  
Begay, Helena Nez  
Begay, Norman M.  
Charles-Newton, Eugenia  
Claw, Shawna Ann  
Crotty, Amber K.  
Daniels Jr., Herman M.  
James, Vince R.  
Jesus, Brenda  
Johnson, Casey Allen  
Nez, Andy  
Nez, Rickie  
Notah, Nathan  
Parrish, Shaandiin  
Simonson, Germaine  
Simpson, Danny  
Slater, Carl R.  
Tolth, George H.  
Yanito, Curtis  
Yazzie, Cherilyn  
Yazzie, Lester C.

**NAY:** 0

**EXCUSED:** 1

Tso, Otto

**NOT VOTING:** 0

**PRESIDING SPEAKER:** Curley, Crystalyne



# 2024 SPRING COUNCIL SESSION LEGISLATION RESULTS

**LEGISLATION 0039-24:** An Action Relating to the Resource and Development Committee; The Budget and Finance Committee, the Naabik'iyáti' Committee and the Navajo Nation Council; Approving \$4,842,845.00 From the Síhasin Fund for the Construction of a New Cameron Chapter House Building; and Approving the Related Expenditure Plan.

**SPONSOR:** Honorable Casey Allen Johnson

**ACTION:** PASSED

**YEA:** 18

Arviso, Steven R.  
Begay, Helena Nez  
Claw, Shawna Ann  
Crotty, Amber K.  
Daniels Jr., Herman M.  
James, Vince R.  
Jesus, Brenda  
Johnson, Casey Allen  
Nez, Andy  
Nez, Rickie  
Notah, Nathan  
Simonson, Germaine  
Simpson, Danny  
Slater, Carl R.  
Tolth, George H.  
Yanito, Curtis  
Yazzie, Cherilyn  
Yazzie, Lester C.

**NAY:** 0

**EXCUSED:** 1

Tso, Otto

**NOT VOTING:** 4

Begay, Norman M.  
Charles-Newton, Eugenia  
Aseret, Lomardo  
Parrish, Shaandiin

**PRESIDING SPEAKER:** Curley, Crystalyne

**LEGISLATION 0075-24:** An Action Relating to the Budget and Finance Committee, the Resources and Development Committee, the Naabik'iyáti' Committee, and the Navajo Nation Council; Approving \$17,628 from the Síhasin Fund to NTUA for the Construction of a Gas Service Line Extension for Gladys Jones' Residence in Ganado, Arizona; Approving the Related Expenditure Plan.

**SPONSOR:** Honorable Vince R. James

**CO-SPONSOR:** Honorable Brenda Jesus

**ACTION:** PASSED

**YEA:** 17

Arviso, Steven R.  
Begay, Helena Nez  
Claw, Shawna Ann  
Crotty, Amber K.  
Daniels Jr., Herman M.  
James, Vince R.  
Jesus, Brenda  
Johnson, Casey Allen  
Nez, Andy  
Nez, Rickie  
Notah, Nathan  
Simonson, Germaine  
Simpson, Danny  
Slater, Carl R.  
Tolth, George H.  
Yanito, Curtis  
Yazzie, Lester C.

**NAY:** 1

Yazzie, Cherilyn

**EXCUSED:** 2

Charles-Newton, Eugenia  
Tso, Otto

**NOT VOTING:** 3

Begay, Norman M.  
Aseret, Lomardo  
Parrish, Shaandiin

**PRESIDING SPEAKER:** Curley, Crystalyne

**LEGISLATION 0076-24:** An Action Relating to the Budget and Finance Committee, the Resources and Development Committee, the Naabik'iyáti' Committee, and the Navajo Nation Council; Approving \$1,386,000 from the Síhasin Fund to NTUA for the Construction of Approximately Two Miles of Waterline Extensions for 16 Families in the Kin Dah Lichii Chapter; Approving the Related Expenditure Plan.

**SPONSOR:** Honorable Vince R. James

**CO-SPONSOR:** Honorable Brenda Jesus

**ACTION:** PASSED

**YEA:** 16

Arviso, Steven R.  
Begay, Helena Nez  
Begay, Norman M.  
Crotty, Amber K.  
Daniels Jr., Herman M.  
James, Vince R.  
Jesus, Brenda  
Johnson, Casey Allen  
Nez, Andy  
Nez, Rickie  
Notah, Nathan  
Simpson, Danny  
Slater, Carl R.  
Tolth, George H.  
Yanito, Curtis  
Yazzie, Lester C.

**NAY:** 0

**EXCUSED:** 2

Charles-Newton, Eugenia  
Tso, Otto

**NOT VOTING:** 5

Aseret, Lomardo  
Claw, Shawna Ann  
Parrish, Shaandiin  
Simonson, Germaine  
Yazzie, Cherilyn

**PRESIDING SPEAKER:** Curley, Crystalyne

**LEGISLATION 0059-24:** An Action Relating to the Law and Order Committee, Naabik'iyáti' Committee, and the Navajo Nation Council; Confirming and Appointment of Michael Anderson as Division Director for the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety.

**SPONSOR:** Honorable Helena Nez Begay

**CO-SPONSOR:** Honorable Cherilyn Yazzie

**ACTION:** PASSED

**YEA:** 11

Arviso, Steven R.  
Begay, Helena Nez  
Daniels Jr., Herman M.  
Jesus, Brenda  
Johnson, Casey Allen  
Nez, Andy  
Nez, Rickie  
Notah, Nathan  
Simpson, Danny  
Slater, Carl R.  
Yazzie, Lester C.

**NAY:** 4

Yanito, Curtis  
Tolth, George H.  
James, Vince R.  
Curley, Crystalyne

**EXCUSED:** 2

Tso, Otto  
Charles-Newton, Eugenia

**NOT VOTING:** 6

Aseret, Lomardo  
Begay, Norman M.  
Claw, Shawna Ann  
Parrish, Shaandiin  
Simonson, Germaine  
Yazzie, Cherilyn

**PRESIDING SPEAKER:** Crotty, Amber K.



COUNCIL RECOGNITION PHOTOS



Council Delegate Steven Arviso recognized students from Chuska Community School for their interest in the tribal government.



The St. Michaels Girls Varsity Basketball Team was recognized by Council Delegate Brenda Jesus.



The Ganado Native American Club was recognized for performing cultural dances and songs during the 2024 Spring Session.



Council Delegate Vince James recognized former Council Delegate and NTU Educator Dr. David Tsosie who was joined by his students.

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL STRENGTHENS AWARENESS OF CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION



**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Members of the 25th Navajo Nation Council partnered with the Navajo Division of Social Services to bring awareness to Child Abuse Prevention by hosting a march to the Navajo Nation Council Chamber on April 19.

Speaker Crystalyne Curley thanked all the volunteers for their support in bringing attention to the ongoing problem of child abuse in homes, schools, and in public.

“I stand firm with my colleagues to advocate on the behalf of those too young and afraid to speak out against their aggressor,” Speaker Curley said.

Delegate Lester Yazzie applauded the behavior health workers and all social workers for their continuing to handle difficult and sensitive cases on a daily basis.

Speaking from an educator’s background Delegate Andy Nez added, “It’s really about finding that passion inside of you, that compassion, that care to want to do better.”

Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty stated that kinship and family reunification should be the goal for guiding and protecting children.

“We must be sure that our children are protected. As we walk to the Council Chamber may this be your healing journey as well,” Delegate Crotty said.

**LEGISLATION 0082-24:** An Action Relating to an Emergency; Urgent Request to President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., the White House, Members of Congress, and Relevant Federal Agencies to Halt the Transportation of Uranium Through Navajo Nation Lands.

**Sponsor:** Honorable Casey Allen Johnson

**Co-Sponsor:** Honorable Crystalyne Curley

**ACTION:** PASSED

**YEA:** 16

- Arviso, Steven R.
- Begay, Helena Nez
- Begay, Norman M.
- Crotty, Amber K.
- Daniels Jr., Herman M.
- James, Vince R.
- Jesus, Brenda
- Johnson, Casey Allen
- Nez, Andy
- Nez, Rickie
- Notah, Nathan
- Simpson, Danny
- Slater, Carl R.
- Tolth, George H.
- Yanito, Curtis
- Yazzie, Lester C.

**NAY:** 0

**EXCUSED:** 2

- Charles-Newton, Eugenia
- Tso, Otto

**NOT VOTING:** 5

- Aseret, Lomardo
- Claw, Shawna Ann
- Parrish, Shaandiin
- Simonson, Germaine
- Yazzie, Cherilyn

**PRESIDING SPEAKER:** Curley, Crystalyne





# **25<sup>TH</sup> NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL**

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**THE OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER**

P.O. BOX 3390 • WINDOW ROCK, AZ 86515 • (928) 871-7160