



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

MEDIA CONTACT:

nnlb.communications@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 21, 2025

25th Navajo Nation Council advocates for Navajo priorities with Arizona legislators



Left to right: 25th Navajo Nation Council Speaker Crystalyne Curley, Arizona Senate President Warren Petersen, Arizona House Speaker Steve Montenegro, and Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Last week, members of the 25th Navajo Nation Council met with Arizona state legislators to discuss key Navajo priorities during the 30th Indian Nations and Tribes Legislative Day at the Arizona State Capitol.

On Thursday, Jan. 16, Navajo Nation Speaker Crystalyne Curley met with Arizona Senate President Warren Petersen to discuss a proposal addressing dual taxation on the Navajo Nation.

“Encouraging private business development is crucial for our economy, but when entrepreneurs face dual taxation from both the Nation and the state, many choose to set up elsewhere, depriving us of revenue,” Speaker Curley explained.

She emphasized that while the Nation cannot eliminate taxes, the proposed Transaction Privilege Tax (TPT) would offer a credit to offset dual taxation on a single economic activity. The proposal also seeks to amend the Nation’s Fuel Excise Tax agreement to retain more revenue within the Nation.

President Petersen expressed support for a fair solution for both parties.

On Jan. 16, Health, Education, and Human Services Vice Chair Germaine Simonson met with Arizona Senator Theresa Hatathlie and Arizona Department of Veterans’ Services Director John F. Scott II to discuss support for tribal healing ceremonies for veterans with PTSD.

Sen. Hatathlie noted that in 2023, the Arizona Department of Health developed a grant to assist Native American veterans with PTSD through traditional healing. To distribute these funds, the department established an intergovernmental agreement with the 22 tribal nations in Arizona.

Director Scott emphasized the need to identify which Navajo Nation agency should manage the grant, suggesting a veterans' agency as the most suitable option. "We want to ensure these funds are used as efficiently as possible," Scott said.

Vice Chair Simonson agreed, adding that this discussion could lead to broader conversations about the grant's administration.

"Many veterans were told their service information was classified and never shared it. Now, years later, they seek traditional medicine to heal their wounds," Simonson said. "This funding would greatly benefit veterans seeking those services."

Director Scott also discussed deploying Starlink broadband modems to connect rural veterans with telehealth and benefits services.

Council Delegates Shawna Ann Claw, Cherilyn Yazzie, Dr. Andy Nez, and Vice Chair Simonson met with Arizona State Rep. Mae Peshlakai to discuss expanding elder care facilities in Arizona tribal nations. Rep. Peshlakai noted that she's introducing a bill to allocate \$15 million to improve and create these facilities where they are lacking.

"I've spoken with elders, and this is a concern they've raised," Rep. Peshlakai said. "I want to provide solutions for tribal communities."

Dr. Nez suggested collaborating with Indian Health Service facilities to leverage existing resources such as funding, transportation, and staffing.

Protecting the Nation's water rights remains a top priority. Speaker Curley addressed this issue with Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs on January 14.

Speaker Curley thanked Gov. Hobbs for her support of the Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement and reiterated the Nation's commitment to providing clean water to Navajo communities.

"It's a goal of Navajo leadership to pass this settlement," Speaker Curley said. "With your leadership, we are united."

Gov. Hobbs affirmed that water protection is a priority, stating, "Protecting water is essential to protecting life. For those who have lived without running water, this access is life changing. I understand the importance of tribal perspectives in water policy and will ensure you have a seat at the table."

The 25th Navajo Nation Council extends its gratitude to Arizona state legislators for engaging with them and listening to the voices of the Navajo people.

###