



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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25th Navajo Nation Council discusses Navajo-Utah priorities with Lt. Gov. Henderson



Speaker Crystalyne Curley discussed critical water rights issues with Utah Lt. Gov. Deidre Henderson and Congressman Mike Kennedy.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Today, members of the Navajo-Utah Commission joined Speaker Crystalyne Curley in welcoming Utah Lt. Gov. Deidre Henderson and Congressman Mike Kennedy to the Navajo Nation Council Chamber to strengthen communication on Navajo-Utah priorities.

“Through collaboration with Navajo-Utah Chapters, tribal governments, and state and federal agencies, we’ve developed key priorities that address long-standing challenges,” Speaker Curley told the lieutenant governor.

Discussions focused on water rights, transportation infrastructure, uranium contamination, and economic development.

Speaker Curley opened by addressing the Utah-Navajo Nation Water Rights Settlement Interlocutory Decree and thanked Lt. Gov. Henderson for her continued support.

“We need to jointly develop an expenditure plan for the Utah-Navajo Water Rights Settlement to resolve issues like rights of way, water delivery systems, and infrastructure,” Curley said. “This isn’t about golf courses or swimming pools—it’s about turning on a faucet and having running water.”

Budget and Finance Chair Shaandiin Parrish highlighted that nearly half of the approximately 12,000 Navajo-Utah residents still lack piped water. She also urged the lieutenant governor to advocate for the Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement Act (NAIWRSA).

NAIWRSA proposes allocating 89 percent—or 44,700 acre-feet per year—of Arizona’s Upper Basin Colorado River Water, and approximately \$5 billion for tribal water infrastructure and trust funds.

“Our partners in Utah value tribal self-sufficiency,” said Chair Parrish. “Economic development depends on water infrastructure. We need your partnership to realize these goals.”

Council Delegate Curtis Yanito echoed the importance of securing clean water to support Navajo prosperity and address uranium contamination.

“Much of our water is tainted with uranium. As contamination spreads, our people can’t rely on hauling potable water from windmills,” Yanito said. “In many areas, it feels like a third world country. Where state lines end, so do resources.”

Delegates also asked for Lt. Gov. Henderson’s support of Senate Bill 243, introduced by Senator Josh Hawley, which seeks to expand the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act. The bill includes an estimated \$50 million to address the impact of uranium mining on the Navajo Nation.

Speaker Curley also requested \$1 million in matching funds from the state for the Oljato/ Navajo Mountain Road EIS Project. The total project cost is \$4 million, with the Navajo Nation already committing \$1 million.

“This transportation project touches every concern we’ve raised—emergency response, public safety, taxation, tourism, and election security,” Curley said.

Lt. Gov. Henderson affirmed her commitment to ongoing collaboration.

“We’re here to understand how we can work together more effectively,” Henderson said. “The interface between the state and the Navajo Nation is complex, but nothing worthwhile is ever easy.”

Congressman Kennedy also expressed his dedication to partnership.

“It’s not by chance we’re here. We are born for these responsibilities,” Kennedy said. “I’m here to serve—and to solve problems together.”

Delegates closed by emphasizing the need for continued government-to-government consultation between the states, the federal government, and the sovereign Navajo Nation.

“We must continue to strengthen this dialogue, especially on issues impacted by Presidential Executive Orders,” said Speaker Curley.

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