



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Speaker Crystalayne Curley highlights budget, water rights, and sovereignty in report to Navajo Nation Council



Speaker Curley reaffirmed the Council's commitment to passing legislation that protects the Nation's rights and improves the quality of life for all Diné citizens.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On Monday, during the opening day of the 2025 Spring Session of the 25th Navajo Nation Council, Speaker Crystalayne Curley delivered the Speaker's Report, emphasizing critical issues impacting the Navajo Nation. Topics included the development of the Fiscal Year 2026 Comprehensive Budget, major progress on water rights settlements, and federal advocacy to protect Navajo tribal sovereignty.

In her report, Speaker Curley extended her gratitude to her fellow Council Delegates, President Dr. Buu Nygren, Vice President Richelle Montoya, Chief Justice JoAnn B. Jayne, and the Diné people. She acknowledged the solemn walk held earlier that morning to honor missing and murdered Indigenous persons, reaffirming the Council's commitment to justice and healing for affected families.

"We are planting seeds this spring that will shape the future of our people," Speaker Curley stated. "The words we speak and the decisions we make will have lasting impacts for generations."

Speaker Curley addressed the Fiscal Year 2026 budget planning process and expressed appreciation to the Budget and Finance Committee for working closely with government branches to develop funding priorities amid an unpredictable economic climate. Legislative branch priorities include restoring attorney support, securing financial and energy advisors,

improving public outreach, strengthening intergovernmental relations, and enhancing election infrastructure.

Speaker Curley reported on federal efforts to pass the Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement Act, reintroduced in Congress with broad bipartisan support. If enacted, the legislation would secure over \$5 billion in funding and confirm water rights from multiple sources, delivering clean, reliable water to tens of thousands of Navajo families for the first time.

“Access to safe, clean drinking water is not a privilege. It’s a basic human right,” Speaker Curley said. “This settlement is not just a legal agreement; it’s a life-changing investment in our people.”

Speaker Curley also provided updates on the Rio San José Stream System Water Rights Settlement Act, which quantifies Navajo water rights in New Mexico and secures more than \$223 million in federal funding for water infrastructure.

In support of these efforts, the Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project Amendments Act of 2025 seeks to expand funding and service areas, extending the project’s reach to new communities and increasing its total funding to over \$2.1 billion. The legislation would also establish new trust funds to ensure long-term operations and maintenance.

The Speaker’s report emphasized the importance of strong federal advocacy, particularly under the changing political landscape in Washington, D.C. The Council has adopted several resolutions reaffirming the Nation’s sovereign political status, calling for consultation on federal education policy, and defending the Nation’s rights under treaty and trust obligations.

“These resolutions are a clear reminder to our federal partners that our sovereignty is not negotiable,” she said.

The speaker also celebrated significant milestones, including the recent Utah-Navajo Nation Water Rights Settlement Interlocutory Decree, which confirms a water allocation of 81,500 acre-feet per year and provides funding for critical infrastructure.

In closing, Speaker Curley reaffirmed the Council’s commitment to passing legislation that protects the Nation’s rights and improves the quality of life for all Diné citizens.

“Our work is far from done,” she said. “But united, we carry the vision of our ancestors and the strength of our people into every step forward.”

The 25th Navajo Nation Council voted 16 in favor and one opposed in accepting the Speaker’s Report as a written report. View all the 2025 Spring Session reports and presentations here: <https://www.navajonationcouncil.org/committees>.

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