



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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25th Navajo Nation Council celebrates groundbreaking of LeChee Water System Improvement Project



The groundbreaking of the LeChee Water System Improvement Project marked a continued partnership with all stakeholders to bring clean, reliable water to the community.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On Wednesday, June 18, members of the 25th Navajo Nation Council joined the Navajo Nation Water Rights Commission, LeChee Chapter leadership, the Navajo Department of Water Resources (DWR), and other stakeholders to celebrate the blessing ceremony and groundbreaking of the Western Navajo Pipeline Phase I – LeChee Water System Improvement Project.

The ceremony marked the start of construction and continued partnership among the Navajo Nation, engineering firm Brown and Caldwell, and B4 Enterprises to deliver clean, reliable water to the community.

During the event, DWR Principal Hydrologist Robert Kirk presented a historical overview of the project, which began in 1996 when the former LeChee Chapter President introduced alternative solutions to address the chapter's water needs.

In 2016, the 22nd Navajo Nation Council passed CJA-12-16, adopting the Sihasin Fund Bulk Water & Wastewater Development Expenditure Plan, which allocated over \$101 million for bulk water projects, including LeChee. This initial funding enabled the hiring of Brown and Caldwell to conduct water analyses and other feasibility studies.

Further progress came in 2021 when former Council Delegate Paul Begay sponsored legislation CJY-39-21, securing an additional \$58.2 million to fully fund Phase I of the Western Navajo Pipeline.

Speaker Crystalyne Curley emphasized the importance of unity and persistence in advancing the project and acknowledged the contributions of Western Navajo Agency chapters like LeChee, which supported the Nation for decades through industries such as the Navajo Generating Station (NGS).

"This community has given back to our government and the Nation is what it is today because of the Western Agency," Speaker Curley said. "I'm excited for this project and the opportunities it will provide for your families."

She also credited past councils and delegates for laying the foundation for continued infrastructure development.

"If you look at the history of the Navajo Nation Council, millions of dollars have been dedicated to infrastructure improvements—powerlines, water lines, and more," she said. "Investing in essential services for our Navajo people remains a top priority of the 25th Navajo Nation Council."

Council Delegate Helena Nez Begay expressed gratitude to the chapter staff in attendance and acknowledged the spiritual strength that guided the project.

"Prayers have carried us through to today. My mother would say that as a leader, you must have a prayer and a teaching that guides your community," said Delegate Nez Begay.

Former Council Delegate Paul Begay, who served on the 24th Navajo Nation Council, reflected on the decades-long journey that led to this milestone.

"It took 30 years to bring the LeChee Water System Improvement Project to Phase I," he said. "A lot of leadership was involved in keeping this project alive. I want to thank my co-sponsors—Council Delegates Otto Tso, Herman Daniels Jr., Thomas Walker, and Carl Slater. This project went through many layers of leadership—chapter, county, state, and federal. The real work begins today."

Council Delegate Otto Tso provided the traditional blessing for the project. Council Delegates Brenda Jesus and Herman Daniels Jr. attended the groundbreaking.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council extends gratitude to all former Council Delegates and city, county, state, and federal partners who contributed to the success of this long-awaited project.

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