



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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25th Navajo Nation Council holds public hearing on President Trump's initiative to revitalize the coal industry



Dził Yijiin residents presented testimonies on the impacts of resource extraction on their communities.

FOREST LAKE CHAPTER — On Friday, May 30, the 25th Navajo Nation Council held a public hearing at the Forest Lake Chapter House to solicit community feedback on President Donald J. Trump's Executive Order 14241, "Reinvigorating America's Beautiful Clean Coal Industry," which seeks to expand coal development by revising existing federal regulations.

"This hearing was not just a forum, it was a long-overdue recognition of the voices that have too often been ignored," said Speaker Crystalyne Curley. "For communities still living with the consequences of extraction, being heard is the first step toward justice."

Council Delegates Germaine Simonson, Cherilyn Yazzie, and George Tolth attended the hearing to listen directly to the concerns presented by community members.

The hearing served as a platform for residents to share their lived experiences and articulate concerns about the proposed policy. Over 50 individuals delivered oral testimony, while 169 attendees completed a public survey, offering detailed feedback on Executive Order 14241.

The Dził Yijiin region, which includes Forest Lake Chapter, has endured profound and lasting impacts from coal mining operations conducted by Peabody Energy from 1960 until the company's departure in 2019. Speakers described decades of environmental degradation, water depletion, respiratory illnesses, and cultural disruption.

Testimonies reflected a mistrust of federal energy policy, with many community members warning that Executive Order 14241 could exacerbate historical injustices. Several participants emphasized that promoting coal extraction without tribal consultation endangers Native sovereignty and well-being. Many strongly opposed the initiative, calling it a dangerous return to extractive practices that have long harmed Indigenous lands and people.



Speaker Curley greeted community members and welcomed their testimonies.

President Trump's executive order, signed on March 20, 2025, seeks to accelerate domestic production of critical minerals by streamlining permitting, financing, and federal land use processes. However, residents expressed alarm that such broad measures could result in energy development on tribal lands without consent or meaningful engagement.

Concerns were also raised about budget reconciliation efforts that would open all federal lands, including within tribal territories, to mining and drilling activities—actions that may proceed without tribal input and be shielded from legal challenge.

The hearing reinforced the urgency of ensuring that Indigenous voices are considered in national policy decisions. For the people of Dził Yijiin, the legacy of Peabody's operations is a lived and ongoing struggle.

Responding to the community's concerns, Delegate Germaine Simonson emphasized the need for stronger regional representation. She advocated for appointing more members from the area to serve on the Black Mesa Review Board, to strengthen oversight and better address the issues raised during the hearing.

Building on that call to action, Delegate Cherilyn Yazzie stressed the importance of unity and persistence in defending the region's interests.

"This isn't going to be the first, second or twentieth time that we must fight for our position," said Delegate Yazzie. "We must continue to strengthen the protection of our precious water sources."

Community members thanked the 25th Navajo Nation Council for holding the hearing in their chapter and for making space for their perspectives. Many stressed the need for sustained consultation with affected communities, particularly as federal policies risk repeating the same patterns of extraction and exploitation.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council extends its gratitude to the Forest Lake Chapter staff for their support in hosting the hearing, and to all community members who came forward to share their voices and experiences.

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