



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

MEDIA CONTACT:

nnlb.communications@gmail.com

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25th Navajo Nation Council holds second public hearing to receive input on federal efforts to revitalize the coal industry



Over 250 attendees showed up to the Nenahnezad Chapter to voice their opinions on federal Executive Order 14241.

NENAHNEZAD, N.M. – Today, the 25th Navajo Nation Council held a public hearing at the Nenahnezad Chapter House to hear community voices regarding federal Executive Order 14241, titled “Reinvigorating America’s Beautiful Clean Coal Industry.”

The Council held the first public hearing at Forest Lake Chapter in May, an area located close to the former Kayenta Mine that provided significant amounts of coal for the former Navajo Generating Station.

The Nenahnezad community is located near the Navajo Mine and the Four Corners Power Plant, which continue to operate and create revenue for the Navajo Nation and employment for many Navajo people.

“The Council is taking an objective approach to gain input and to hear directly from those who have been impacted and benefited from the Nation’s coal industry. The views that were shared in Forest Lake are different than the majority of the views that we heard today in Nenahnezad. It’s important that we listen to our Navajo people. Your voices matter. You have the right to be heard by leadership and to help shape the future of our Nation,” said Speaker Crystalyne Curley.

President Trump’s executive order, signed on March 20, 2025, aims to accelerate domestic

production of critical minerals by streamlining permitting, financing, and federal land use processes.

Thursday's public hearing drew more than 250 attendees, with approximately 90 individuals offering verbal comments. Community members were also invited to submit written statements.

The majority of the verbal comments supported the intent of the federal executive order. Many attendees were current or former mining employees who shared how the industry has supported generations of family livelihoods, education, scholarships, and career advancement, including training for upward mobility.

In a region where coal mining remains a major employer for Navajo people, its legacy has created a path of prosperity for many. Many emphasized that mine closures represent a major loss of income, revenue, jobs, and further displacement from local employment.

Miners also reflected on the shutdown of the Navajo Generating Station and Kayenta Mine. Some workers were forced to relocate to accept jobs off the Nation and some sought employment elsewhere, impacting many families and communities.

While many voiced support for the executive order, others expressed concern about the long-term consequences of relying on resource extraction. Some emphasized that the Nation's land and natural wealth should be managed on its own terms, warning that a future based solely on extractive industries is unsustainable.

Others highlighted the environmental and health impacts tied to decades of mining. They pointed to elevated rates of respiratory illness, including lung cancer among former workers, and stressed the need to address these harms alongside any proposed economic benefits.

Community input continues to play a vital role in guiding the direction of future policy decisions, according to Speaker Curley.

"We heard a lot about accountability, sustainability, self-sufficiency, and environmental impacts. Our task now is to document comments, written and verbal, compile them into a comprehensive report and present it back to the people and leadership," Speaker Curley said. "Our leaders will carefully weigh the comments, opinions, and recommendations to guide decisions as we move forward."

Council Delegates George Tolth, Danny Simpson, Amber Kanazbah Crotty, Rickie Nez, Helena Nez Begay, Brenda Jesus, Curtis Yanito, and Casey Allen Johnson attended Thursday's hearing and offered feedback.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council also extends its sincere thanks to the Nenahnezad Chapter, Chapter President Norman C. Begaye, and all chapter staff for their assistance, hospitality, and support in hosting the public hearing.

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