



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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25th Navajo Nation Council attends BEAD grant presentation by Arizona Commerce Authority



Speaker Crystalyne Curley and Council Delegate Casey Allen Johnson joined the Navajo Nation Broadband Office and Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren for a presentation on the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — On Wednesday, the 25th Navajo Nation Council attended a presentation by the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA) on the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program and its potential impact on Navajo communities, particularly those in Arizona. Speaker Crystalyne Curley and Council Delegate Casey Allen Johnson attended the presentation.

Speaker Curley emphasized the urgency of expanding broadband access across rural Navajo communities.

“This is something that is deeply needed across the Navajo Nation, especially in our rural communities where connectivity is still very limited,” said Speaker Curley. “There are students in our districts who still don’t have access to reliable internet at home, and families who remain disconnected from basic services. This funding represents an opportunity to bring our people into the digital age, close that gap, and improve education, health care, and overall quality of life.”

She also underscored the importance of continued collaboration among the 25th Navajo Nation Council, the Navajo Nation Broadband Office, and state partners to secure matching funds and advance future legislation.

Speaker Curley expressed appreciation for broadband leadership, Delegate Johnson, and Council Delegate Carl R. Slater for advocating for infrastructure improvements and reaffirmed the Council's commitment to ensuring all Navajo communities benefit from expanded connectivity.

Speaker Curley also extended her appreciation to Delegate Slater for his leadership and commitment in advancing the BEAD initiative. She noted that Delegate Slater played a key role in moving the project forward and advocating for broadband investment across the Arizona portion of the Navajo Nation.

"I want to thank Delegate Slater for his dedication and leadership in pushing this effort forward," said Speaker Curley. "His work has been instrumental in helping secure this opportunity, and his continued support reflects our shared commitment to bringing reliable connectivity to our communities."

Delegate Johnson also voiced strong support for the BEAD program, reiterating the urgent need to expand broadband infrastructure in underserved areas of the Navajo Nation. He highlighted long-standing infrastructure gaps that continue to affect residents, particularly in the Western region.

"For many of our communities, especially in places like Cameron, we are still catching up after decades without basic infrastructure," said Delegate Johnson. "This investment is about bringing our people forward, expanding fiber and connectivity where it's been limited for far too long, and making sure our students, families, and elders have access to the tools they need to succeed."

He also reflected on challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, when students struggled to access reliable internet for remote learning, and noted the growing importance of telehealth services for rural families.

During the presentation, ACA officials outlined the scope and purpose of the BEAD program, a historic federal investment aimed at expanding broadband access to unserved and underserved areas.

According to presentation materials, Arizona received approximately \$967 million in BEAD funding to support infrastructure projects connecting households and community anchor institutions, including schools, libraries, and health facilities, to high-speed internet.

The Navajo Nation was identified as a major recipient, representing 33 percent of Arizona's BEAD funding and 11 percent of eligible locations statewide. The award makes the Navajo Nation the largest funded broadband project in Arizona, underscoring both the need and the scale of connectivity challenges across the region.

Preliminary project details indicate the Arizona BEAD award will support service to approximately 17,000 locations and more than 160 community anchor institutions across the Navajo Nation.

The project will use a mix of fiber, fixed wireless, and satellite technologies to reach remote and rural areas. Total project costs are estimated at nearly \$198 million, with more than \$148 million in BEAD funding supporting the effort.

The Navajo Nation Broadband Office is leading implementation efforts as part of a broader strategy to expand digital access. These investments are expected to strengthen economic development, support remote learning, expand telehealth services, and improve the quality of life for Navajo citizens.

Construction on Arizona BEAD-funded projects is expected to begin as early as fall 2026 following final approvals and permitting, with completion anticipated later that year.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council reaffirmed that expanding broadband access remains a top priority. As projects move forward, the Council remains committed to working with the Navajo Nation Broadband Office, state partners, and federal agencies to ensure no community is left behind.

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