



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Council Delegates brief Congressional leaders on severe flooding in Northern Agency, urge storm preparedness



Council Delegates Eugenia Charles-Newton, Rickie Nez and Amber Kanabah Crotty met with Sen. Ben Ray Luján and Rep. Teresa Leger Fernández to discuss severe flooding in New Mexico.

SHIPROCK, N.M. — On Wednesday, Council Delegates Eugenia Charles-Newton, Rickie Nez and Amber Kanabah Crotty met with New Mexico U.S. Sen. Ben Ray Luján and U.S. Rep. Teresa Leger Fernández to discuss severe flooding across the Navajo Nation's Northern Agency and urgent needs for emergency response, infrastructure recovery and public safety.

The delegates were joined by Navajo Nation public safety officials, including Deputy Police Chief Donnie Kee, law enforcement personnel and emergency management representatives coordinating response efforts.

Delegate Charles-Newton described the flooding as unprecedented for many Northern Agency communities, citing widespread damage and environmental impacts. She urged coordinated recovery assistance and resources.

"Our communities are facing an extraordinary emergency that has placed the safety and well-being of our Navajo people at risk," Charles-Newton said. "Families are experiencing damage to their homes, disruptions to essential services and uncertainty about what comes next. We must work together with our federal partners to ensure our communities receive the immediate assistance and long-term resources needed to recover. Our priority is protecting lives, restoring access to essential services and making sure no family is left behind."

Delegate Nez warned that flooding threatens farmland, water access and transportation, endangering food security for families reliant on farming and livestock. Northern Agency families depend on the San

Juan River for agriculture and livestock. Near the Nenahnezad Bridge, residents are avoiding hazardous crossings and taking alternate routes.

“For many of our families, farming and raising livestock are not only sources of income but a way of life that sustains our communities,” Nez said. “When flooding damages our fields, threatens our livestock, and cuts off access to roads and water resources, the consequences extend far beyond the immediate emergency. We need immediate support to restore safe access, protect our agricultural resources, and help displaced residents return to stable living conditions.”

Delegate Crotty raised concerns regarding the closure of the Shiprock Bridge and the disruption to emergency transportation, access to health care, and essential services for surrounding communities. She emphasized that bridge closures during emergencies create additional challenges for residents seeking medical treatment, particularly elders, individuals with disabilities, and families living in remote areas.

“When critical transportation routes are closed, our communities face additional barriers to receiving timely medical care and essential services. We must consider our elders, individuals with disabilities, and relatives who depend on regular medical treatment, medications, and emergency transportation,” Crotty said. “Emergency planning must include reliable alternative routes, coordinated medical transportation, timely public communication, and contingency plans to ensure our most vulnerable community members are protected. This requires stronger coordination among the Navajo Nation, state, and federal governments to conduct timely bridge inspections, expedite emergency repairs, identify safe alternative routes, and establish clear communication protocols during disasters.”

Crotty also emphasized the importance of long-term infrastructure resilience, including assessing vulnerable bridges, roads, and drainage systems throughout the Northern Navajo Agency to reduce future disruptions from severe flooding and other emergencies.

Deputy Police Chief Kee reported that Navajo Police Department personnel continue responding to calls for service, monitoring hazardous conditions and assisting residents. Public safety officials emphasized that community cooperation and preparedness will be essential as additional rainfall threatens already saturated areas.

As the Navajo Nation prepares for another potential storm, Council delegates and public safety officials urge residents to take precautions to protect themselves and their families.

Residents should prepare emergency kits with water, nonperishable food, flashlights, batteries, first aid supplies, medications, important documents and extra clothing. Families should plan evacuation routes, arrange alternate shelter and create a “Ready, Set, Go” plan that prioritizes elders, children, people with disabilities and those relying on powered medical equipment.

Officials warn residents never to walk or drive through floodwater. Six inches of fast-moving water can knock down an adult, while two feet can carry away many vehicles. Avoid downed power lines, standing water and damaged electrical equipment. Those near rivers, streams or flood-prone areas should be ready to move to higher ground if flooding threatens.

During a flood watch, monitor weather updates, charge devices, secure outdoor belongings and move valuables above expected flood levels. Store drinking water and prepare for power outages. Stay in a secure location unless evacuation is necessary or officials direct you to leave.

After a flood, return home only when authorities confirm it is safe. Have damaged buildings checked for

structural and electrical hazards. If drinking water safety is uncertain, use bottled or treated water. Wear gloves and boots during cleanup to avoid contaminated water, debris and mold.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council urges residents to follow official updates from the Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management, Navajo Department of Transportation, Navajo Police Department and National Weather Service. Enable Wireless Emergency Alerts to receive urgent weather warnings and evacuation notices.

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