



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Navajo Nation Council accepts report from Speaker LoRenzo Bates

**WINDOW ROCK** – During the opening day of the 2018 Summer Council Session, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Navajo Nation Council accepted a written report from Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland).

In his report, Speaker Bates reaffirmed the Navajo Nation's opposition to the proposed reorganization of the U.S. Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

"The proposed plan put forth by the Department of the Interior would split the Navajo Nation between two separate regions within the BIA. Working with two BIA regions, as opposed to the one BIA region currently in place, will only complicate matters and create barriers to delivering direct services to Navajo people," stated Speaker Bates.

Members of the Council shared their concerns with Department of the Interior officials during a formal consultation session held on June 25.

The report also highlighted the Nation's recent selection of a potential new owner and new operator that would allow for the continuation of the Navajo Generating Station beyond 2019. Speaker stated that negotiations with Avenue Capital as the new potential owner and Middle River Power as the new potential operator recently began.

"As we move into the negotiating stage, time will be of the essence as we work to prepare a completed negotiated plan for the 23<sup>rd</sup> Navajo Nation Council to consider. Included in these considerations will be Navajo jobs and families who depend on this source of revenue for their income. Our Navajo workforce is a vital part of what allows us as a sovereign nation to continue to act in the best interest of our people," Speaker Bates said.

Speaker Bates also thanked his Council colleagues for continuing to advocate at the congressional level for the extension of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act and to expand certain provisions that would include providing benefits to victims of the nuclear fallout such as "downwinders" and former uranium mine workers. The provisions ensuring compensation and benefits to affected individuals are set to expire in 2019.

"The Navajo Nation Council requests the support of congress for Senate Bill 197, entitled the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act Amendments of 2017," added Speaker Bates.

Other items covered in Speaker's report include the Treaty of 1868 events hosted by the Office of the Speaker, Veterans housing, \$100 million Síhasin Fund power line and chapter projects expenditure plan, summer youth employment funding, progress of the Sexual Assault Prevention Subcommittee, fiscal year 2019 budget, Real ID issues in New Mexico, the Governor's Heritage Preservation Honor Award for the Council Chamber renovation, the possible closure of the Office of Navajo and Hopi Indian Relocation, and the federal Land Buy Back Program.

To view the full report from Speaker Bates, please visit the Navajo Nation Council's website at [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org).

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