

Speaker Bates highlights state legislative priorities in Winter Session report

Written by Staff Reports
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WINDOW ROCK – On Jan. 22, the 23rd Navajo Nation Council unanimously accepted Speaker LoRenzo Bates’ (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland) report for the 2018 Winter Council Session with a vote of 17-0.

A large portion of Speaker’s report focused on the Navajo Nation’s legislative priorities for the states of Utah, New Mexico, and Arizona as legislators from each state continue with their annual legislative sessions.

“Through the Council’s State Task Force we have been able to meet with various state legislators and introduced legislation to outline the Nation’s priorities for each state’s legislative session. In the following report, I have provided an overview of the priorities and objectives that we along with our lobbyists will continue to promote,” Bates stated in the written report.

On Jan. 17, the Council’s Naabik’íyáti’ Committee adopted the Navajo Nation’s legislative priorities for the 2018 New Mexico State Legislative Session, which began on Jan. 15. Among the priorities include securing additional state funding for Capital Outlay projects if more funds are available, increasing Navajo Nation representation on the Tribal Infrastructure Fund Board, lobbying for additional funds to improve school bus routes on the Navajo Nation, and advocating for measures to address hate crimes and discrimination, sexual assault prevention, and human trafficking.

Among the priorities for the state of Arizona include modernizing the gaming compact between the state and the Navajo Nation to ensure greater profitability, a longer duration, and greater security to improve and sustain the Navajo Nation’s economy. Other priorities include lobbying for a fairer distribution of the state’s Transaction Privilege Tax revenue for road improvements and to benefit capital projects for Diné College and Navajo Technical University.

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Bates noted that the Office of the Speaker continues to work with the Navajo Utah Commission on important Utah policy priorities including, local transportation priorities, Utah Navajo Trust Fund, Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act, Bears Ears Nation Monument, and redistricting for the San Juan County Utah Commission and the San Juan County School Board.

Other items covered in speaker's report include the Navajo Generating Station, Navajo Indian Irrigation Project, progress of the Sexual Assault Prevention Subcommittee, housing programs, housing in the Former Bennett Freeze Area, tax recovery claims for veterans in Arizona, and community outreach efforts.

Prior to accepting Speaker's Report, the Navajo Nation Council provided time for President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez to present the State of the Nation Address. The Council voted 11-9 to accept the report.

To view the full report from Speaker Bates, visit the Navajo Nation Council's website at www.navajonationcouncil.org

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