

N.M. legislators welcome money to repair U.S. 64

Written by Staff Reports

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WASHINGTON, D. C. — U.S. Sens. Martin Heinrich, D-N.M. and Ben Ray Luján, D-N.M., and U.S. Rep. Teresa Leger Fernández, D-N.M. are welcoming \$25 million in grant funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation for a U.S. Highway 64 corridor improvement and repair project running through Shiprock, N.M.

This project will reconstruct approximately 21 miles of U.S. Highway 64 in northwestern New Mexico. The expansive corridor project includes: approximately four complete bridge replacements; widening and pavement rehabilitation of the entire 21-mile- highway corridor; major drainage improvements; safety and lighting improvements, and installation of fiber optic cable to connect communities and monitoring equipment to implement corridor management practices.

“I am grateful to President Biden for making transportation infrastructure investment in Tribal communities a reality and not just a talking point,” Heinrich, a member of the Senate Committee on Appropriations said. “This \$25 million investment will mean better, safer roads for thousands of Shiprock residents and their families.

“In addition, I can’t wait to see how the funding we passed in the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will provide even more infrastructure opportunities across our state,” he added. “You can count on me to keep fighting to ensure that New Mexicans, no matter where they live, have access to quality highways, roads, and bridges.”

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Lujan spoke about how the investment in infrastructure in northwestern New Mexico would create new opportunities for New Mexicans.

“I was honored to support this project which will have lasting impacts in rural and Tribal communities,” Luján said. “With the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal signed into law, I’m confident that New Mexicans will begin seeing more investments like this one to repair our infrastructure and create thousands of jobs.”

Leger Fernández talked about linking communities.

“Safe roads and bridges are essential to connect our rural and Tribal communities to critical health resources, job opportunities, and schools,” she said. Highway 64 is an important transportation corridor that connects New Mexico to our neighboring states and provides mobility for many of our northwestern communities, especially Navajo.

“This grant will connect communities within the Navajo Nation to each other and their neighbors.”

In 2020, Heinrich and then-U.S. Rep. Ben Ray Luján wrote to DOT in support of the project requested by the New Mexico Department of Transportation and in partnership with the Navajo Nation and Navajo Department of Transportation.

In April of this year, the Biden administration remodeled an existing grant program as the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity grant program. One of the goals of the reform is to make funding more accessible for projects that can demonstrate improvements to racial and Tribal equity.

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