

President Nez discusses CARES Act deadline, other concerns with Rep. O'Halleran

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NAZLINI, Ariz.— Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez met with Arizona Congressman Tom O'Halleran, D-Ariz., Oct. 23, to talk about ongoing CARES Act projects and the pending Dec. 30, deadline to expend funds, infrastructure needs and initiatives on the Navajo Nation, and efforts of the Nez-Lizer Administration to work with federal agencies to move projects forward.

The two leaders met in the community of Nazlini, Ariz., as the Nez-Lizer Administration held a food and care package distribution to help local residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. O'Halleran and his staff members also assisted with the distribution of food and supplies to local families.

"We appreciate the leadership of Congressman Tom O'Halleran and for his advocacy for the Navajo people on many issues at the federal level. The Congressman supported tribes with CARES Act funds and continues to advocate for an extension to the CARES Act funds deadline.," Nez said. "The residents of Nazlini also appreciated his visit and assistance during the food and care package distribution."

They focused on the need for more federal funding and support for infrastructure projects including roads, water resources, and electric lines. On Oct. 1, Congressman O'Halleran voted in support of a bill entitled, the "Heroes Act," which, if passed by the Senate, would provide \$9.5

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billion for tribes to further assist with the response to COVID-19.

"I always value the opportunity to hear directly from President Nez as we work to understand what federal assistance and resources are needed to support families on [the] Navajo [Nation], especially as the coronavirus pandemic continues to hit Navajo communities hard," O'Halleran said. "I was glad to be able to lend a hand in distributing supplies to help keep Navajo families safe, and I look forward to continuing to work with President Nez to make the voices of tribal communities heard in Washington."

Nez also spoke about his administration's work with federal agencies to address and expedite federal regulations in order to process and complete infrastructure projects, in accordance with Executive Order No. 13924 issued by the White House on May 19. In June, Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer issued letters and a "white paper" to several federal agencies, outlining recommendations to implement measures to make the Executive Order beneficial and effective for the Navajo Nation.

"We look forward to continuing our partnership with Cong. O'Halleran and the rest of our congressional delegation to complete CARES Act projects, to advocate for the extension of the Dec. 30 CARES Act deadline, and to work with our federal partners to move forward with infrastructure projects and initiatives," Nez added.