



TÓ NIZHÓNÍ ÁNÍ
"SACRED WATER SPEAKS"

Mission: Rooted in protecting the water of Black Mesa, we're working to bring power back to our Diné communities impacted by coal. Tó bee iiná. Water is life.

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August 29, 2025

Crystalyne Curley, Speaker
25th Navajo Nation Council
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Yáá'át'ééh Speaker Curley,

The Northern Navajo Agency Council (NAC) held their most recent quarterly meeting on Saturday, June 21, 2025, at Cove Chapter House in Cove, Arizona. I had previously attempted several times to present to the NAC, but was only allowed to provide a written report once. At this meeting, I was on the agenda to present a five-minute report on two topics: 1.) an update on our community engagement regarding the Tucson Electric Power's (TEP) Right-of-Way (ROW) renewal and 2.) updates on changes to the proposed Hydrogen Pipeline across Navajo. Tó Nizhóní Ání (TNA) has been engaging with relevant chapters on both issues. At least 13 chapters will be directly impacted by the hydrogen pipeline, and we have been educating members using scientific research data provided to us by our partners who have studied the environmental impacts that hydrogen production and the hydrogen pipeline pose.

I work hard to do my work with integrity and transparency. Our Navajo communities struggle daily with enormous amounts of information and misinformation. It takes a considerable amount of time to break down technical information accurately, especially in our Diné language, so that members can understand and make informed decisions. This is always the goal for the organization I work for, To Nizhoni Ani. This is why I am writing to you. I believe that Council Delegates and elected officials representing Navajo communities, should be held accountable and held to the same standards. In particular, I am very concerned about the ethics and behavior of a certain Council Delegate at the Northern Agency Council Meeting on June 21, 2025.

Before my report presentation, the NAC acted on Resolution 6: "Supporting and Recommending to the 25th Navajo Nation Council Resources and Development Committee to Support and Approve Greenview Energy in their Proposed Pipeline Through Northern Navajo Agency", sponsored by Herman Farley and Victor Dee. Mr. Dee gave a short presentation about his resolution, saying in Navajo essentially that everyone including the U.S. Government, NM Governor Lujan-Grisham, and all the Permittees along the pipeline route support this pipeline and that they have obtained most all the Grazing Permittee's signatures of approval, so they are requesting the NAC to approve this

resolution, so it can begin to bring in jobs and revenues to the Navajo Nation and Grazing Permittees. The audience then began their questions, with the first being:

“What is the project?” Mr. Dee responded, “It’s for the Greenview hydrogen pipeline, from Hogback Chapter and going out at Grey Mountain.”

Another came from a Chapter Official who stated,

“We haven’t seen you back at our chapter since last year and our chapter told you that our community did not want the hydrogen pipeline and our chapter has been steadfast in saying “No” to this project. We’ve asked for updated maps and more information, yet no one has come. Some of these sites are close to Anasazi ruins or our Diné cultural sites...and there’s still a lot of unanswered questions, so our community is very opposed to this pipeline project.”

Mr. Dee’s response was that there are a lot of chapters who oppose the pipeline; however, the permit holders are the ones who support this project. Another Chapter Official stated he would like to hear the opposition’s stance so they could determine the pros and cons to be better informed. Still another Chapter Official asked,

“What types of community benefits are being offered?”, “Where is this hydrogen going to be processed and how is it going to be transported? Are wells going to be drilled?”

These questions indicate that Chapter Officials, especially newly elected ones and many impacted community members, clearly do not understand what hydrogen is, how its produced, or much about this project or how it will impact them, which is the responsibility of the developers (companies) to ensure adequate community engagement and education is provided.

Finally, Council Delegate Rickie Nez asked to speak. He answers the questions and concerns, (In Navajo and English), in the following way:

“When I was first elected to Council in 2019, Tallgrass and Greenview’s plan was to use hydrogen since a lot of grant monies were available. There’s a hydrogen pipeline from the Appalachian area to Southern Wyoming and the plan was to bring that pipeline to the Southwest through Colorado, near Aneth, and cross into Red Mesa, Dennehotso, Kayenta, Shonto, Tuba City, Cameron, towards Flagstaff into Baja, California, and transported from there to Asia, where they use a lot of hydrogen. I became the sponsor of this legislation to begin with, and it was going to generate \$22 million for the Navajo Nation, so these monies could be distributed to 110 chapters for Senior Citizens Programs, scholarships, Veterans Programs, and you name it. That’s what we do, we are appropriators as Navajo Nation Council. My first legislation was to have NTEC acquire Navajo Generating Station (NGS) at Page, AZ, and Kayenta Mine. It failed by one vote. We lost close to \$50 million dollars. How do we replace that? How are we going to generate revenue? I introduced another legislation for Forest Carbon Credits because we have trees and we’re going to generate \$20 million dollars soon. Now, how are we going to support 110 chapters? Northern Agency has oil, and we give a lot of money to Window Rock into the general fund. Navajo

Mine and Four Corners Power Plant give us a lot of money, \$40 million annually into the general revenues. NAPI and NECA give a lot of money. Which other agency can say that? From your Northern Agency, all the chapters are supporting. Whether they want to close these down, they're still going to get money somehow. Peterson Zah created the Permanent Trust Fund, that money is at \$2 billion. If we don't start planning for the future and how we're going to generate revenues, we might as well start shutting down some chapters. So, the plans changed. Greenview said they're going to hold off on hydrogen, but still the

Right-of-Way will be starting from Hogback, for both PNM and San Juan Generating Station, they're planning on piping natural gas and at some point, during the years, hydrogen will be piped with it. The pipeline is going to be about 36 inches in diameter, and this is just going to be for the Right-of-Way and it's going to be done safely. Every so often, there's going to be monitoring, computers will tell them where it's leaking or if there's anything wrong, and they'll go there and mitigate that. So as I'm thinking for you, you're either going to oppose it or support it. To me, I tell my colleagues across the nation, if you're going to oppose the mine as well as the Four Corners Power Plant, we might as well introduce a legislation saying that you don't use the money that comes from there to your chapter, that's what I tell them. All these operations are done within the laws, there's Federal laws, state laws, and tribal laws. (In Navajo): It is not done haphazardly or carelessly. These plans are being carried out thoughtfully with much discussion. (In English): If you don't want these projects, vote red. If you support it, vote green, that's all there is to it. One side's going to win but you've got to respect the losing party. Thank you and God bless you."

After Delegate Nez's statement to the audience, there was no further discussion. His statements were made with only the company information and talking points. It was clear that the public did not know or understand about the latest developments of the hydrogen pivot to Liquid Natural Gas (LNG). We are appalled by Mr. Nez's threats to impacted chapters that oppose projects like hydrogen and the expansion of gas in the Four Corners area. A statement like "we might as well introduce legislation saying that you don't use the money that comes from there to your chapters", undermines democracy at the local level. Statements like this don't build trust, inform, educate, and generate critical thinking and planning. These types of statements effectively shut down any further discussion from locally elected officials to be involved, ask hard questions and make better decisions for their communities.

Aside from the threats made to the Northern Agency Council, Mr. Nez did not say where he got his information, nor did he cite any credible third-party analysis or know any specifics to the project. We live in a time when the information given by the company and proposed project simply is not enough. First and foremost, outside companies with their proposed projects don't have Navajo interests at the top of their priorities. We have to remember that they are always looking out for themselves and their bottom line.

Talking to the Navajo officials who have the duty to look out for their communities in this manner is unacceptable, especially a Navajo Nation Council Delegate. Questions and concerns posed by Chapter officials in regard to the Hydrogen and Hydrogen to Gas project are valid and deserve discussion and vetting away from the company's talking points and narratives. A delegate should never speak to the public for the purpose of silencing the public. Everyone in the room became

quiet, as if they were in a state of fear and shock to make any other comments, and the NAC moved forward with their agenda.

Sometimes we (TNA) are mistakenly called out as providing scare tactics when we are actually sharing information that has been cited by science and analyzed by economic and energy experts. By contrast, Delegate Nez misused his position as a member of Resources and Development Committee and local Council Delegate to halt further discussion and questions on the hydrogen and gas topic. Clearly, Mr. Nez's position was in favor of the company and did not provide clear justification or specifics. I'm asking for the Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council to exercise her authority to make corrections and put a stop to what looks like authoritarian behavior from Mr. Rickie Nez at the NAC meeting in June. Our people have rights; Chapters have rights and Chapter officials have the obligation to make decisions for their community that is in the best interest of their local lands and resources. This includes the health and well-being of the people. We should never feel pressured to give up our resources to outside companies and projects that undermine our local sovereignty. Just because a company tells us its good for us does not mean it is. We have plenty of current and past experiences with industry to know what the outcomes are. We also have the right to get our questions and concerns answered.

"Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) is a collective human right of Indigenous peoples to give or withhold their consent for any actions that would impact their lands, territories, or rights." (www.conservation.org), which is backed by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Please ensure that your 25th Navajo Nation Council members understand this important principle of Indigenous human rights, support, and practice FPIC. Crucially, please reiterate the role and responsibility of Navajo Nation Council Delegates, and the standard and principles they must adhere to each and every day they carry out their position. We have elections, a three-branch government, and representation at different levels of government. We are not a dictatorship, and we don't bully our membership in favor of outsiders. We look forward to your response to all the issues raised herein. T'áá'íyisí Ahxéhee'.

With Sincerity and K'é,

Eleanor Smith

Eleanor Smith, Community Organizer
Tó Nizhóní Ání (Sacred Water Speaks)

CC: Brenda Jesus, Chair, NN Resources and Development Committee
Navajo Times Editor
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