



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Navajo Nation takes Horsemen Lodge land into trust, expanding economic opportunities to benefit relocatees



Members of the 25th Navajo Nation Council join representatives from the Bureau of Indian Affairs as President Buu Nygren signed a deed placing 13.8 acres of land into trust.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Speaker Crystalayne Curley, alongside members of the 25th Navajo Nation Council, joined Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren for the signing of a General Warranty Deed, officially placing 13.8 acres of land near Flagstaff, Arizona, into trust. This includes a parcel housing the Horsemen Lodge restaurant.

The initiative, known as the Lower Highway 89 Project, involves three contiguous parcels totaling approximately 13.8 acres in Coconino County. By signing the General Warranty Deed, the land's status changes from fee land to trust land. This action not only adds to the Nation's land base but also opens up new opportunities for economic development.

"Placing the Lower Highway 89 parcels into trust is a critical step in strengthening our economy and enhancing our growth potential. Expanding our land holdings preserves our sovereignty and creates new avenues for economic development," said Speaker Curley. "This initiative has received unanimous support from the Navajo Hopi Land Commission and the 25th Navajo Nation Council's Gaming Subcommittee."

Over the past year, the 25th Navajo Nation Council has worked closely with the U.S. Department of the Interior to secure trust status for the 13.8-acre parcel near Flagstaff.

The Navajo Hopi Land Commission (NHLC) played a key role in securing the fee-to-trust land status for the Lower Highway 89 Project, which was officially signed today by President Nygren

and Acting Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Navajo Regional Director Deborah Shirley.

In March 2020, the NHLC passed a Resolution NHLCMA-3-2020, supporting the purchase and development of the Horsemen Lodge and directing the Navajo Nation to collaborate with ONHIR, the U.S. Department of the Interior, and the BIA to expedite the land-into-trust process.

The NHLC holds authority over decisions related to the management and use of lands acquired under the Navajo Hopi Land Settlement Act of 1974.

“This change in land status will provide the Nation with greater flexibility to invest in economic initiatives and ensure that this land will benefit Navajo relocatees for generations,” said Naabik’iyati Gaming Subcommittee Chair Eugenia Charles-Newton, who attended the signing ceremony held during the Tribal Interior Budget Committee meeting in Washington, D.C.

The fee-to-trust process transfers land title from an individual or entity to the United States for the benefit of the tribe, a vital tool for expanding tribal sovereignty and economic self-determination.

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