



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

CONTACTS:

Jared Touchin, Communications Director
(928) 274-4275

Crystalyne Curley, Sr. Public Information Officer
(928) 274-2758

nnopvp.communications@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 25, 2021

**Navajo Nation Commission on Emergency Management reaffirms
drought declaration state of emergency to activate additional resources**

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On Friday, the Navajo Nation Commission on Emergency Management held a special meeting at the request of Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, and approved Resolution CEM 21-06-25, reaffirming the Navajo Nation’s drought state of emergency declaration to activate available emergency resources to help mitigate drought conditions.

“Everyone is aware that we are in a severe drought in the entire southwest. With this declaration we will be able to direct more resources to help address the situation. The Department of Water Resources has workers out in the communities helping to repair windmills, earthen dams, and other resources for our people. In addition, the Navajo Department of Health and Community Health Representatives are also distributing water to elders and disabled that are in need. During times of adversity, we have to remember the teachings of our elders such as T’áá Hwó Ají Téego, or self-reliance and self-determination. The teachings from our elders provide guidance and allow us to persevere, so please check on your elders and make sure they have everything that they need. We are still in a public health emergency due to COVID-19, so we have to continue to address that emergency as well,” said President Nez.

The Department of Water Resources recently reported the completion of repairs to 37 earthen dams in several communities. In addition, the Division of Natural Resources and Division of Community Development continue to coordinate efforts to provide hay and other resources for livestock to communities with \$4 million in funding approved by the Navajo Nation Council’s Resources and Development Committee.

Due to several factors including drought conditions, President Nez and Vice President Lizer also issued an Executive Order on Friday implementing Stage 2 Fire Restrictions to increase prohibitions to help protect against the spread of more wildfires.

“From the local level on up, we have to coordinate and properly carry out measures to help address the current drought conditions and to help prevent further problems such as overgrazing. Some of the issues we are facing are preventable through proper strategizing, not only within our

government, but individually as well. Our administration will continue to work to provide more resources to help with water resources, livestock, and agriculture,” said Vice President Lizer.

Resolution CEM 21-06-25, reaffirming the Navajo Nation’s drought state of emergency declaration, was passed by a vote of 3-0 and concurred by President Nez and Vice President Lizer.

###

For the latest news from the Office of the President and Vice President, please visit <http://www.opvp.navajo-nsn.gov/> or find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

THE NAVAJO NATION

JONATHAN NEZ | PRESIDENT MYRON LIZER | VICE PRESIDENT



CEM 21-06-25

STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARATION

THE NAVAJO NATION COMMISSION ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT RE-AFFIRMS THE 2018 DROUGHT DECLARATION STATE OF EMERGENCY AND RE-AFFIRMS THE CONTINUATION OF THE DROUGHT DECLARATION UNTIL SUCH TIME IT IS RESCINDED

WHEREAS:

1. Pursuant to 2 N.N.C., §§ 881 and 883 (A) (C), the Navajo Nation Council established the Navajo Nation Commission on Emergency Management to coordinate emergency and disaster relief service by Navajo Nation and non-tribal entities in conjunction with the Department of Emergency Management; and to recommend to the Navajo Nation Council legislation or other appropriate activity regarding natural and man-made emergencies; and
2. Pursuant to 2 N.N.C., § 884 (B) (1), the Navajo Nation Commission on Emergency Management is responsible for declaring a state of emergency with the concurrence of the President of the Navajo Nation; and
3. Pursuant to 2 N.N.C., § 884 (B) (2), the Navajo Nation Commission on Emergency Management will assist in seeking assistance from federal, state, and other tribal governments, local and private agencies to address emergency and disaster related situations; and
4. The Navajo Nation Emergency Drought Declaration of February 26, 2018 is still in effect. Precipitation deficits accumulated during recent years contribute to long-term drought conditions which warrant a re-affirmation of the Drought Declaration; and
5. On June 8, 2021, the Arizona Governor's Drought Inter-Agency Coordinating Group (ICG) recommended that the state's Drought Emergency Declaration (PCA99006) and Drought Declaration for the State of Arizona (Executive Order 2007-10) remain in place; and
6. On May 12, 2021, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) declared 533 primary counties in 20 states as 'Secretarial Disaster Designations – 2021 Crop Year, All Crop' due to the ongoing drought. The 533 primary counties designated as all crop disaster areas correspond to the following states: Arizona (15); California (56); Colorado (63); Hawaii (1); Idaho (2); Iowa (8); Kansas (30); Louisiana (1); Montana (14); Nevada (17); New Mexico (33); North Carolina (3); North Dakota (48); Oklahoma (13); Oregon (18); South Dakota (12); Texas (149); Utah (28) Washington (1), Wyoming (21); and
7. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) declared 524 primary counties in 18 states as 'Secretarial Disaster Designations – 2021 Crop Year, All Drought' due to the ongoing drought (updated May 12, 2021). The 524 primary counties designated as all drought disaster areas correspond to the

following states: Arizona (15, which include Apache, Coconino, Navajo); California (56); Colorado (63); Hawaii (1); Idaho (2); Iowa (8); Kansas (30); Montana (14); Nevada (17), New Mexico (33, which include Bernalillo, Cibola, McKinley, San Juan, Sandoval, Socorro); North Dakota (48); Oklahoma (13); Oregon (18); South Dakota (12); Texas (144); Utah (28, which include San Juan); Washington (1); Wyoming (21), as primary counties designated for 2021 drought disaster losses; and

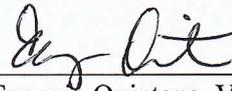
8. The U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook, Drought Tendency During the Period June 17, 2021 to September 30, 2021, indicates existing drought should persist or intensify across the south and west swaths of the contiguous United States. In addition, drought has expanded into the northern reaches of the New Mexico/Arizona border (National Weather Service, Climate Prediction Center); and
9. The U.S. Drought Monitor provides weekly map updates, it shows as of June 17, 2021, 95.84% of Navajo Nation is in extreme (D3) to exceptional (D4) drought conditions, and 64.38% of the Navajo Nation is in exceptional (D4) drought (https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/data/pdf/current/current_tribal_243or_trd.pdf); and
10. The National Weather Service – Climate Prediction Center reports (June 21, 2021) El Nino-Southern Oscillation (ENSO): ENSO-neutral conditions are present. ENSO-neutral is favored through the Northern Hemisphere summer (78% chance for the June-August season) and fall (50% chance for the September-November season), with chances of La Nina increasing into the fall and winter 2021-22. La Nina is anticipated to continue affecting above average temperatures and below average precipitation across the United States during the next few months, resulting in reduced surface water flows which impact regional Navajo livestock and municipal wells used for drinking water, particularly alluvial wells, which are more prone to the effects of drought, resulting in less recharge, low static water levels, lower yields; and
11. USDA/NRCS and Navajo Nation Water Management Branch snow survey data, (i.e. March 15, 2021 AZ Basin Outlook Reports), depicts the snowpack on the Chuska Mountains to be 47% of median; the forecast calls for well below normal runoff for Wheatfields Creek, Captain Tom Wash, Bowl Canyon Creek and other Navajo Nation dams and reservoirs; and
12. Approximately 7,500 stock ponds exist on the Navajo Nation (2003 Navajo Nation Drought Contingency Plan), and as the water supply diminishes and evaporates, more pressure will be put on the 900 Navajo Nation windmills and numerous municipal wells used for drinking; and
13. Drought conditions have created a critical shortage of water and range feed for livestock, which will result in the generally poor physical conditions of livestock and increase in diseases; the land condition will continue to deteriorate, and the socio-economic framework of the Navajo Nation will be negatively impacted. Chapters, livestock owners and farmers will need to plan to protect and preserve their land and their livestock; and
14. Excessive livestock and overgrazing is directly related to drought vulnerability and lack of adequate vegetation for rangeland; these destructive practices adversely affects vegetation and natural ecosystems for many years, if not permanently; and
15. The Navajo Nation has issued an Executive Order of Stage 2 Fire Restriction effective June 21, 2021, signed by President Jonathan Nez and Vice-President Myron Lizer. The probability of catastrophic wildfire is extremely high which may result in loss of homes, animals, forest, vegetation, land erosion, and negatively affect the air quality.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the Navajo Nation Commission on Emergency Management declares the Navajo Nation in a Drought State of Emergency Declaration as of February 26, 2018; and
2. The Navajo Nation Commission on Emergency Management finds it necessary for appropriate Navajo Nation entities to continue and/or immediately begin and maintain coordination and collaboration with relevant agencies for use of resources and continuing to seek solutions to meet the needs of the Navajo Nation public; and
3. The Navajo Nation shall activate available emergency resources such as community education, assistance, and other means as determined fit and feasible to restore and sustain vital community infrastructure.

CERTIFICATION

We hereby certify that the foregoing declaration was duly considered by the Navajo Nation Commission on Emergency Management at a duly called meeting in Window Rock, Navajo Nation, Arizona, at which a quorum was present that the same was passed by a vote of 3 in favor and 0 opposed, and 0 abstained, this 25th day of June, 2021.



Eugenia Quintana, Vice-Chairperson
Commission on Emergency Management
Navajo Nation

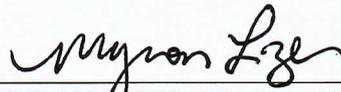
Motion: Ben Bennett

Second: Dicky Bain

CONCURRENCE:



JONATHAN NEZ, President
THE NAVAJO NATION



MYRON MIZER, Vice President
THE NAVAJO NATION