



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL  
Office of the Speaker

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Navajo Nation Council Speaker Recognizes Wells Fargo Settlement Team**

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Aug. 27, 2019 – Navajo Nation Council Speaker Seth Damon extended recognition for the \$6.5 million settlement between the Navajo Nation and Wells Fargo to the members of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council Budget and Finance Committee, former Navajo Nation Attorney General Ethel Branch and Navajo Nation Department of Justice attorneys Cherie Espinoza, Jana Werner and Mel Rodis on Monday, Aug. 26, 2019.

“Together, the Budget and Finance Committee of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council and the Navajo Nation Department of Justice created the case against Wells Fargo based on the testimony of Navajo elders and their families that the bank had never gotten consent open up credit accounts,” said Speaker Damon.

“The Navajo Nation Council and the Department of Justice acted to protect Navajo elders, their families and the Nation from years of mistreatment and predatory practices at the hands of Wells Fargo bank,” said Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown, member of the current Budget and Finance Committee.

As a former Wells Fargo employee, Delegate Brown provided testimony to the Navajo Nation that the bank pressured employees to set up false accounts for Navajo elders to meet quotas. These practices served to further entrench the Navajo people in deep cycles of debt that would consume significant portions of fixed incomes in an already poverty-stricken area, said Delegate Brown.

Former Navajo Nation Department of Justice Attorney General Ethel Branch and attorneys Cherie Espinoza, Jana Werner and Mel Rodis worked on the Navajo Nation’s lawsuits in partnership with the committee that were filed in 2017, stated Speaker Damon.

Their work in taking the testimony of our Navajo Nation members and challenging one of the country’s largest corporations is recognized and deeply appreciated by the Navajo Nation Council, said Speaker Damon.

The Navajo Nation Department of Justice announced this month that a settlement of \$6.5 million had been reached and that the Navajo Nation has received the funds in exchange for dismissing its case. Speaker Damon also thanked current Navajo Nation Attorney General Doreen McPaul for continuing to pursue the lawsuits after her appointment in April.

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