



# 24<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council

## Office of the Speaker

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Past Leadership Paved the Way for Navajo Sovereignty

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Today the Navajo Nation Council celebrates Sovereignty Day. In 1985, the Navajo Nation prevailed at the US Supreme Court in the Kerr McGee Corp. v. Navajo Tribe of Indians case challenging the Nation’s sovereignty and ability to levy taxes.

The case reaffirmed the Navajo Nation’s sovereign status and paved the way for the creation of the Permanent Trust Fund.

To commemorate the victory and reaffirmation of Navajo sovereignty, the council passed CMY-35-85 designating April 16 as Navajo Nation Sovereignty Day. Later the council moved the holiday to the fourth Monday in April.

“Our sovereignty predates the founding of the United States. It is not enough to be a sovereign in the abstract. As a Nation, we must exercise our sovereignty in order to demonstrate the power we as a people and government hold,” Navajo Nation Council Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhááí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí, Rock Springs, Tsayatoh) stated. “We stand on the shoulders of our former leaders to reach new heights in the development of our Nation and the exercise of our sovereignty.”

“Three decades ago, outstanding leadership submitted a novel idea, the Permanent Trust Fund, to the Navajo people,” said Speaker Damon. “Thirty-four years later – in this spring alone – council delegates opened multiple community and economic development enterprises partially funded by the Permanent Trust Fund’s income. On behalf of the 24th Navajo Nation Council, we look forward to setting the foundation for future generations of economic and community development.”

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