



## **President Nygren meets with Natural Resource Conservation Service Chief Bettencourt**



*President Buu Nygren meets with NRCS Chief Aubrey Bettencourt in Washington, D.C. to discuss expanding USDA support for Navajo farmers and ranchers. Photo Courtesy of NNWO Staff*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – This week, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren met Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Chief Aubrey Bettencourt to move forward efforts that would bring long-overdue agricultural support directly to Navajo farmers and ranchers. A major focus of their conversation revolved around dedicating space for an NRCS office in Window Rock, AZ. This move would immediately expand local access to technical staff, conservation planning, and farming infrastructure improvement programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and PL-566 Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act funding.

The meeting also addressed how complex and overlapping permitting processes between federal agencies like the NRCS and the Bureau of Indian Affairs have slowed down the delivery of resources. Both parties agreed to work toward aligning requirements to help producers get access to funding more efficiently. In addition, President Nygren raised the urgent need to modernize support for both large-scale projects like the Navajo Agricultural Products Industry's Navajo Indian Irrigation Project and smaller farms across the Nation.

Additional discussions focused on expanding pathways for the next generation of Navajo farmers and ranchers through partnerships with Navajo Technical University and Diné College's Land Grant Office. Initial ideas included spotlighting Navajo farmers who are successfully navigating USDA programs, and supporting the Navajo Beef and wool buyback programs. Additionally, more resources were discussed for combatting threats to rangeland health, including field demonstrations to control invasive species like Russian olives. Particularly in resource rich areas like the San Juan river corridor.

The meeting concluded with a promising invitation for Chief Bettencourt to attend the upcoming Navajo Nation Fair and to participate in joint outreach alongside USDA Secretary Rollins, the Department of the Interior, and other federal agencies. The intent of these partnerships would be to expand access to federal tools, streamline complex permitting processes, and create lasting partnerships for the benefit of Navajo farmers and ranchers.