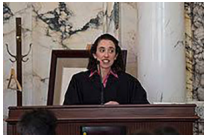


## Two former lawmakers happy about a 9th circuit ruling

Written by Staff Reports  
Friday, 09 August 2019 04:04

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“The Navajo people were given a big victory today,” LoRenzo Bates said July 30. “I applaud this federal judge who affirms our sovereignty, recognizes our need to continue in our own governance, and our inherent right to be,” Bates said.

Bates is a former Navajo Nation lawmaker who rose to serve four terms as its presiding speaker of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council is from Upper Fruitland, and whose chapter is directly affected by the loss of jobs and revenues from energy.

“The federal appeals court made the right decision today, [July 30] saying ‘no’ to environmental bullyism,” Sharon Clahchischilliage said. Clahchischilliage left office in January as state representative for New Mexico House District 4. “They’re fighting the wrong fight when it comes [to] putting people out of work, reducing our livelihood, and taking millions of dollars from Navajo.”

Sharon Clahchischilliage said Judge Michelle Friedland’s ruling said the Navajo people can’t be sued. Clahchischilliage said, “That’s the basis of our sovereign immunity,”

“We created our own energy company and bought out a coal company to save jobs and revenue for another 30 years,” Bates said.

“We invested our money in energy,” Bates said. “Our people have been in energy development since the early 1920s. We’re not stopping because foreign agitators camp out in our hogans and prey on our people imposing their judgment and misgivings,” he continued.

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“Outside environmentalists come here to Navajo, indoctrinate our people to be followers instead of leaders of sovereignty,” Clahchischilliage said. “New Mexico is taking a position against our sustainability, even some of our Navajo leaders are buying into the no energy-no future annihilation.”

While serving as District 4 state representative, Clahchischilliage sought the support of President Donald Trump for coal base energy to save jobs in her district. The White House responded shortly after with an executive order compelling continued coal use for energy.

The Navajo Nation purchase of a coal mining plant and operation represented the single largest acquisition in energy in the United States.

Oil and gas development on the Navajo Nation began in 1922, and coal mining in 1961. The Navajo Nation is mineral and energy rich and contributes significantly to providing electricity in the southwest.

Both former lawmakers remain active in their communities, and support energy expansion through their staunch beliefs and drive to save jobs and revenues for the Navajo people.