



# 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 29, 2015

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## Special Session called to consider override of presidential veto

**WINDOW ROCK** – The Navajo Nation Council is scheduled to convene in a special session at 10:00 a.m. on Dec. 30 in the Council Chamber in Window Rock to address five legislations including Legislation No. 0398-15, which seeks to override a presidential veto of resolution CO-46-15.

Council approved CO-46-15 in October, which sought to amend certain provisions within Title II of the Navajo Nation Code to make the legislative process more efficient. The resolution also included language regarding the president's line-item veto authority, which stated, "The veto of a budget line-item shall only be to the numeric appropriated dollar amount."

Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichíí, Steamboat), who is sponsoring the legislation to override the veto, said the intent of the language is to clarify the purpose of the line-item veto authority that was granted in 2009 through a public referendum.

Radio messages from Delegate Shepherd and Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland) have begun airing on local radio stations to offset misleading information from the Office of the President and Vice President in recent days, which implied that the Council is attempting to take away the president's line-item veto authority.

"We are not attempting to limit the authority granted by the Navajo people. We are clarifying the original intent of the line-item authority, which is to prevent excessive spending of public funds," stated Delegate Shepherd.

In a Dec. 28 press release from the Office of the President, it states that the special session will be held with the "intent to override the Navajo Nation President's line-item veto authority granted through referendum by the Navajo people."

"The information provided by the President's Office is completely misleading," said Speaker Bates. "In no way does this legislation attempt to strip the president of the line-item veto authority."

Speaker Bates also stated that without clarification to the line-item veto authority, the definitions of "budget items" and "budget line items" remain unclear – both terms were used in 2009 when the referendum was presented to the Navajo people to consider.

Delegate Shepherd previously stated that when the referendum was presented to the public in 2009, the public was informed that dollar amounts or appropriations would be subject to the line-item veto authority, and that President Begaye continues to overstep the authority granted by the Navajo people by overstriking legislative language such as Conditions of Appropriations.

On Dec. 28, Speaker Bates once again sent a letter to President Russell Begaye offering to sit down and discuss the issue in order to reach a compromise. A letter was first sent to President Begaye on Dec. 7 inviting him to attend a Dec. 17 meeting to address the issue, however, the president did not respond or attend.

During the Dec. 17 meeting, Attorney General Ethel Branch described the 2009 referendum language as “ambiguous” due to the lack of definition of the terms “budget items” as opposed to “budget line items.”

“It is very disappointing that President Begaye continues to purposely mislead the Navajo people by telling the public that this Council is attempting to ‘override the voice of the people’” stated Speaker Bates. “The people deserve to have accurate information provided to them.”

To view the legislation seeking the override, please click [here](#). The proposed agenda for Wednesday’s special session is available at [navajonationcouncil.org](http://navajonationcouncil.org).

The special session will be live-streamed via the Council’s designated Ustream channel. To view live proceedings during Wednesday’s session, please visit [ustream.tv](http://ustream.tv) and search for ‘Navajo Nation Council’ in the search box.

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