



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253
Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174
Crystalyne Curley (928) 286-7918
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Navajo Nation Council adopts the FY2018 Comprehensive Budget

WINDOW ROCK – The Navajo Nation Council deliberated for three days before adopting the Navajo Nation’s fiscal year 2018 Comprehensive Budget on Thursday, along with 18 amendments that were approved during this week’s budget session, by a vote of 19-2. The Comprehensive Budget will also be subject to consideration by President Russell Begaye.

At the start of the budget session on Tuesday, legislation sponsor Council Delegate Seth Damon (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí’, Rock Springs, Tsayatoh), explained that the proposed operating budget for FY2018 totals over \$636 million, which includes General Funds, Indirect Cost funding, higher education set aside funds, personnel savings, proprietary fund, fiduciary funds, special revenue internal funds, and special revenue external funds.

According to the legislation, the Legislative Branch would receive over \$15 million, the Judicial Branch would receive nearly \$15 million, and the Executive Branch would receive over \$578 million. In addition, the legislation allows each branch of government to carryover certain amounts of unexpended funding from the current year’s budget for specific purposes.

During this week’s budget session, the Council approved several reallocations of funding to address various unmet needs including, \$60,000 for the Department of Water Resources for technical assistance, over \$1.2 million for stipends for grazing officials, land board members, and farm board members, \$49,000 for the Navajo Nation Library to digitize records, \$900,000 the Department of Diné Education to assist with the implementation of the Diné School Accountability Plan, and \$808,000 for the Navajo Area Agency on Aging to help meet the needs of senior citizens.

The carryovers approved this week through amendments included the following:

- Two separate carryovers proposed by Council Delegate Dwight Witherspoon (Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Hardrock, Pinon, Whippoorwill) for the Division of Natural Resources to provide additional funds to address stipends for grazing officials, land board members, and farm board members. The amount will not be determined until all balances are reconciled at the end of the current fiscal year.
- Carryover proposed by Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) from the executive branch in the amount of approximately \$148,000 for the Phoenix Indian Center.

- Carryover proposed by Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) in the amount of \$5.5 million from the executive branch to provide \$50,000 to each of the Nation's 110 chapters to help community members with home renovations, and an additional \$764,000 in financial assistance to the Naschitti Chapter to provide recovery funds for the Asaayi Lake wildfire that occurred.
- Carryover proposed by Council Delegate Dwight Witherspoon (Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Hardrock, Pinon, Whippoorwill) from the Division of Social Services for the Strengthening Families Program and its shelter in the community of Shiprock. The amount will not be determined until all balances are reconciled at the end of the current fiscal year.
- Carryover proposed by Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels) for the Navajo Veterans Administration and each of the five agency offices for \$83,000.

The Council also approved three additional Conditions of Appropriations this week as follows:

- COA proposed by Council Delegate Dwight Witherspoon (Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Hardrock, Pinon, Whippoorwill), directing the Office of Navajo Nation Scholarship and Financial Assistance to develop a scholarship/loan program to fill positions, which are considered difficult or challenging to fill, at divisions and to propose funding from the Síhasin Fund. The plan shall also include a provision for a percentage of loans to be forgiven if a recipient becomes employed with the Navajo Nation. The plan shall be presented to the appropriate oversight committees by the end of the second quarter in FY2018.
- COA proposed by Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) issued to the Department of Health to have the Navajo Area Agency on Aging, by the end of the second quarter, develop and/or update the policy regarding food purchase and delivery for Navajo Senior Centers, to ensure the health and safety of Navajo seniors and to fill all vacant agency staff positions by the end of the second quarter.
- COA proposed by Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels) issued to the Division of Economic Development to hire an appraiser within its Real Estate Department in order to carry out its plan of operation.

The Navajo Nation Council voted 19-2 to approved Legislation No. 0345-17, which required two-thirds approval, or 16 supporting votes to pass. The President will have 10 calendar days to consider the Comprehensive Budget once the final resolution is delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President.

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