



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Naabik'iyátí' Committee moves fiscal year 2019 budget legislation forward

WINDOW ROCK – The Naabik'iyátí' Committee met in a special meeting on Wednesday, and voted in support of Legislation No. 0278-18, which seeks the Navajo Nation Council's approval of the Navajo Nation fiscal year 2019 Comprehensive Budget.

The legislation sponsored by Council Delegate Seth Damon (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí', Rock Springs, Tsayatoh), requests the approval of a total operating budget of over \$767 million for FY2019, which begins on Oct. 1.

If approved by the Council and signed by the president, the current proposed budget would allocate over \$704 million for the executive branch, and over \$16 million each for the legislative and judicial branches.

Delegate Damon who also chairs the Budget and Finance Committee, which is tasked with recommending the Comprehensive Budget to the Navajo Nation Council each year, explained that the legislation also includes \$3 million in the base budget for compensation for grazing officials, farm board members, and Eastern Land Board members. For chapters, the proposed bill includes \$3.8 million for capital outlay match funds, and over \$12 million for non-administrative costs.

The Naabik'iyátí' Committee also approved four amendments that included reallocating \$21,000 from the Office of the President and Vice President to fund unmet needs for the Office of Miss Navajo, and reallocating \$1 million from the Department of Justice's fixed cost litigation fund to the water rights litigation fund.

The other two amendments included the approval of a carryover of up to \$255,000 for the animal control program under the Division of Natural Resources, and a Condition of Appropriation for the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency to prioritize the completion of the "tribal environmental plan" by the end of the first quarter of FY2019.

Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) also requested the committee's support for a directive to include the unmet needs for the Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, and Tselani/Cottonwood chapters and veterans to the unmet needs listing compiled by the Office of Management and

Budget based on previous budget hearings. Committee members approved the directive with a vote of 6-5.

The Budget and Finance Committee also recommended increased funding for a general wage adjustment for Navajo Nation employees, the retirement plan account, scholarship funding for students, and additional funds to prepare the Nation for the 2020 U.S. Census. It also calls for approximately \$3.3 million from the Permanent Trust Fund income to be set aside to assist in addressing future budget shortfalls.

The Naabik'iyáti' Committee approved the budget legislation along with four amendments and one directive with a vote of 11-0. The Navajo Nation Council is scheduled to begin the budget session next week.

The Comprehensive Budget will require two-thirds approval, or 16 supporting votes from the Council to pass, and will be subject to consideration by the president of the Navajo Nation.

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