



Navajo Nation commends inclusion of \$8 billion Tribal relief in third US stimulus bill

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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council expressed their support of a \$2 trillion bill that passed the Senate today which included \$8 billion of tribal government relief funding. The funding was included in the Senate Bipartisan Emergency COVID-19 Relief Package Compromise Agreement that came earlier in the day.

“What this means for the Navajo people is this: We must continue to work together, as a Nation, to fight back the spread of COVID-19. We must support each other and provide the encouragement to our children, our relatives and our elders to stay healthy,” said Speaker Seth Damon.

Senator Tom Udall (D-N.M) announced the inclusion of tribal relief funding earlier that includes more than \$2 billion in emergency funding for tribal governments, communities, and urban Indian health programs. The Indian Health Service will receive an amount of \$1.032 billion, \$453 million will go to Bureau of Indian Affairs programs and \$69 million will be allocated to the Bureau of Indian Education. All federal agencies will be able to better administer programs, such as tribal public safety programs, with the added funding.

“We have a very scary outbreak on the Navajo Nation,” said Senator Udall on the Senate Floor. “And I’m sure we need to weigh in and help.” Senator Udall, who is the Vice Chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, stressed the importance of the federal government’s trust responsibility to tribal nations, particularly during the COVID-19 public health crisis.

Once Congressional leaders and the Trump Administration came to the agreement, the entire stimulus bill was brought out to the Senate for vote, where it passed unanimously at 96-0. The funding will provide much needed resources to protect tribal nations across the US, a portion of which will ultimately be allocated to the Navajo Nation’s own COVID-19 relief activities. “Delegates provided Senator Udall’s staff with the Navajo Nation’s medical and general supplies needs. Now, delegates will advocate for the Navajo people’s portion of the \$8 billion stimulus,” said Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty.

Council delegates have been working remotely through teleconferencing calls to continue receiving information from the Navajo Nation Division of Community Development, Navajo Nation divisions, county and state agencies and federal partners relating to COVID-19 response efforts.

Council delegates are also taking part in local community efforts through leadership meetings, coal or wood deliveries, obtaining PPE for vital community workers, and more. “This is a level of coordination that my fellow council delegates and I have been actively engaged in because our chapter leaders and community members rely on us to give them that assurance that, together, we will do everything we can to stop COVID-19 from spreading,” said Council Delegate Mark Freeland.

Navajo Nation Council Delegates are the primary point of contact for local chapter governments to the central government in Window Rock. In addition to the central government, there are 110 chapters that elect a total of 24 council delegates to the Navajo Nation Council.

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