



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 20, 2020

Navajo Nation Council, President approve \$4 million Navajo Department of Health COVID-19 emergency funding



PHOTO: In this photo from Monday's Special Session of the Navajo Nation Council, Delegates discussed emergency legislation to fund COVID-19 response efforts. On, Friday, Mar. 20, 2020, the Council approved \$4 million in emergency funding for the Navajo Department of Health. President Nez signed the legislation into law the same day.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — The Navajo Nation Council voted to approve \$4 million in emergency funding for the Navajo Department of Health COVID-19 coronavirus response effort. COVID-19 is a new respiratory illness that is highly contagious and spreads from person-to-person. Recently, the Navajo Nation has highly encouraged people across the Navajo Nation to reduce travel, stay home, and to avoid physical contact with others.

“This emergency funding approved by the 24th Navajo Nation Council will directly assist the Navajo Nation’s efforts to better coordinate public education and to improve our capacity to respond to the outbreak of COVID-19,” said Speaker Seth Damon, who co-sponsored Legislation No. 0062-20 with Council Delegates Amber Kanazbah Crotty and Charlaine Tso.

“This \$4 million appropriation is a comprehensive, robust and focused response to the COVID-19 outbreak. This legislation will provide for adequate response to mitigate the pandemic and protect our People while limiting the spread of the virus in our communities. We urge our People to voluntarily self-isolate, stop all unnecessary travel, and practice the prevention guidelines outlined by the CDC,” said Delegate Crotty.

“This is for our People,” said Delegate Charlaine Tso. “What we are facing, as a Nation, is unlike anything we have seen in this modern day and age. And yet, it is inspiring to know that we are a resilient, strong people. My heart goes out to those who are undergoing treatment for this COVID-19, and with this \$4 million emergency funding, we want the Navajo Nation to know we are fighting to give our People the best fighting chance at overcoming this.”

The Navajo Nation Council deliberated on Monday and ultimately did not approve an emergency appropriation request from President Nez for \$3 million. Council delegates found that budget request did not specifically outline any COVID-19 emergency response activities. After Monday's special session, the Council created a petition for Friday's special session to allow necessary time to properly coordinate a budget request for COVID-19 response activities.

The \$4 million appropriation was approved by a vote of 22 in favor, zero opposed, with Speaker Damon not voting. The approved legislation, Navajo Nation Council Resolution No. CMA-06-20, was delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President by Friday afternoon. President Nez signed the emergency legislation into law that same day.

Resolution No. CMA-06-20 was considered alongside Legislation Nos. 0064-20, 0065-20, 0060-20, 0061-20 which allows chapters to temporarily meet quorum requirements with three registered voters, temporarily suspends and waives the statutory requirement for Navajo Nation Council and its subcommittees to hold regular meetings, and minimizes the procedures for the Navajo Nation's acceptance of donations greater than \$1000 in value. An additional legislation established the Navajo Nation's support for a clerical correction to H.R.6201, the "Families First Coronavirus Response Act." Those legislation passed with CMA-06-20.

For more information on COVID-19, go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov or the Navajo Nation Department of Health website at www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov.

###

MEDIA CONTACTS

Rick Abasta, Communications Director, (928) 287-2085.

Byron C. Shorty, Sr. Public Information Officer, (928) 287-2085.

communications@navajo-nsn.gov