



## Special Session of the 24th Navajo Nation Council canceled, Legislative Branch to undergo deep cleaning

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** April 30, 2020

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — Speaker Seth Damon issued a cancellation Thursday evening of the special session of the 24th Navajo Nation Council that was to be held tomorrow, May 1, 2020, so that all Legislative Branch buildings could be disinfected and sanitized.

“Out of an abundance of caution, I am recommending all Legislative Branch staff and Navajo Nation Council Delegates to undergo COVID-19 testing if they are presenting coronavirus symptoms and to follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines. I am also issuing a cancellation of tomorrow’s special session of the Navajo Nation Council,” said Speaker Seth Damon. “Thursday evening, a Legislative Branch employee reported symptoms of the coronavirus. I am closing all offices, ordering all Legislative Branch buildings to be sanitized and am in contact with the Navajo Area Indian Health Service to bolster monitoring efforts.”

All Navajo Nation Legislative Branch buildings will be closed for deep cleaning. Under Legislative Branch protocol, the first instance of a symptomatic report will automatically result in a further closure of program offices.

Roselyn Tso, director of the Navajo Area Office of the Indian Health Service, advised the Office of the Speaker late Thursday that all Legislative Branch employees should self-monitor for symptoms, which include shortness of breath, coughing, chills or fever. If any symptoms are presenting, the individual needs to go immediately to the nearest healthcare facility to undergo COVID-19 testing and to self-quarantine until the results of the test are confirmed.

The Legislative Branch is comprised of 13 programs that have been operating on extremely limited office staff since March. Work will continue to move forward under expanded remote work plans with each of the programs.

“Although the Legislative Branch and the Navajo Nation Council did everything we could to cancel the 2020 Spring Session, we had to move forward with the necessary staff under our statutory obligation,” said Speaker Damon. “Though the individual has had only one point of contact with members of the Legislative Branch in the last two weeks, our priority is, and has always been, the health safety of our employees.”

The Navajo Nation Council Chamber will be completely closed and will reopen after proper cleaning and ceremonial procedures are followed. “Our Legislative Branch family was aware of this possibility, and together, we will continue to encourage each other to be strong and supportive of ourselves and the communities we serve,” said Speaker Damon.

All Legislative Branch programs are administered by the Navajo Nation Office of the Speaker. Hon. Seth Damon is the Speaker of the 24th Navajo Nation Council and heads Legislative Branch programs.

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