



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Navajo Nation Council approves funds to address dilapidated Judicial facilities

WINDOW ROCK – With a unanimous vote, the Navajo Nation Council approved Legislation No. 0401-15 on Tuesday, seeking funds from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance in the amount of \$300,000 to assist in the completion of modular buildings that will house the Navajo Nation Supreme Court and the Administrative Office of the Courts in Window Rock.

If signed into law, the funds would be used to design the electrical system, installation of a new waterline, add concrete for site access and curbing, asphalt for an access road, and a parking lot for the facility that was purchased by the Judicial Branch.

According to the legislation, the funding costs are as follows: \$31,113.90 for mobilization of modular building and storage; \$19,757.00 for site prep and interior finishes; \$73,828.00 for asphalt and signage for a parking lot; \$108,519.10 for utility connection (i.e. electrical, water, and sewage); and \$66,782.00 for ribbon foundations, curbing, and gutters.

The modular project began in August 2014, after judicial staff and administrative workers were forced to relocate to at least four scattered offices throughout Window Rock due to unsafe working conditions, dilapidated buildings, and the risk of mold contamination.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Otto Tso (Tó Nanees Dizi) expressed that there is a critical need to complete the Supreme Court and administrative offices because it is a vital function of the Navajo Nation that needs to be addressed immediately.

“What we are doing is addressing the current Supreme Court’s unmet needs due to the lack of funding. We as a Nation need to look at upgrading our buildings and give our employees a safe place to work,” said Delegate Tso. “We also need to keep in mind that it must also be a safe environment for our Navajo people who utilize the courts and its offices.”

Delegate Tso said the Council’s approval of the funding is a major step toward addressing one of the Judicial Branch’s top priorities and also for the Law and Order Committee.

During a Council summit held in early December 2015, Acting Chief Justice Allen Sloan met with Council members to discuss the Nation’s priorities outlined in the “One Nation, One Voice” agreement. During the meeting, he emphasized the need to replace or improve judicial facilities

that continue to deteriorate and displace judicial employees.

In November, it was reported that the Nation's Peacemaking Program and the Window Rock Office of Probation and Parole Services would be relocated due to mold found in their facilities.

Council members voted 18-0 to pass Legislation No. 0401-15. President Russell Begaye will have ten calendar days to consider the legislation once it is sent to the Office of the President and Vice President.

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