



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

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Commercial Smoking Ban, Uranium Mining Congressional Hearing, and Judicial Branch funding to be considered by Navajo Nation Council

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PHOTO: Chairman Rick Nez walking into the Council Chambers for the 2021 Winter Council Session.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — The 24th Navajo Nation Council to consider multiple legislations to enact a commercial smoking ban, a uranium mining congressional hearing request, and \$961,438 for the unmet needs of the Judicial Branch during the 2021 Fall Session from Oct. 18 to 22, at the Navajo Nation Council Chambers in Window Rock, Ariz.

Among the bills listed on the fall session proposed agenda is Legislation No. 0190-21 providing \$1,244,915 million from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance (UUFB) to address unmet needs for the Navajo Nation Judicial Branch and Navajo Election Administration for the 2022 fiscal year. This proposed legislation is sponsored by Honorable Speaker Seth Damon.

“When we met with President Jonathan Nez and Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne during a Three Branch Chiefs meeting in June, we agreed that it would be in the best interest of the Navajo Nation that unmet needs be funded through a UUFB appropriation,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Łichíí, Rock Springs, Tsayatoh). “The full operation of our courts and the Judicial Branch is an important public service to the Navajo people. There is a legal obligation for the Legislative Branch to expend funds for upcoming elections and to maintain the health and safety of our poll workers.”

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Legislation No. 0201-21 approves the transfer of the Navajo Transit System from the Division of General Services to the Navajo Division of Transportation. This proposal is sponsored by Council Delegate Carl Slater (Round Rock, Rock Point, Tséché'izí, Lukachugai, Tsaile-Wheatfields).

Legislation No. 0174-21 enacts the Air is Life Act of 2021 to prohibit the use of commercial tobacco products in enclosed, indoor workplaces or public places and within 25 feet from any indoor area across the Navajo Nation. This proposal is sponsored by Chair Daniel Tso (Littlewater, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake, Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Ojo Encino, Counselor).

“The Air is Life legislation is important to the livelihood of our families. Now more than ever we need to protect the quality of our sacred, life-giving force, our air,” said Delegate Carl Slater. “Through sensible reform, our nation will also streamline the planning, development, and delivery services of the Navajo Transit System after it is relocated under the Navajo Transportation Division.”

Legislation No. 0211-21 requests a United States congressional hearing regarding the approval of uranium mining, the long-term outcomes, and the remediation and reclamation effects of uranium mining within the Navajo Nation. This proposal is sponsored by Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Tachee/Blue Gap, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tselani/Cottonwood, Low Mountain).

“It is imperative for the United States Congress to focus and hear directly from the Navajo people on how uranium mining affects their lives,” said Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. “This congressional hearing must be conducted on the Navajo Nation and I have asked the Council to immediately send this request to Washington, D.C. The nation-to-nation relationship is important, so this hearing will provide closure for the communities negatively impacted.”

On Thursday, the Naabik'iyáti' Committee (NABI) adjourned leaving two bills on the agenda for consideration in two weeks. They include Legislation No. 0209-21 allocating \$68 million in Síhasin Funds to complete twelve water connection projects and Legislation No. 0206-21 allocating \$1.8 million in emergency funds for 110 chapters.

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