



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

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\$1.16 Billion allocated in American Rescue Plan Act funding for Water Pipelines, Electricity, and Broadband Internet Projects across the Navajo Nation

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PHOTO: Speaker Seth Damon presenting legislation before the 24th Navajo Nation Council.

TWIN ARROWS, Ariz. — Speaker Seth Damon and the Naabik'iyáti' Committee (NABI) of the 24th Navajo Nation Council hosted a two-day work session with the Executive Branch to discuss Legislation No. 0257-21 to allocate \$1,166,003,000 billion of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding for construction of new water and electric lines, broadband internet connections, and road infrastructure projects for the Navajo people. This is the first set of legislation to address the responsible allocation of ARPA funding for the Navajo government.

In August, the Navajo Nation Council approved Resolution CYJ-41-21 establishing the Navajo Nation Fiscal Recovery Fund (NNFRF) Office as the official headquarters to oversee and approve all APRA projects during the pandemic.

Interim Executive Director Tom Platero was appointed by Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez to lead the NNFRF Office to work with the Legislative Branch to allocate ARPA funding.

“We will work with our Executive Branch divisions and programs to invest over \$958 million in new water and electric lines, broadband infrastructure, and housing construction projects that will employ a Navajo workforce,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh). “The Navajo Nation Council will introduce several more legislations to address the ongoing needs of the Navajo people during this pandemic. It is important we carefully allocate ARPA money that

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will uplift our small businesses and immediately begin chapter projects.”

In October, the Navajo Nation Council met with President Jonathan Nez and Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne to finalize the funding amount addressed by Legislation No. 0257-21 for over 10,000 infrastructure and economic development projects.

Working alongside the Executive Branch, the bill will allocate the following:

- \$250 million for housing and bathroom addition construction
- \$208 million for internet broadband connections
- \$301 million for water lines and wastewater projects
- \$200 million for power line projects
- \$207 million for hardship assistance

“We need to immediately expend our ARPA allocation to ensure we meet the guidelines provided by Congress,” said Council Delegate Pernel Halona (Coyote Canyon, Mexican Springs, Naschitti, Tohatchi, Bahastl’á’a). “This legislation ensures we invest over \$1 billion in new funding opportunities to begin construction on projects with our own Navajo workers. We commend the leadership of our Congressional representatives and President Joe Biden for their commitment to our Sovereign Nations. This is the largest investment in infrastructure projects in history for Indian Country and we need to lead by spending these funds now.”

According to the Navajo Nation Department of Justice (NNDOJ), individuals do not have to reapply for the second allocation of hardship assistance payments. Any future check disbursements will follow the process previously approved by the Office of the Controller (OOC).

“We have four years to spend this money, so let us begin building water lines, constructing homes, and supporting our local chapters hit hardest by COVID-19,” said Council Delegate Mark Freeland (Becenti, Lake Valley, Náhodishgish, Standing Rock, Whiterock, Huerfano, Nageezi, Crownpoint). “Lines of communication between all branches of the Navajo government have to be open and transparent. We believe our people are ready to get to work in their communities because they can design, construct and oversee our infrastructure projects. The creation of Navajo jobs that employ our people at each ARPA project is the main goal as we defeat this pandemic together.”

Earlier this year, the Navajo Nation received approximately \$2.1 billion in ARPA funds from the Biden Administration to respond to the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a statement, President Jonathan Nez added, “This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to transform the Navajo Nation and to improve the quality of life for elders, disabled, veterans, youth, and families. Never before has the Navajo Nation received this level of funding in such a short timeframe. If passed by the Council, this legislation will provide immediate financial relief for children and adults. This is not an easy process, but together, we continue to work together and work through the challenges to implement plans for hardship assistance, water, electricity, broadband, housing, and bathroom additions.”

The Naabik’iyáti’ Committee will meet over the next few weeks to address any questions and concerns before Christmas.

The Navajo Nation Fiscal Recovery Fund Office with the Controller’s Office created a website to share all ARPA updates and information with the Navajo people at www.NavajoNationARPA.org