



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

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\$1,070,298,867 Billion in American Rescue Plan Act funding approved for Water Pipelines, Electricity, Housing Construction, and Broadband Internet Projects by the Navajo Nation Council

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PHOTO: Members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council pose for a group picture after a work session held at Twin Arrows Navajo Casino and Resort.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Speaker Seth Damon and the 24th Navajo Nation Council took historic action by approving Legislation No. 0086-22 to appropriate \$1,070,298,867 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding for the construction of new water and electric lines, broadband internet connections, and housing infrastructure projects for the Navajo people. Sponsored by Council Delegate Mark Freeland, the bill passed by a vote of 20 in favor and two opposed.

In July 2021, Vice Chairman Carl Slater sponsored Resolution No. CJY-41-21 allocating over \$400 million to immediately fund defunded CARES act programs for water, electricity, broadband, small business assistance, and Judicial Branch funding. Following this approved legislation, Madam Chair Amber Kanazbah Crotty sponsored Resolution CD-62-21 to allocate \$557,000,000 to distribute hardship assistance checks to the Navajo people across the country.

“We appreciate the leadership of our chapter officials, community leaders, and my colleagues of the Navajo Nation Council for making history. Over a \$1 billion investment has been made on behalf of the Navajo people,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh). “The last two years have made us a more resilient Sovereign Nation

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prepared to begin constructing new water, electric, and broadband internet lines for families. The Navajo Nation is ready to rebuild, construct, and create thousands of new jobs because of American Rescue Plan Act funding.”

Last 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.

Legislation No. 0086-22 will allocate the following priorities:

- \$241.9 million for housing construction, veteran housing, and electric connections
- \$225 million for water lines and wastewater projects
- \$211.2 million for chapter and regional projects
- \$150 million for bathroom additions
- \$120 million for the new hardship assistance applications
- \$109.8 million for internet broadband connections
- \$40 million for public safety, rural addressing, and cyber security upgrades
- \$19.2 million for transitional housing and detox centers

“This legislation was sponsored to directly address the living conditions of our Navajo people during this COVID-19 pandemic. Our relatives residing in rural areas need basic infrastructure access to drinking water, electricity, and bathroom additions,” said Council Delegate Mark Freeland (Becenti, Lake Valley, Náhodishgish, Standing Rock, Whiterock, Huerfano, Nageezi, Crownpoint). “This historic action by my colleagues of the Navajo Nation Council addresses the urgent needs of the communities we represent. Many of our families do not have the luxury of waiting for thousands of infrastructure projects to begin. This is the Navajo people’s money, and they deserve our immediate support during this pandemic.”

Once Speaker Damon certifies the resolution, President Jonathan Nez has ten days to consider it. If no action is taken, it becomes Navajo Nation law immediately.

The Navajo Nation Council established the Navajo Nation Fiscal Recovery Fund (NNFRF) Office as the official headquarters to oversee and approve all APRA projects during the pandemic. All ARPA updates and information available for the Navajo people can be accessed here: www.NavajoNationARPA.org

Statements from members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council:

“We made many attempts to get as much ARPA funds to bring the most quality of life enhancements of water and electric connections to our community members. This compromise action begins the boots on the groundwork construction for 110 chapters. We have much to still get done for the people, and this \$1 billion allocation is the first step to rebuilding the Navajo Nation during this pandemic,” said Chairman Daniel Tso (Littlewater, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake, Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Ojo Encino, Counselor).

“This is the largest financial action taken by any Navajo Nation Council in history. Our people still live in sheds and campers with no plumbing or electricity. It is this Council’s mandate to develop, propose, and even demand real-world solutions that are substantive, meaningful, and

sometimes drastic to improve the quality of life of our Navajo families immediately. These ARPA funds will assist our communities and put the people first,” said Chairman Jamie Henio (Alamo, Ramah, Tóhajiilee).

“While the Nation’s needs are many and the funding available is inadequate to cover all of our infrastructure needs, this is a strong step to bring our standard of living into the 21st century. I’m proud of my colleagues for being pragmatic and not letting the perfect be the enemy of the good,” said Vice Chair Carl Slater (Round Rock, Rock Point, Tséché’izí, Lukachukai, Tsaile-Wheatfields).

“The Navajo Nation Council took a historic vote today to make the largest appropriation of \$1 billion into our communities. We did our best to bring the Executive and Legislative Branches together to hear concerns and find a compromise. It is estimated that it would cost over \$20 billion to rebuild the infrastructure of the Navajo Nation. These American Rescue Plan Act funds will now construct water lines to provide drinking water, expand access to broadband internet, build veterans’ housing, and more,” said Council Delegate Wilson Stewart Jr. (Fort Defiance, Crystal, #18 Red Lake, Sawmill).

“I am very much looking forward to completing our infrastructure projects for families across Utah Navajo and the Westwater community. We have been waiting to get their homes renovated, for electricity and water line connections, and for veterans’ homes to be built. Our people come first, and this historic legislation makes that investment,” said Council Delegate Charlene Tso (Mexican Water, Tółikan, Teec Nos Pos, Aneth, Red Mesa).

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