



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

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Navajo Nation Leaders take historic action by investing \$1.07 Billion in Water, Electric, Broadband connections & Chapter Infrastructure Projects

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PHOTO: Members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council, President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, and Speaker Seth Damon, along with Executive and Legislative Branch staff attend the ARPA Resolution signing ceremony in Crownpoint, N.M.

CROWNPOINT, N.M. — The 24th Navajo Nation Council was joined by President Jonathan Nez for the official signing ceremony of Resolution No. CJN-29-22 for a historic appropriation of \$1,070,298,867 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding in Crownpoint, N.M., last Friday.

The allocation is the largest investment to the Navajo people that will begin the construction of water and electric lines, broadband internet connections, COVID-19 mitigation, E911, public safety issues, and housing infrastructure projects. Sponsored by Council Delegate Mark Freland, the bill passed by a vote of 20 in favor and two opposed during a Special Session two weeks ago.

“Working with the eight regional chapters I represent, they helped guide me to complete this historic legislation. Over \$1 billion will now be invested to upgrade water and electric lines to the most rural areas of the Navajo Nation. ARPA is COVID-19 relief funding that will provide for the critical needs and basic infrastructure priorities for our families at the hogan level. Lives will be forever changed beginning today,” said Council Delegate Mark Freland (Becenti, Lake Valley, Náhodishgish, Standing Rock, Whiterock, Huerfano, Nageezi, Crownpoint).

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Last year, 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.

“After countless work sessions and fierce negotiation, the Executive and Legislative Branches came together to make this historic day a reality. It took grit and hard work from our staff, chapter officials, and community leaders to properly invest over \$1 billion into our communities. This legislation brings hope for the next seven generations. It will impact many lives from every corner of the Navajo Nation. This day will live with us as part of the greater Diné story. Now let’s get our people to work and create new jobs, rebuild our infrastructure, and start laying out new water and electric lines and broadband connections,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh).

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. In a coordinated joint effort, Speaker Damon, President Nez, and the Council lobbied Congressional representatives from both political parties and the White House for the second ARPA allocation.

“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).

Resolution No. CJN-29-22 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

“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 get still 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, Torreón, Whitehorse Lake, Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Ojo Encino, Counselor).

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

“The Navajo Nation Council worked with the Executive Branch and the ARPA Office to make this day a reality for the Navajo people. Working together, this is now the largest appropriation to invest over \$1 billion into our communities. 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 Chairman Rickie Nez (T’iistsoh Sikaad, Nenahnezad, Upper Fruitland, Tsé Daa K’aan, Newcomb, San Juan).

Speaker Damon and Delegate Freeland were joined by Vice Chairman Raymond Smith Jr. and Delegates Paul Begay, Eugene Tso, Otto Tso, Edmund Yazzie, and Pernell Halona. Crownpoint Chapter President Rita Capitan and several chapter officials also were in attendance with Division Directors from the Nez-Lizer Administration. The full signing ceremony can be viewed at: <https://www.facebook.com/navajonationcouncil>

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