



25th Navajo Nation Council

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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25th Navajo Nation Council approves amendment to expand Fiscal Recovery Fund usage for bathroom renovations/upgrades



Delegate Shaandiin Parrish (left) sponsor of legislation 0014-24, emphasizes the need to effectively utilize remaining FRF dollars to meet the needs of residents across the Navajo Nation and Ryan Begay for Division of Community Development (DCD) noted that the legislation will enable case-by-case assessments.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The 25th Navajo Nation Council has unanimously passed Legislation 0014-24, amending Resolution CJN-29-22 to expand the eligible uses of Fiscal Recovery Funds (FRF) to include bathroom renovations, in addition to the previously authorized new bathroom additions. This move aims to enhance infrastructure in Navajo communities by making bathrooms safer, more sanitary, and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The amendment permits the reallocation of FRF funds under Section 11 to support bathroom renovation projects that may include repairs or improvements to existing bathrooms, addressing critical improvement repairs such as ADA accessibility upgrades, replacements of water heater(s), wall heater, toilet, bathroom sink, utility sink, and replacement of fixtures as necessary to make the renovation of the existing bathroom compliant with industry standards.

It also includes provisions for broader home infrastructure improvements, such as dry wall finishing work for water line connections, septic systems, and electrical system installation. The decision responds to remaining unspent FRF balances limiting the FRF dollars to “new

bathroom additions," however with community demand for renovations over new construction, this amendment maximized the impact of federal relief funds.

Budget and Finance Committee (BFC) Chair Shaandiin Parrish, who sponsored the legislation, emphasized the need to effectively utilize remaining FRF dollars to meet the needs of residents across the Navajo Nation. According to Parrish, "By expanding the scope of these funds to include renovations, we can ensure that all dollars are used to provide essential upgrades for Navajo households, preventing any unused funds from being returned."

The legislation provides an equal distribution increase to the Delegate Regional Plans in the amount of \$4.1 million per delegate region by reallocating unused funds not being spent by departments to an identified need.

Health, Education, and Human Services Committee (HEHSC) Chair Vince James expressed concerns about addressing unserved areas lacking running water. In response, the legislation includes provisions to direct funds toward broader infrastructure needs, including water and septic system connections.

Law and Order Committee (LOC) Chair Eugenia Charles-Newton and other delegates highlighted the importance of ADA compliance, particularly for elderly residents and those with disabilities, advocating for renovations that include critical safety upgrades like walk-in showers and higher toilet seats.

Ryan Begay, Planner/Estimator for Division of Community Development (DCD) noted that the legislation will enable case-by-case assessments to identify homes needing renovations, including upgrades like walk-in showers, widened doorways, and ADA compliance measures. The initiative aims to allocate the remaining funds before the December 31, 2024, U.S. Treasury federal deadline, with approximately \$100 million designated for bathroom-related projects, of which \$28 million has already been obligated.

The DCD will work with 110 local chapters to assess, prioritize, and implement bathroom renovation projects. The Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority (NECA), as the main contractor for DCD, will collaborate with subcontractors to manage project execution. The legislation sets a deadline of November 1, 2024, for modifying existing contracts to accommodate these expanded uses.

The FRF funds reallocated from the CJN-29-22; Section 7 Wastewater and Section 9 Electric Connections to homes; in total approximately \$100 million dollars was reallocated to bathroom renovations, repairs, and improvements of existing facilities.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council voted 21 in favor with none opposed, approving Legislation 0014-24. Once the resolution is certified and delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren will have up to ten calendar days to consider it.

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