



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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New Mexico Caucus vets New Mexico Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan and Capital Outlay Projects



The New Mexico Delegate Caucus convened to discuss the status of New Mexico's capital outlay and Indian Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) projects.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – In preparation for the 2025 New Mexico Legislative Session, the New Mexico Delegate Caucus discussed the status of New Mexico's capital outlay and Indian Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) projects.

Division of Community Development Sr. Program Project Specialist Sharilene Jeff provided a report about the vetting process for Chapter ICIP projects across New Mexico. Jeff explained chapter projects submitted by chapters are being cross-referenced with the Indian Affairs Department's (IAD) list and a future reconciliation date is being coordinated between I.A.D and the Nation before the new year.

New Mexico Caucus Leader Amber Kanazbah Crotty said that the New Mexico Legislature requests that the Navajo Nation vet the projects submitted on behalf of the New Mexico chapters before they are submitted into the New Mexico Outlay funding portal.

"On the Navajo Nation, best practices are to work with the chapters. What can the Woven Integrated Navajo Data (WIND) system provide in terms of project management. Is there a plan to develop a project management system?" Crotty asked. "We need to be able to view a dashboard that details the status of projects."

Projects must meet specific criteria, such as completion of the Pre-Planning Activities (PPA's) to get chapter projects to project ready, shovel-ready (construction-ready) and have the administrative documentation completed, before being submitted to the legislature for funding requests. Currently, some chapters are submitting incomplete or non-shovel-ready projects, and only a few have completed the vetting process.

As of December 4, 2024, ten chapters have submitted projects to the portal, which closes on December 13, 2024. However, Jeff explained many of these submissions lack (PPA's) land withdrawal, scope of work, project budgets, other legal agreements or necessary criteria, which can hinder inter-governmental approval.

A major focus was on reauthorization of projects expiring on June 30, 2025, short-funded projects, shovel-ready projects with complete PPA's. There is a need for chapters to align their projects with the required criteria to avoid delays and ensure funding is in line with both Chapter ICIP Priorities & the New Mexico Caucus Priorities.

The Caucus raised concerns about the discrepancy between what chapters submit and what is needed for successful vetting by DCD/CPMD. New Mexico chapters, such as Ramah, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, and Twin Lakes, were named as those that had completed submissions, while others have not completed their vetting.

The NM legislature has already received the project packets, and chapters that failed to vet their projects risk losing out on funding. Caucus members emphasized the need for a resolution from chapters to streamline project submission and approval processes through DCD/CPMD technical assistance from Sharilene Jeff, Casey Begay, and Dwayne Waseta.

Council Delegate Danny Simpson emphasized that if chapters submit a resolution, it would be easier to track and manage projects, also reiterating the importance of syncing chapters' resolutions with the Indian Affairs Department (IAD) processes.

The Caucus also inquired about the \$30 million allocated by the New Mexico legislature for capital outlay, noting that despite requests, the Navajo Nation has yet to receive any funding under this package.

Council Delegate Eugenia Charles-Newton stressed the importance of completing the vetting process for the proposed capital outlay projects reiterating that the project portal closes on Dec. 13, 2024, and that New Mexico Legislators begin filing legislations on Jan. 2, 2025.

The Caucus intends to finalize the Navajo Nation's New Mexico Legislative Priorities, aligning with ICIP Capital Projects, during their next regular meeting.

The New Mexico Caucus invites the New Mexico House District 6 – (11) Nominees to the next meeting.

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