



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

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Navajo Nation Council votes to remove all unconfirmed Executive Division Directors, reinforces oversight authority and legal compliance



Delegate Charles-Newton sponsored Legislation No. 0093-25, calling for the removal of all Executive Branch division directors who have not been formally confirmed by the Council.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — On Thursday, the 25th Navajo Nation Council approved Legislation No. 0093-25, calling for the removal of all Executive Branch division directors who have not been formally confirmed by the Council.

Sponsored by Council Delegate Eugenia Charles-Newton, the legislation addresses an issue in which appointed executive division directors have continued to serve in acting roles for extended periods, in some cases over a year, without receiving the formal confirmation required by the Council. According to Navajo Nation law, 2 N.N.C. § 102(F)(1), the President is obligated to obtain Council confirmation for all Division Director appointments following recommendations from the relevant oversight committees.

“The law is evident,” said Delegate Charles-Newton. “The Council must confirm directors before they can exercise official authority. Yet we’ve watched these individuals act in leadership roles without that confirmation—signing contracts, making decisions, and directing major divisions of government. That is not just a procedural error; it’s a fundamental violation of Navajo law and sovereignty.”

The unconfirmed directors named in the legislation are Candice Yazzie (Community Development) and Tony Skrelunas (Economic Development). Council members cited concerns about a lack of transparency, poor service delivery, and delayed reforms under

these unconfirmed leaders. The legislation directly addresses community concerns that Acting Directors have failed to meet their responsibilities to the Diné people.

Council Delegate Shawna Ann Claw voiced strong support for the measure, saying, “Many of these positions come with high salaries, full benefits, and great responsibility. Yet our people are not receiving the services they need. We must ensure these roles are filled by qualified, confirmed individuals who are accountable to the people and the law. This legislation helps us begin to fix that process.”

Council Delegate Cherilyn Yazzie introduced an amendment directing the Office of the President and Vice President to take further action. Within 15 calendar days of the resolution’s certification, the Executive Office must submit a written memorandum listing all unconfirmed appointees, their salaries, appointment letters, and a plan and timeline for completing the confirmation process. The amendment also tasks the Title 2 Subcommittee with revising the confirmation process to include clear timelines and procedures to ensure legal compliance and continuity in government operations.

“We’re in a situation where the law is being willfully ignored by the Executive Branch,” said Delegate Charles-Newton. “This isn’t just about filling vacancies. This is about maintaining balance between the branches of government, protecting our sovereignty, and honoring the laws our predecessors put in place.”

Delegate Claw added, “We must uphold integrity. Some of these directors have served far too long beyond what should be allowed. If they know they were not confirmed, they should do the honorable thing and step aside. The people expect leaders who are both qualified and accountable.”

Delegate Rickie Nez, reflecting on nearly two decades of public service, also supported the action. “This vote is not about individuals. It’s about the law and the people. When we step down from this Council, we will be judged by what we did in service to our Nation. This decision tells our people that we take our responsibilities seriously.”

Dr. Andy Nez emphasized the broader implications of executive inaction and called for greater accountability. “There are still outstanding issues, including unanswered questions related to major funding and hiring decisions. We must hold the Executive Branch to the same level of scrutiny and transparency we expect from every branch.”

Delegate Charles-Newton reaffirmed that the legislation protects the rule of law and maintains critical checks and balances.

The Navajo Nation Council voted 15 in favor and one opposed in approving Legislation No. 0093-25. Once 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 the resolution.

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