



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Navajo Nation Council amends sections of Navajo Preference in Employment Act, reinforces employee rights**



**Council Delegate Vince James emphasized that restoring just cause protections to program managers ensures uniformity and consistency across the workforce.**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – The 25th Navajo Nation Council unanimously approved legislation No. 0162-25 to rescind Resolution CO-60-17 and amend sections of the Navajo Preference in Employment Act (NPEA), restoring regular employee protections for program managers within the Executive Branch.

The action repeals the 2017 resolution that had classified program managers as exempt from the “just cause” provisions of the NPEA, which protect employees from unjust termination, demotion, or disciplinary action without due process.

Delegate Vince James, who introduced the legislation, said, “Restoring just cause protections to our program managers ensures uniformity and consistency across our workforce. This change reflects our commitment to fairness and accountability in employment practices.”

Under the new amendments to 15 N.N.C. §§ 603 and 604(B)(8), the definition of “program manager” is removed from exemption status. Beginning October 1, 2025, all program managers will be classified as regular status employees, entitled to the same employment protections and due process as other Navajo Nation employees.

The legislation followed review by the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee, the Law and Order Committee, and the Naabik'iyáti' Committee, with final approval granted by the Navajo Nation Council.

"As leaders, we are obligated to review past policies and correct those that do not serve the long-term interests of our Nation and employees," said cosponsor Curtis Yanito. "This action strengthens workforce protections and supports the integrity of our laws."

According to Section Four of the resolution, the Department of Personnel Management is directed to implement the changes by updating personnel records and issuing revised Personnel Action Forms for all affected program managers.

The legislation was approved with a vote of 20 in favor with none opposed. The new law will take effect on October 1, 2025. 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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