



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 5, 2026

Budget and Finance Committee advances legislation allocating \$84 million from Síhasin Fund for transportation improvements



Budget and Finance Committee (BFC) approved Legislation No. 0012-26, sponsored by Council Delegate Arbin Mitchell.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — On Tuesday, the Budget and Finance Committee (BFC) approved Legislation No. 0012-26, allocating \$84 million from the Síhasin Fund for transportation improvement projects across the Navajo Nation.

The legislation, sponsored by Council Delegate Arbin Mitchell, supports infrastructure improvements intended to address long-standing road and transportation needs throughout the Navajo Nation.

“This legislation represents an important step toward improving the roads and transportation infrastructure our communities depend on every day,” said Council Delegate Arbin Mitchell. “By investing Síhasin Fund dollars into these projects, we are helping chapters address critical needs such as safer roads, improved access for emergency services, and better connectivity for families and businesses throughout the Navajo Nation.”

During the meeting, the Navajo Division of Transportation (NDOT) presented its implementation plan for the projects. NDOT Director Tom Platero informed BFC that the \$84 million allocation will fund 64 projects across the Navajo Nation. Each Council Delegate will have \$3.5 million available for projects within their respective regions.

According to NDOT, the projects include road improvements and other transportation-related infrastructure, with the division anticipating completion within a 36-month timeframe based

on expanded staffing, improved project management systems, and updated contracting procedures.

BFC members questioned NDOT's capacity to deliver the projects efficiently. Director Platero explained that the division has strengthened its project management structure and expanded its compliance and contract management teams. NDOT has implemented Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity contracting mechanisms to streamline procurement and accelerate project delivery while maintaining competitive bidding requirements. Additionally, the division has reduced contractor payment timelines to approximately 46 days, bringing the process closer to industry standards.

Council Delegate Cherilyn Yazzie asked how transportation projects would be affected if the Navajo Nation Council approves a reapportionment plan that changes delegate regions and how NDOT would address project allocations under those circumstances.

"I want to ensure that if reapportionment changes the boundaries of our delegate regions, the transportation projects tied to those communities are still handled fairly and transparently," said Delegate Cherilyn Yazzie. "Our chapters depend on these improvements, and we need clarity on how NDOT will adjust project planning if those regional changes take place." Director Platero informed the committee that NDOT will work directly with Council Delegates if the reapportionment legislation is approved to ensure projects remain aligned with the correct regions.

Council Delegate Lester Yazzie asked whether NDOT has coordinated with the State of New Mexico to secure funding for transportation infrastructure, particularly bridge projects. Director Platero said that NDOT has increased coordination with regional planning councils and state partners to pursue these funding opportunities and to work with county and regional entities to expand available resources for infrastructure improvements.

BFC Vice Chair Carl R. Slater motioned for an amendment to allow delegates to modify the specific projects within their regional allocations while maintaining the \$3.5 million funding cap per delegate. The amendment also addresses potential changes related to the pending reapportionment plan by allowing delegates to substitute projects if a chapter is reassigned to a different region. All adjustments must remain within the overall \$84 million allocation for the 64 transportation projects.

The Budget and Finance Committee voted four in favor and none opposed to approve Legislation No. 0012-26. The legislation now moves forward to the Naabik'íyáti' Committee for further review and consideration.

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