



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - CORRECTION
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Naabik'iyáti' Committee advances legislation allocating \$6 million from Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance for FY26 Chapter emergency assistance



Council Delegate George H. Tolth (left) was joined by Eastern Agency Council President Johnny Johnson during his presentation of Legislation No. 0029-26.

CORRECTION: The Naabik'iyáti' Committee voted to advance Legislation No. 0029-26 forward to the Navajo Nation Council, not to approve the legislation.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On Thursday, the Naabik'iyáti' Committee voted to advance Legislation No. 0029-26, allocating \$6 million from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance to 110 Navajo chapters to provide emergency assistance for Fiscal Year 2026.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate George H. Tolth said the funding is intended to help address gaps in emergency assistance provided by chapters, particularly during extreme weather events.

“Across the Navajo Nation, we’ve recently experienced extreme weather events that have caused road closures, utility disruptions, and limited access to essential services,” said Delegate Tolth. “These issues pose immediate risks to the health and safety of the Navajo people. In many cases, we are hearing from community members and elders that their chapter cannot assist them due to a lack of funding.”

During the presentation, Council Delegates raised questions regarding chapter emergency management plans, reversion language in the legislation, and whether the funding could be used to address emergencies not directly related to natural disasters.

Council Delegate Carl R. Slater expressed concerns about the reversion language, noting that emergencies occur year-round and are not limited to natural disasters. He suggested the funds should remain with chapters rather than revert back to the Navajo Nation's General Fund.

"I don't think expiration dates are necessary, and we should consider waiving that language," Slater said.

Council Delegate Shawna Ann Claw said the intent of the funding should allow chapters to provide general assistance and not be limited strictly to disaster-related emergencies. She referenced a situation in which a family sought help from a chapter to bring a deceased relative home from another state.

"This emergency funding could have been released to the family to bring her home," Delegate Claw said. "As leaders, we need to be able to act on our compassion for our people. This legislation has good intentions."

Claw added that once appropriated, the funding should remain with the chapters and not revert to the Navajo Nation's General Fund.

Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez noted that the Navajo Commission on Emergency Management should consider variations of emergencies, including the long-standing drought conditions across the Navajo Nation, to ensure chapters are prepared to respond to community needs.

Questions were also raised regarding chapter preparedness. Council Delegate Eugenia Charles Newton asked how many chapters currently have Emergency Management Plans in place.

In response, Administrative Service Center Department Manager Jaron Charley said it is the responsibility of each chapter to develop and maintain its Emergency Management Plan.

Additional discussion focused on legislative support from chapters. Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty requested that supporting chapter resolutions be submitted along with the legislation.

The committee deliberated Legislation No. 0029-26 to gather recommendations before the measure moves forward to the Navajo Nation Council, where delegates may propose amendments addressing concerns raised during the discussion.

The Naabik'íyáti' Committee voted 14 in favor and two opposed to move the legislation forward to the Navajo Nation Council for consideration.

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