



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

## 25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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### **Navajo Nation Council approves historic investment in broadband infrastructure projects across the Navajo Nation**



Left to right: Navajo Nation Broadband Office Sr. Programs and Projects Specialist Laura Johnson, Council Delegate Carl R. Slater, Broadband Office Department Manager Sonia Nez, and Americas Communication CEO Bernardo Portilla.

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – On Thursday, the 25th Navajo Nation Council unanimously approved a historic investment totaling \$244,617,938 to fund broadband infrastructure projects throughout the Navajo Nation.

Sponsored by Budget and Finance Committee Vice Chairman Carl L. Slater, Legislation No. 0109-26 appropriates \$75,546,678.33 from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance to the Navajo Nation Broadband Office and approves the Broadband Infrastructure Projects Plan.

“This measure underscores the need to address the broadband divide that exists on the Navajo Nation. Addressing this disparity will impact critical services that include public safety, education, emergency response, and healthcare. But most importantly, it will unlock the economic potential of our entrepreneurial people as we march into the digital age,” said Delegate Slater. “I thank my colleagues on the 25th Navajo Nation Council for their support of this historic measure.”

The legislation also amends Council Resolution CJA-05-26, which enacted the Capital Development Financing Act and established the Capital Development Financing Fund (CDFS) to permit refinancing and reimbursement of funding sources. In addition, the measure authorizes \$169,071,259 in debt financing from the CDFS, bringing the total investment in broadband infrastructure projects to \$244,617,938.

The measure underscores the 25th Navajo Nation Council's commitment to expanding, improving, and modernizing broadband infrastructure in all chapters across the Navajo Nation, with the goal of providing reliable internet access to every household.

The approved funding will expand broadband access to all 110 chapters across the Navajo Nation. Currently, 52 chapters are connected to fiber optic infrastructure, while the remaining 58 chapters will receive low Earth orbit satellite (LEO) internet service through Starlink as fiber networks are extended to those communities. Starlink service is expected to be deployed within 90 days to provide immediate connectivity while long-term fiber construction continues.

The investment also includes matching funds for the federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program, which is projected to connect approximately 31,000 homes to high-speed internet, with an estimated 6,000 homes expected to be connected by the end of the year.

Broadband enhancements will be carried out in three phases to expand 5G service. Existing fiber-connected towers will be upgraded first, followed by extending fiber and 5G capabilities to additional sites. New towers will then be constructed in underserved areas to provide reliable broadband access to remaining households.

Council Delegate Vince R. James emphasized the significance of the historic investment and called on the Navajo Nation Broadband Office to remain diligent, transparent, and accountable in administering the funding.

"I'm placing a great deal of trust in the broadband staff to manage and spend these funds responsibly," Council Delegate James said. "When the Council has questions, do not ignore us. If you are asked to provide a report on how this money is being used, be transparent and keep the Council informed."

As amended by the Budget and Finance Committee, the legislation also authorizes future debt financing through the Capital Development Financing Act (CDFA) for Phase 2 of the Dilkon Justice Center and the Tsé Bit'á'í Justice Center in Shiprock, N.M. The Dilkon project will include facilities for Adult Corrections and Programs, Intake and Juvenile Services, the Department of Corrections, Public Safety, and support services. The Tsé Bit'á'í Justice Center will house law enforcement, courts, peacemaking, criminal investigations, probation services, a detention facility, and a medical examiner's building.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council unanimously approved Legislation No. 0109-26 on the consent agenda with a vote of 21 in favor and none opposed. Once certified and delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren will have up to 10 calendar days to act on the resolution.

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