



The Navajo Nation
Commission on Emergency Management



M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Honorable Dr. Buu V. Nygren, *Navajo Nation President*
Honorable Richelle Montoya, *Navajo Nation Vice President*
Honorable Crystalayne Curley, *Speaker of the 25th Navajo Nation Council*
Honorable 25th Navajo Nation Council
Honorable Eleanor Shirley, *Acting Chief Justice*

FROM: 
Marcarlo Roanhorse, *Chairperson*
Commission on Emergency Management
The Navajo Nation

DATE: September 14, 2026

SUBJECT: 2026 Navajo Nation Council Fall Session Report

This memorandum provides a formal report to Navajo Nation leadership summarizing the activities and accomplishments of the Navajo Nation Commission on Emergency Management (CEM) during the Fourth Quarter (July through September 2026). The reporting period was impacted by severe monsoon storms, flash flooding, road and infrastructure damage, and the need for coordinated emergency response and recovery across the Navajo Nation.

During the fourth quarter, CEM convened three special emergency meetings (July 24, September 15, and September 17) and a flooding logistics coordination meeting (September 16). The Commission adopted the nationwide monsoon emergency declaration, reaffirmed it in response to September flooding, and unanimously approved an amendment strengthening resource coordination, chapter emergency assistance, federal relief efforts, and emergency procurement authority. The Commission also adopted a resolution requesting establishment of a \$5 million Emergency Preparedness and Response Reserve; that request remains distinct from an approved appropriation.

Established under 2 N.N.C. § 881, CEM assesses, verifies, recommends, and declares emergencies with Presidential concurrence under 2 N.N.C. § 884(B)(1). In conjunction with the Department of Emergency Management (DEM), the Commission coordinates emergency and disaster relief and recommends appropriate governmental action. This report addresses Commission decisions and coordination, not a comprehensive account of every agency response activity.

COMMISSION MEETINGS AND ACTIONS

July 24, 2026 — Emergency Special Meeting

CEM reviewed monsoon storm impacts and infrastructure damage. It adopted Resolution CEM

26-004, “Declaration of Emergency Due to Severe Monsoon Storms, Flash Flooding, and Road Infrastructure Damage Across the Navajo Nation,” by a vote of 5–0–0. Initial reports included Tonalea, Birdsprings, Teesto and Alamo; the complete washout of Navajo Route 6011 in Tonalea underscored the urgency of road access and stabilization. The original declaration called for coordinated damage assessments, emergency resource requests, road response, chapter assistance, and documentation of costs.

CEM also adopted Resolution CEM 26-005 by a vote of 5 in favor, 1 opposed, and 0 abstained. The resolution requests that the Navajo Nation Council and President approve legislation allocating \$5,000,000 for an Emergency Preparedness and Response Reserve under the CEM business unit. Commissioners and legal counsel discussed reserve administration, allowable costs, fiscal oversight, and mutual-aid financial exposure.

September 15, 2026 — Emergency Special Meeting

CEM convened to receive DEM and transportation assessments of severe flooding in Chinle and Many Farms. Briefings described receding water levels alongside continuing rescue and safety operations, with the Chinle Chapter House serving as an Emergency Operations Center. Commissioners discussed heavy equipment needs, NDOT support, chapter procurement challenges, and access to resources. The Commission reaffirmed the existing CEM 26-004 declaration rather than creating a separate declaration and arranged further logistics coordination.

September 16, 2026 — Flooding Logistics Coordination Meeting

CEM convened a logistics meeting focused on Chinle/Many Farms and Northern Agency flooding with DEM and Navajo Department of Transportation (NDOT). The purpose of this meeting was to better identify emergency operations coordination, communications and public service announcements, transportation needs, and possible modification of CEM 26-004.

September 17, 2026 — Emergency Special Meeting

The Commission received a Navajo Nation Monsoon 2026 situation report covering welfare checks, road closures, sheltering, resource coordination, and damage assessments. CEM approved the amended CEM 26-004 by a unanimous 6–0–0 vote. The amendment expressly provides access to available chapter emergency funds for eligible assistance, directs NDOT to coordinate with the Federal Highway Administration on applicable emergency relief, encourages additional assistance and damage assessments, and allows use of available assets including emergency procurement as necessary and subject to law. President Nygren concurred with the amended declaration.

IMPACTS AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE PRIORITIES

Documented storm impacts included flooded or washed out roads, damaged culverts and crossings, erosion, disruption of access to essential services, displaced residents, shelter needs, power outages, and potential health and sanitation hazards. The amended resolution identifies affected areas including Chinle, Dennehotso, Newcomb, Sheep Springs, White Rock, Sanostee, Birdsprings, Navajo Mountain, and Tóhajiilee, among others. The declaration applies across the Navajo Nation, rather than only to the named communities.

CEM emphasized protection of life and safety; safe emergency access; welfare checks and shelter; restoration and stabilization of transportation infrastructure; support to elders and other vulnerable residents; damage and cost documentation; and coordination among DEM, NDOT, public safety agencies, chapters, Administrative Service Centers, and partner governments.

RESOLUTION CEM 26-005 – EMERGENCY RESERVE PROPOSAL

The proposed \$5 million reserve would support preparedness, response, mitigation, recovery, and qualifying mutual-aid obligations. Subject to legislation, an approved expenditure plan, and Navajo Nation fiscal and procurement requirements, potential costs include personnel, equipment, fuel, safety supplies, communications, temporary infrastructure, shelter, technical assistance, and mutual-aid reimbursement. The resolution specifically identifies potential financial exposure under the proposed Arizona Mutual Aid Compact, Legislation 0018-26. CEM proposes policy oversight, DEM technical implementation support, financial reporting, and annual reserve review. Leadership action and a lawful funding allocation would be necessary before reserve spending.

PUBLIC INFORMATION, SITUATION REPORTS AND CHAPTER GUIDANCE

Throughout the flooding response, the Chairperson circulated situation reports to Navajo Nation leadership and CEM Commissioners to support situational awareness and timely decisions. The Commission also issued public communications and a September 17 guidance memorandum urging chapters to activate local emergency coordination, identify contacts, document damages and costs, and submit ICS 213 resource requests to the DEM Emergency Operations Center. The guidance stresses appropriate fiscal controls, procurement documentation, and continued public warnings against floodwater and unsafe roads.

OBSERVATION AND ONGOING NEEDS

- Timely access to heavy equipment, barricades, fuel, transportation and road stabilization resources remains critical during widespread flooding.
- Consistent incident command, centralized resource requests, timely situation reports, and interdepartmental coordination are essential to prevent delays.
- Chapters require practical assistance with local emergency plans, ICS forms, damage assessments, procurement, and reimbursement documentation.
- Longer-term emergency funding and mutual-aid arrangements require clear authorization, expenditure standards, oversight, and reliable reporting.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO NAVAJO NATION LEADERSHIP

1. Support continued DEM led coordination, EOC operations, and regular incident and recovery reports to the Commission and Navajo Nation leadership.
2. Direct appropriate departments to prioritize life-safety access, damaged roads, culverts, bridges, and flood related public health risks, within their respective authority and resources.
3. Request a documented assessment of unmet chapter needs, response expenditures, damages, federal relief eligibility, and recovery priorities.

4. Review CEM 26-005 and consider the legislation, expenditure plan, fiscal controls, and oversight necessary for a dedicated \$5 million reserve; do not treat the proposed amount as available funding.
5. Strengthen chapter technical assistance in emergency operations, resource requests, recordkeeping, and hazard mitigation.
6. Maintain coordinated public notices, interagency communications, and periodic updates to the Council and affected chapters.

DECLARATION STATUS

CEM 26-004 states that the declaration remains effective until the monsoonal season has lapsed or the declaration is terminated. The amended language should govern current references to its duration. CEM will continue reviewing conditions and DEM reports to determine whether further Commission action is needed.

CONCLUSION

The Commission acknowledges the dedication of chapter officials, first responders, DEM, NDOT, public safety personnel, and local and outside partners serving affected communities. CEM remains committed to its statutory coordinating and advisory responsibilities and to keeping Navajo Nation leadership informed as response transitions into recovery and mitigation.