



The Navajo Nation Council — Office of the Speaker

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Navajo Council approves FY 2010 comprehensive budget

\$20,593,161 appropriated to Legislative Branch, \$519,688,569 Executive Branch, \$14,506,906 Judicial Branch

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — It took three days, but the Navajo Nation's operating budget for fiscal year 2010 has been approved by the 21st Navajo Nation Council on Thursday, Sept. 9, by a vote of 47-29 with amendments totaling nearly \$8 million—\$7,971,921 to be exact.

For nearly two weeks, the Council conducted budget hearings with the various programs and divisions within the Navajo Nation. In its approved budget, the Legislative Branch of the Navajo Nation will receive \$20,593,161; the Executive Branch \$519,688,569 and the Judicial Branch \$14,506,906.

With the Nation's current financial condition a top priority, the prime sponsor of the legislation of the tribal budget, LoRenzo C. Bates (Upper Fruitland) made references to the Nation's rough financial times and explained the present financial temperature is largely due to the fluctuating oil market and the gloomy national economy.

"We will be anticipating a shortfall of \$16 million and the budget you have before you is a midpoint and a compromise," said Bates.

On hand to answer questions regarding the tribal budget was Mark Grant, controller of the Navajo Nation, who answered questions regarding the projected savings of the Nation—funds that Council appropriated as amendments to the FY 2010 budget.

There were several amendments to the proposed budget.

The Council voted 51-17 on several amendments sponsored by Council Delegate Young Jeff Tom (Mariano Lake/Smith Lake) to move \$7,971,921 from the Nation's General Fund to be dispersed as follows: \$2,392,500 to all 110 Navajo Chapters for stipends; \$468,000 to the District Grazing Committees; \$223,421 to the Eastern Navajo Land Board; \$258,000 to the Navajo Nation Farms Boards; \$1.5 million to Diné Power Authority; \$3,080,000 to the Office of the Speaker; and \$50,000 to the Office of the President and Vice-President.

In an effort to balance the budget, Katherine Benally (Dennehotso) made four amendments to Tom's proposed amendments. The amendments subtracted \$500,000 from the appropriations to the Office of the Speaker and the Council for discretionary funds; funds were decreased from the Office of the President and the Office of the Controller as well.

Also in an effort to balance the budget, Tom's amendment was recalled and an additional amendment was made by Willie Tracey Jr. (Ganado/Kinlichee) to remove an appropriation in the amount of \$264,000 from the Navajo Nation Council's appropriation.

In response to the Council's amendments, Council Delegate Raymond Joe said it was good the Council took from their portion of the budget to give money to other needed areas.

"In Tracey's amendment, the Navajo Nation Council gave up funds for their other meetings, everybody gave it up to help balance the budget," said Raymond Joe (Tachee/Blue Gap/Whippoorwill). "But we wanted chapter, grazing and land board officials to get their stipends, and a large portion of those funds are going to the Navajo people as well."

In another amendment sponsored by Hoskie Kee (Littlewater/Baca-Prewitt/Camaero Lake), the Council will carry over all unexpected funds for the Council and the Office of the Speaker into fiscal year 2010 which passed by a vote of 54-19.

Kee also made a second amendment to change language within the legislation to approve direct disbursement of unexpended balance of capital funds of \$219,430 to be appropriated to Casamero Lake Chapter for capital infrastructure to Baca/Prewitt Chapter, which passed 37-34.

In all, six amendments were proposed by Council in an effort to balance the budget.

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