



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 5, 2018

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Navajo Nation Council adopts the FY2019 Comprehensive Budget

WINDOW ROCK – The 23rd Navajo Nation Council deliberated for four days before adopting the Navajo Nation’s fiscal year 2019 Comprehensive Budget on Tuesday, along with 25 amendments. The Comprehensive Budget legislation was approved by a vote of 21-0 and will be subject to consideration by President Russell Begaye.

At the start of the budget session, legislation sponsor Council Delegate Seth Damon (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí’, Rock Springs, Tsayatoh), explained that the total proposed operating budget is over \$767 million for FY2019, which begins Oct. 1. If approved and signed by the president, the current proposed budget would allocate over \$704 million for the executive branch, and over \$16 million each for the legislative and judicial branches.

On the second day of the session, the Council unanimously approved an amendment proposed by Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels) to restrict the Office of the President and Vice President and the Navajo Nation Council from expending more than 33-percent of the FY2019 budget until the swearing in of a new presidential administration and new Council on Jan. 8, 2019. Delegate Hale said the amendment provides for accountability and fiscal responsibility of public funds. The amendment was approved by a vote of 17-0.

During the four-day budget session, the Council also approved several reallocations of funding to address various unmet needs including:

- Over \$12,000 for house wiring for Tohatchi Chapter residents
- Over \$410,000 for the Department Emergency Management to maintain equipment used for AMBER Alerts
- Over \$134,000 for the Judicial Branch’s technology operations and maintenance costs associated with the integrated justice information sharing project
- Over \$147,000 for Navajo-Hopi Legal Services for various unmet needs
- Over \$166,000 for the Office of Diné School Improvement’s accountability plan
- Over \$250,000 for the Veterans Administration for stipends and several new positions
- Over \$172,000 for the Department of Family Services to create three new child protective services positions

- Over \$63,000 for technical services for Regional Business Development Offices under the Division of Economic Development for project planning purposes
- Over \$42,000 for the Real Estate Department for a new senior office specialist position
- Over \$327,000 for the Division of Aging and Long Term Care Support, formerly known as the Navajo Area Agency on Aging, for contract compliance and quality program services
- \$140,000 for consulting for the Navajo Nation Washington Office for efforts to help extend the federal Radiation Exposure and Compensation Act

Council also approved the following carryover amounts from the current fiscal year to FY2019:

- \$700,000 for the Department of Water Resources for capital outlay projects
- \$145,000 for the Navajo Nation Library to digitize records
- \$50,000 for the Department of Diné Education for consulting
- Remaining operation budget amount for the Office of Public Defender
- \$56,000 for consulting services for the Navajo-Hopi Land Commission Office

The Comprehensive Budget also includes a listing of Conditions of Appropriations including directing all LGA certified chapters to begin conducting chapter audits by the end of the second quarter of FY2019, if the chapter has not completed an audit within two years prior to Sept. 30, 2018. Other Conditions of Appropriation require all LGA certified and non-LGA certified chapters to present a chapter budget to the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of the Controller prior to the disbursement of FY2019 appropriations.

Council also approved an amendment to prioritize approximately \$1.3 million to cover chapter official stipends for the 110 chapters under the Division of Community Development.

The Navajo Nation Council voted 21-0 to approve Legislation No. 0278-18, which required two-thirds approval, or 16 supporting votes to pass. The President will have 10 calendar days to consider the Comprehensive Budget once the final resolution is delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President.

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