



The Navajo Nation  
Office of the President and Vice President

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Navajo Nation Branch Chiefs present FY2020 budget allocations**



**PHOTO:** (left to right) Navajo Nation Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne, 24<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council Speaker Seth Damon, and Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez present the “Branch Chiefs Agreement,” to the Navajo Nation Council’s Budget and Finance Committee in Window Rock, Ariz. on June 3, 2019.

**WINDOW ROCK** – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Speaker of the 24<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council Seth Damon, and Navajo Nation Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne presented the “Branch Chiefs Agreement,” which outlines the recommended allocations for each branch of government for the upcoming fiscal year 2020 budget to the Navajo Nation Council’s Budget and Finance Committee in Window Rock on Monday.

The three branch chiefs met on May 28 and agreed to an overall proposed budget of \$167 million for upcoming fiscal year 2020, which begins on Oct. 1, 2019. This is a decrease of \$5 million from the current fiscal year’s budget. The proposed \$167 million budget is inclusive of the following:

Fixed Costs: \$15,815,144  
Executive Branch: \$105,568,495  
Legislative Branch: \$14,892,739  
Judicial Branch: \$14,924,653  
Chapters - Non- Admin.: \$11,998,969  
External Funds Cash Match: \$3,800,000  
Total: \$167,000,000

In a written letter dated May 14, President Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer outlined their vision for addressing declining revenues while maintaining direct services for the Navajo people in the upcoming budget process for the Navajo Nation.

“The Executive Branch is reviewing the operations of each division and department to identify duplicate services, stagnant federal dollars, excessive spending, and other cost-saving measures,” they stated.

The letter also states that another important aspect of cost-savings will come with reviewing vacant positions within the Executive Branch to determine if personnel expenses can be reduced, while avoiding any layoffs of current employees.

In addition, President Nez and Vice President Lizer have continuously directed all division directors to drastically limit the amount of travel for conferences, summits, and meetings that occur off of the Navajo Nation.

The decline in revenues for the Nation in the upcoming fiscal years is due to the pending closure of the Navajo Generating Station and the Kayenta Mine, which provided tens of millions of dollars in revenue on an annual basis.

In response to the expected decreases, President Nez and Vice President Lizer put forth several solutions to address the shortfalls including setting aside \$21 million from the Undesignated, Unreserved Fund Balance for fiscal year 2021. Another proposal recommends creating a new Permanent Trust Fund five-year plan to prioritize the interest income from the Nation’s Permanent Trust Fund to offset revenue shortfalls before considering the funds for projects.

“Rather than allocating PTF’s interest income for projects as we do now, we can reverse it and prioritize operating funds and direct services in our annual budget then use whatever is left over for projects,” President Nez said.

At the conclusion of Monday’s discussion, the Budget and Finance Committee accepted the report from the three branch chiefs with a vote of 5-0.

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