



## The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

### CONTACTS:

Jared Touchin, Communications Director  
(928) 274-4275

Crystalyne Curley, Sr. Public Information Officer  
(928) 274-2758

[nnopvp.communications@gmail.com](mailto:nnopvp.communications@gmail.com)

---

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 14, 2020

## President Nez cites unspent chapter funds, financial accountability and planning measures in line-item veto

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Citing accountability to the Navajo people, a decline in annual revenue, and unspent chapter funds, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez used the executive authority granted by the Navajo people to the president to line-item veto an appropriation request of approximately \$1.4 million for emergency funds for chapters.

The appropriation was approved by the Navajo Nation Council through Resolution CJA-01-20 on Jan. 28, despite a report that was provided to the Council members prior to their vote from the Division of Community Development showing unspent emergency funds totaling well over \$2 million for the 110 chapters. The total overall unspent funds for all chapters are far greater.

President Nez and Vice President Lizer said they are open to working with the Navajo Nation Council to create an alternative solution that allows chapters to transfer or to use a limited amount of unspent funds from other accounts during emergency situations, as long as accountability measures are in place to prevent the misuse of such funds.

Department of Emergency Management Director Harland Cleveland reported that there has been no declarations of emergency or chapter resolutions requesting emergency assistance this winter season. He also noted that the department currently has a zero balance in its operations budget as well as the disaster relief line item under the Division of Public Safety.

During the State of the Navajo Nation Address on Jan. 27, President Nez and Vice President Lizer called upon the Council to consider a five-year plan to use the annual interest earned from the Permanent Trust Fund to address the \$30 to \$50 million decline in annual revenue due to the closures of the Navajo Generating Station and Kayenta Mine. They added that with the uncertain future of other power plants, the plan should be a top priority over other funding requests.

“We have proposed a plan to address the annual budget using the Permanent Trust Fund interest income. To that end, I have stressed to the Council how important this plan will be in continuing to provide services to the Navajo People and that this plan should be a priority for leadership. This plan is important enough that I urged the Council to forego other funding requests until we have

worked on the Permanent Trust Fund Five-Year Plan. With the current balance of \$14.9 million in the Nation's UUFB, I appreciate delegates responding by placing other funding requests on hold," stated President Nez.

The Nez-Lizer Administration also continues to urge all chapters and families to develop emergency response plans that prioritize the elderly and disabled, especially during the winter season to ensure they are well taken care of.

"The Nation will undoubtedly encounter future situations that could be considered an emergency and, yes, Chapters, as well as the Nation must have a plan to address those situations. The Navajo Department of Emergency Management works closely with Chapters with their situation reports and should a Chapter expect or experience an emergency the Department coordinates with the Chapter and the Emergency Management Commission on declaring an emergency," stated Vice President Lizer.

The Nez-Lizer Administration was successful in securing the reimbursement of 75-percent of last year's expended emergency funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency as a result of a winter snow storm that brought heavy snowfall to a large portion of the Navajo Nation.

"We must not forget the teachings of our parents and grandparents – T'áá hwó' ajít'éego, self-reliance. Make sure there is enough food stored from the fall harvest, chop enough wood to keep your home warm, and always have hay and other feed for the animals. As a Nation we have survived by keeping to our teachings and we must continue to do so," President Nez stated.

The line-item veto of CJA-01-20 is not subject to override by the Navajo Nation Council, in accordance with Navajo Nation law.

# # #

For the latest news from the Office of the President and Vice President, please visit <http://www.opvp.navajo-nsn.gov/> or find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.