



The 22nd Navajo Nation Council — Office of the Speaker

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Confused Signals Come from President Shelly on FY2012 Budget

President's Shelly's vetoes target green initiatives, resource development, young people and the elderly

Window Rock, AZ — The Navajo Nation Council voiced anger at Navajo President Shelly's line-item vetoes of portions of the FY2012 Tribal Operating Budget on Friday. Among the cuts in the \$556.6 million budget included \$111 thousand for the Little Folks Day Care Program, \$161 thousand for five Navajo Area Agency on Aging offices in Shiprock, Chinle, Tuba City, Fort Defiance and Crownpoint, \$352 thousand from the Navajo Green Commission, \$130 thousand from the Resources Committee, and \$838 thousand for legislative district staff for the 24 Council Delegates.

"The Council is very concerned for President Shelly's lack of cohesive management on the direction he wants to take the Navajo People," said Navajo Nation Council Speaker Johnny Naize. "The President says not to forget the elders but it appears he has. He has also said we need to nurture the youth because they are our future but instead has yanked funding that would do just that."

"Additionally, at a time when other governments are looking for ways to build a green economy to reduce waste and become environmentally aware, President Shelly has decided that the Navajo people will not."

"These vetoes were unnecessary after all the discussions we held in June between the three Branches and during the recent Budget Sessions which produced this budget," continued Naize. "I unfortunately believe the President has suddenly decided on himself to rewrite all the work the Branches have done during the past three months."

In the FY2012 operating budget, the Executive Branch was appropriated the bulk of the \$556.6 million at a little more than \$505 million for programs and set asides such as for Higher Education and Veterans. Next, the Legislative Branch was appropriated \$16.6 million with the Judicial Branch receiving \$15.4 million for their programs and set asides. Also included in the budget are \$25.4 million for fixed costs and \$4 million for chapter spending.

"These cuts are concerning because they appear to be made as a vendetta against certain programs, council members and committees," said Naize. "But in the process of doing that he vetoed funds for Summer Youth Employment, and an elderly group home in Blue Gap. Our people are in need and even though the President says his Branch provides direct services to the people, these vetoes prove they won't. That is not how a Natani leads his people."

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Earlier this month President Shelley vetoed \$2.2 million for Youth Employment, \$286,000 for the Hoosh Doo Dii To' Home and \$1 million for the Navajo Department of Transportation.

Also in these latest round of vetoes was funding for 24 Legislative District Staff for the 24 Council Delegates.

“In the past, the Legislative Branch has worked with a little more than 8 percent of the total Navajo Nation Operating Budget, said Navajo Nation Council Speaker Johnny Naize. “Not only do we need to remain at that level but we'll also need some additional funds to address the increased workload for the 24 Council Delegates.”

At the district level there is a growing feeling of isolation as Council Delegates juggle up to 8 chapters and their work on their committees in Window Rock. The Legislative District Staff would assist the Delegates by attending meetings that otherwise may have been missed due to other commitments.

Although some thought a smaller Council would mean a smaller budget, the opposite has happened. The increase in Chapter representation has lead to an increase of meeting and on-reservation travel expenses. Speaker Naize and the Council are resolved in making sure the people don't lose their voice just because President Shelly wants to ration and silence the Delegates ability to serve community needs and concerns.”

“Again, the Navajo People are becoming confused where President Shelly is taking us,” concluded Naize. “All these programs are for the people yet he refuses to acknowledge the need out there. For the last couple of months he has held numerous town halls to get community input yet for all the people's efforts, he has decided to ignore them.”

“I want the people to know that the Council will not ignore them and will continue to work and make sure the business of the people gets done no matter how President Shelly tries to silence them.”

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