



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

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**Nez-Lizer Administration proposes to work with Council to
develop new legislation to protect Navajo consumers from price gouging**

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — In their veto message to the 24th Navajo Nation Council, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer put forth a proposal to work together with the Council members to develop new comprehensive legislation to protect Navajo consumers from excessive pricing, also known as price gouging, by businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

President Nez and Vice President Lizer vetoed Resolution CAP-17-20 on Thursday, stating that they fully support the protection of Navajo consumers from excessive pricing, however they cited the need for input from Navajo citizens, businesses, and others who may be impacted by the implementation of such provisions. In addition, the bill was introduced as an “emergency legislation” and did not allow any opportunity for public comments from the Navajo people, as allowed with regular legislations. The Council passed the bill as part of a “consent agenda” on April 10, with no debate or discussion among the delegates to weigh the pros and cons of the bill.

“We fully support the consumer protection against price gouging, but it needs to be done the right way with the proper applications of our laws. The legislation deserves to be debated and should allow for input from the public, rather than being rushed through the legislative process, added to the agenda, and voted on by the Council with absolutely no discussion. There are many questions raised by the passing of CAP-17-20 and if the Council were allowed a debate, many of these questions would have been answered. We are open to working together to develop new legislation to address the shortcomings of the current bill,” said President Nez.

In previous veto messages, President Nez and Vice President Lizer have expressed concerns with the Council’s growing use of the “consent agenda” provision, that is being used more and more often by delegates to introduce legislations under the “emergency” provision the same day as a scheduled session, which is then added to a consent agenda with multiple other legislations that are voted on with no debate or public input.

“From now on, if our lawmakers continue to take advantage of the emergency legislation and consent agenda provisions, we are going to initiate a comment period of our own to allow the Navajo people to submit written comments before we take action on bills. We need transparency

for the Navajo people and rushing these legislations through the process is not allowing for transparency to occur,” added President Nez.

They further stated that the Nez-Lizer Administration is not opposed to good, well-thought-out consumer laws, adding that they look forward to working with the Council to create such laws. The leaders also recommended working together to develop the framework to create a Navajo Better Business Bureau to help consumers during the pandemic and beyond.

“As President and Vice President e are elected by the Navajo people to create good, comprehensive laws that benefit all Navajo people. This piece of legislation creates many unanswered questions, but we are willing to work with the Council to initiate a new legislation,” stated Vice President Lizer.

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