



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

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**Nez-Lizer request Council to address revenue shortfalls before
considering spending requests during State of the Navajo Nation Address**



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan, First Lady Phefelia Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, and Second Lady Dottie Lizer present the State of the Navajo Nation Address to the 24th Navajo Nation Council in Window Rock, Ariz. on Jan. 27, 2020.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – During the State of the Navajo Nation Address, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer called on the members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council to hold off on considering any legislations that request funds until the three branches of government address the expected revenue shortfalls in the coming years due to the closures of the Navajo Generating Station and the Kayenta Mine. They were joined by First Lady Phefelia Nez and Second Lady Dottie Lizer as they presented the State of the Navajo Nation Address to Council on Monday on the opening day of the Winter Session in Window Rock, Ariz.

In December, President Nez presented a plan to the Council's Budget and Finance Committee that would use the interest income earned from the Nation's Permanent Trust Fund, not the principal, to help fund the Comprehensive Budget for the next five years to ensure that direct services continue for the Navajo people.

"With the closure of the Navajo Generating Station and Kayenta Mine, our Nation's annual revenue has declined by approximately \$30 to \$50 million. Before our administration considers funding new projects, we need to first work together to address the budget shortfall for the coming years to ensure that direct services are provided for the Navajo people and our communities first and foremost," said President Nez, who also noted that chair of the Budget and Finance Committee Jamie Henio has agreed to introduce a bill to put forth the proposed plan.

He also stated that the Permanent Trust Fund was created with the vision that it would be used in times of declining revenues for the Nation to ensure that direct services continue. If the Nation does not address the upcoming budgets, it could lead to layoffs and a reduction of direct services.

"We respectfully request the honorable members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council to hold off on entertaining any legislations that request funding from the UUFB, Síhasin Fund, or other revenue sources until we have a plan in place to address our Nation's Comprehensive Budget for the next five years," President Nez added.

President Nez and Vice President Lizer said once a five-year plan is adopted, they would request the Council to consider legislation to provide additional personnel, expertise, and resources to help complete the high volume of projects that have been funded in previous years.

"Within the last four years, the Navajo Nation has approved well over \$300 million for infrastructure, chapter, and economic development projects in many of our communities. While we applaud these efforts to improve our Nation, there remains a great need for additional funds and resources to provide the personnel and expertise within the Navajo Nation Division of Community Development to manage and complete these projects," stated Vice President Lizer.

They also stated that under the leadership of Division of Community Development Executive Director Dr. Pearl Yellowman, the Capital Projects Management Department is working very hard to ensure that the projects are progressing, however, within the department there is only one planner, one registered architect, one compliance officer, and 13 field project managers.

The ratio of project managers compared to the number of projects is 1 to 30, meaning that each individual project manager is overseeing 30 separate projects at any given time – this is not conducive for the completion of these critical projects.

"We are packaging a legislation to request \$5 to \$6 million in additional funds to hire more qualified personnel with the experience and expertise to expedite and complete these projects. With the support and approval of these funds by the 24th Navajo Nation Council, we will see more projects breaking ground and more benefits for our communities," President Nez added.

The State of the Navajo Nation Address also highlights several of the Nez-Lizer Administration's recent accomplishments including the acquisition of the rights to 500 megawatts of transmission

lines, a partnership with Salt River Project to produce up to 200 megawatts of solar power to sell on the open market, the purchase of a sand and gravel pit to help improve roads, the repair of earthen dams in the former Bennett Freeze area, and much more. At the conclusion of the report, the 24th Navajo Nation Council unanimously accepted State of the Navajo Nation Address with 16 supporting votes and zero opposed.

To access the entire written State of the Navajo Nation Address, please click on the following link:
<https://www.opvp.navajo-nsn.gov/Portals/0/Files/STATE%20OF%20THE%20NAVAJO%20NATION/SONNA%20JAN%202020.pdf?ver=2020-01-27-110640-287×tamp=1580148429548>

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