



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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Nez-Lizer's expenditure plan confronts the COVID-19 pandemic and addresses needed relief for Navajo families, workers, and businesses

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer announce that the administration is working diligently to develop a comprehensive expenditure plan for the \$600 million received from the federal CARES Act appropriation. The plan reflects and commits to helping the Navajo people overcome the public health and economic impacts of COVID-19 pandemic.

"The \$600 million in CARES Act funding should be directed to help the Navajo people by providing for improved health care, water, power, and telecommunications infrastructure, agriculture, small businesses and enterprises, elderly care needs, first responders, educational needs, and scholarships for students entering the health care and public safety fields. Before being elected as President and Vice President by nearly two-thirds of the Navajo voters, we visited over 70 chapters and spent long-hours listening to the needs of the people. We are well-informed of the priorities in every region. The plan further outlines the immediate needs to keep our Navajo families, communities, and economy safe and secured," said President Nez. "Furthermore, the Administration is prepared and committed to work with the 24th Navajo Nation Council and the Judicial Branch to implement the plan to ensure the safety and well-being of our Navajo communities."

The comprehensive expenditure plan outlines the following categories:

- Immediate Expenditure of \$50.5 Million consists of the following:
 - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and safety equipment for Navajo Nation government employees, volunteers, enterprises;
 - Care packages to assist Navajo families that have been impacted by COVID-19
 - Hazard Pay or Special Duty Pay for essential employees;
 - Deep sanitation of all Navajo Nation government facilities and public areas;
 - Reconfiguration of all Navajo Nation offices, which complies with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines, for the safe return of employees
 - Telework capable computer systems for Navajo Nation government employees;
 - Assistance to P.L. 93-638 healthcare facilities on the Navajo Nation; and

- Expenses to facilitate the procurement and/or improvement of the Navajo Nation's Financial System and governmental response to process and implement Navajo Nation CARES Fund expenditures
- Expenditure of \$300 Million for water infrastructure and agriculture projects
 - Adequate plumbing of Navajo homes are necessary to provide clean water for hygiene and household use to combat COVID-19
 - Agricultural project are needed to promote self-sufficiency and economic development
- Expenditure of \$100 Million for powerline and solar infrastructure
 - An adequate source of power and energy of Navajo homes are needed to electrify water infrastructure, refrigeration, telephone, telehealth, etc.
- Expenditure of \$50 Million for Broadband/Telecommunication
 - Adequate telecommunication and broadband systems for Navajo communities are needed to communicate effectively
- Expenditure of \$50 Million for scholarships to assist Navajo students entering the health care and public safety fields
- Expenditure of \$40 Million to help Navajo businesses, and promote economic development
- Expenditure of \$10 Million to address housing needs on the Navajo Nation

Additionally, President Nez and Vice President Lizer support Legislation 0116-20, which proposes to create the "Navajo Nation CARES Fund" to wisely and manage the \$600 million in CARES Act funding from the federal government. The legislation also supports the immediate provision of \$50 million for items such as Personal Protective Equipment, food, water, and care packages for Navajo people, to help health care facilities and specific governmental needs that will help keep employees working under safer conditions.

The legislation is sponsored by 24th Navajo Nation Council Delegates Edmund Yazzie, Kee Allen Begay, Jr., Edison Wauneka, Herman M. Daniels, Jr., Paul Begay, Pernel Halona, Rickie Nez, Mark Freeland, and Jamie Henio.

"The legislation is a solid and unified approach based on the true needs of our Navajo people.. If considered and approved by Council, Legislation No. 0116-20 would set up a more efficient path that allows the three branches of government, health care, and emergency management experts, and our federal partners to work together on the comprehensive expenditure plan to address COVID-19 efforts and to plan for the long-term health care and safety needs of our communities and that includes planning and prevention measures in the event of future waves of COVID-19 or other public health pandemics that may occur in the future," added President Nez.

On Saturday, President Nez line-item vetoed the appropriation in CMY-44-20. The Navajo Nation is established with a balance of power among the three Branches, and not one Branch should have unilateral authority over funds intended to benefit all members of the Navajo Nation and all Branches of the Navajo Nation government.

"The Navajo people are suffering from the spread of COVID-19. As leaders, we can alleviate the pain that this virus has created among our relatives and communities. All the three Navajo Nation Branches must work together to plan for the most beneficial use of the funds, a plan with the people's best interest. As a sovereign and resilient Nation, we must advocate for what is best for the Navajo people," said Vice President Lizer.

"It is evident that CMY-44-20, sponsored by Speaker Damon, was not supported by the Navajo people. Only four supporting legislative comments from the Navajo people are not sufficient to decide for the entire Nation. There were many issues and clarity needed within the resolution. It is vital that we must protect the finances to ensure the safety and well-being of the Navajo people. As leaders, we are committed to working with the Judicial Branch and Legislative Branch to ensure accountability, transparency, and efficient use of the funds outlined in the expenditure plan, which also includes inputs and recommendations from Navajo citizens, chapter governments, enterprises, educational institutes, health care workers, and Navajo Nation divisions and programs," added President Nez.

President Nez and Vice President Lizer request the Navajo people to submit supporting comments for Legislation No. 0116-20, sponsored by Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie and co-sponsors, by e-mail to comments@navajo-nsn.gov and navajonationpubliccomments@gmail.com.

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