



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: NOV. 4, 2024

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Navajo President Buu Nygren signs emergency legislation to pay for election, as Navajo Board of Election Supervisors Chairman Harrison can finally relax

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The Navajo Election Administration was down to the wire and counting the minutes on Friday when money for tomorrow's election came through at last.

were covered and poll workers across the Nation could be paid.

"When they came in a few weeks ago, I said, definitely, I'd support it," the President said.

"We've got to get our elections fully funded so that they can run the elections that they need again. I commend you guys for getting this passed."

As soon as the legislation was signed, the President said he expected the Office of the Controller to get the money to the Election Office.

"Before this meeting, I made sure we reached out to the Controller's Office to make sure that we got to get the fundings rolled out as soon as we can," he said.



On Friday, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren signed emergency legislation to allocate \$961,602 so election costs and poll workers across the Nation could be paid. He was joined by Resources & Development Chairman Otto Tso and Vice Chair Casey Allen Johnson and staff from the Navajo Election Administration.

Navajo Board of Election Supervisors Chairman Melvin Harrison breathed a sigh of relief as Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren signed emergency legislation to allocate \$961,602 so election costs

Navajo Nation Council Resources and Development Chairman Otto Tso was credited by Mr. Harrison for attending a NBOES meeting at just the right time and stepping up to sponsor the needed legislation.

He credited Chairman Tso and Vice Chairman Casey Allen Johnson for the Council's 14-0 vote in support of the legislation.

"Why is it that we have certain entities that should be funded off the top asking for money when fundings are needed, such as the election administration?" Chairman Tso asked. "We're all on the same page about the election. We need to make sure that funding is there. You have something that you protect on behalf of the Navajo people."

In his Nov. 1 letter to the Council to say he would sign the legislation, President Nygren said NBOES provided significant justification for the funding.

He said a major reason emergency legislation was needed is because the Election Administration is operating on a six-month budget and not what it needs for the full fiscal year.

"It is critical that we support our democracy by ensuring smooth elections," he wrote. "I remind my colleagues that we could have avoided this emergency legislation if we had worked together to create a comprehensive budget."

Seeing that elections are paid for is critical to tribal self-governance and ensures the people's right to vote, the President said.



A happy day now that tomorrow's election and poll workers are funded

"It shows the extent of our sovereignty and how we exercise it on a day-to-day basis by funding our own elections," he said. "It encourages our people to get out there and vote, and the more votes we can get out in our communities will have an

impact on how their government looks and the people that will lead them."

And voting is what the Navajo people are doing, Mr. Harrison said.

"There's a lot of people voting," he said. "You can't believe how much walk-ins there is. It's really amazing this year of how many people are voting early, walk-ins and absentee ballot requests."

"It's going to be good election without having to worry about budgets, you know," Mr. Harrison said. "Sometimes we have sleepless nights. I do, you know, like, oh man, how are we going to pay our poll workers? Now we can tell our poll workers, you're going to get paid. The President signed the budget."

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