



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Budget and Finance Committee receives update on sanctioned programs and calls for stronger accountability**



**Budget and Finance Committee voted four in favor and none opposed to accept the Office of the Auditor General's report.**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — On Friday, Feb. 28, the Budget and Finance Committee (BFC) held a special meeting to receive an update from the Office of the Auditor General on the status of Navajo Nation programs under sanction for Fiscal Year 2025.

The report outlined persistent compliance issues across four sanctioned programs with unresolved audit findings and incomplete corrective actions.

Acting Auditor General Helen Brown reported that two programs under the Department of Natural Resources (DNR)—the Navajo Nation Fair Office and the Tribal Ranch Program—remain sanctioned due to long-standing financial mismanagement, inadequate oversight, and failure to address corrective actions over the past decade.

The report also highlighted ongoing sanctions for two programs under the Department of Economic Development (DED)—the Business Industrial Development Fund (BIDF) and P-Card activities—due to poor financial controls, noncompliance with lending policies, and a lack of accountability.

“These repeated findings represent more than just financial missteps; they are long-standing issues that compromise the integrity of our Nation’s resources,” said Budget and Finance Committee Chairwoman Shaandiin Parrish. “It is imperative that these divisions prioritize

meaningful action, not only to resolve findings but to restore the public's confidence in our governance."

Both DNR and DED continue facing sanctions due to unresolved audit findings exposing systemic issues in financial management, oversight, and accountability. The Navajo Nation Fair Office and Tribal Ranch Program have been sanctioned for nearly a decade, while BIDF and P-Card activities in DED face similar issues.

Vice Chair Carl R. Slater stressed the need for innovative solutions like blockchain technology to bring transparency and improve financial oversight. "The people deserve to see progress, not continued excuses," said Vice Chair Slater. "Sanctions were never intended to be indefinite. We must hold our programs accountable to achieve real, measurable improvements. Tools like blockchain and other oversight reforms can help us modernize our approach to financial integrity."

Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty called for hearings to fully address the sanctioned programs, suggesting noncompliance should lead to financial penalties or cost-sharing for repeat audits. "For over a decade, we've heard the same reports with little change," said Delegate Crotty. "It is time to establish clear expectations, meaningful deadlines, and real consequences when programs fail to take action. Our priority must be protecting the financial stability of the Navajo Nation and ensuring our people receive the services they deserve."

The committee agreed to schedule hearings with sanctioned programs, review policy reforms to shorten corrective action timelines, and assess the costs of ongoing sanctions. They also requested follow-up reports on fiscal agent activities, audit costs, and withheld funds.

"Our collective goal is to resolve these findings and get these programs back on track," said Council Delegate Cherilyn Yazzie. "We must ensure our audit processes are supported, funded, and respected, and that those responsible for these programs are actively working to protect the resources of our Nation."

The Budget and Finance Committee voted four in favor, and none opposed, to accept the Office of the Auditor General's report on the sanctioned Navajo Nation programs for Fiscal Year 2025.

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