



25th Navajo Nation Council

# 25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Six-month Continuing Resolution for FY2025 to be considered during special session**



**The 25th Navajo Nation Council will hold a special council session to consider an emergency legislation aimed at securing a six-month Continuing Resolution.**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — On Friday, Speaker Crystalyne Curley announced the introduction of emergency legislation aimed at securing a six-month Continuing Resolution to avoid employee layoffs and continue critical direct services and government operations beyond the end of the current fiscal year, which will end on Sept. 30. A special session to consider the legislation is scheduled for Sept. 16-17 beginning at 9:00 a.m. each day at the Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz.

Legislation No. 0206-24, sponsored by Budget and Finance Committee (BFC) Chair Shaandiin Parrish was introduced on Friday and is designed to ensure that essential government operations, services, and employment for the Navajo Nation remain funded from Oct. 1, 2024 through March 31, 2025. If the measure is passed by the Navajo Nation Council and signed into law by the President, it will allow for additional time to develop and consider a Comprehensive Budget as quickly as possible.

The Continuing Resolution will ensure that funding and benefits remain in place, without disruption, for Navajo veterans, elder and child services, students, and other critical needs. The mandated annual set-asides for the Permanent Trust Fund, Land Acquisition Trust Fund, Diné Higher Education Grant Fund, Capital Outlay Match Funding Special Revenue Fund, Navajo

Nation Water Rights Claims Fund, and the Navajo Nation Veterans Trust Fund will be fully covered through the legislation.

Chair Parrish stated that the Committee worked diligently to include language in the legislation to ensure that the services provided from the Navajo Nation Veterans Trust Fund and the scholarship programs receive 100-percent of their respective funding so that Navajo veterans and students receive their benefits and scholarship funding in full and without delay.

In May, the Budget and Finance Committee invited the Branch Chiefs, or their designee, to a work session to consider the Budget Instructions Manual (BIM) for the FY2025 budget. Speaker Crystalyne Curley was the only Branch Chief in attendance. President Buu Nygren and Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne were not in attendance and did not send a designee.

On July 23, the Budget and Finance Committee approved Resolution BFJY-17-24, adopting base planning amounts which considered recommendations from the Three Branch Chiefs. Similar to last year and years prior, the proposed branch allocations differed between the Budget and Finance Committee's resolution and the amounts put forth by the Branch Chiefs.

On Aug. 7, Navajo Nation Attorney General Ethel Branch issued a legal opinion claiming that the branch base planning amounts contained in Resolution BFJY-17-24 are invalid. As a consequence, the FY25 budget process halted, and BFC members met several times with the Branch Chiefs to achieve an amicable resolution for the operations of the government. No new agreement was signed, necessitating the need for the continuing resolution to be considered on Monday.

On Thursday, Speaker Curley notified President Nygren and Chief Justice Jayne that she has rescinded her signature from the Three Branch Chiefs Agreement dated June 21, 2024.

"The Budget and Finance Committee has worked in good faith to conduct our due diligence in order to develop a proposed budget, including hosting public hearings to hear the needs of our people. The Committee offered numerous de-escalation options and concessions multiple times to Chief Justice Jayne and President Nygren to resolve the budget in a unified and amicable way. Without a consensus in place, legislation must be considered to prevent disruptions in governmental operations and services beyond September. The scare tactics being issued by the Office of the President suggesting layoffs for Navajo Nation employees are unnecessary. We are doing everything within our authorities to avoid layoffs," said BFC Chair Parrish.

The legislation introduced on Friday also directs programs to process budget revisions, budget reallocations, budget modifications, and budget transfers to avoid employee layoffs or other negative personnel impacts.

During the budget process, Chair Parrish said the Budget and Finance Committee was alarmed by the proposed budget for the Executive Branch, which reduced critical funding for programs and departments that provide direct services to the Navajo people in order to increase the overall budget for the Office of the President.

If passed by the Council and signed into law, the Continuing Resolution will provide funding levels that align with the Fiscal Year 2024 budget for the majority of programs and departments,

thereby maintaining financial stability and avoiding any disruptions in direct services.

“As the head of the Legislative Branch, we attempted to work diligently with President Nygren and Chief Justice Jayne to reach a compromise. For the benefit of our government and our people, I compromised by agreeing to a lesser budget amount for the Legislative Branch to move the budget process forward. Unfortunately, only the Executive and Legislative Branches reached a compromise. The introduction of this Continuing Resolution reflects our commitment to developing a solution that benefits our people and communities. It is imperative that we prevent any gaps in funding that could adversely affect our Nation,” said Speaker Curley.

If passed and signed by President Nygren, the Continuing Resolution will take effect immediately, ensuring that all governmental functions and services remain uninterrupted.

The Budget and Finance Committee would then begin a process to use data collected from the community public budget hearings, Navajo Nation program unmet needs submitted in the Comprehensive Budget process, and other priorities identified by the Navajo people and leadership to strategize and allocate additional funding to support much-needed capital construction and service delivery to the Navajo people.

The Navajo Nation Council’s priority remains the Navajo people and their needs. The Council looks forward to having a discussion on the FY2025 Comprehensive Budget for the Navajo Nation government.

The special session is scheduled to begin on Monday, Sept. 16 at 9:00 a.m. at the Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz. The session will also be live-streamed on the Navajo Nation Council’s designated YouTube channel and Facebook page.

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