



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Naabik'íyáti' Committee approves FY2025 budget recommendation for Navajo Nation Legislative Branch



Speaker Crystalyne Curley sponsored Legislation 0192-24, proposing the FY2025 Legislative Branch budget.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On Friday, Jan. 17, the Naabik'íyáti' Committee of the 25th Navajo Nation Council approved the Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) budget recommendations for the Navajo Nation Legislative Branch, advancing the budget to the proposed FY2025 Comprehensive Budget.

The committee first unanimously approved Legislation 0159-24, which outlines procedures for reviewing and recommending the FY2025 oversight budget, with a vote of 13 in favor, and no opposition. These procedures will guide future FY2025 budget meetings.

Speaker Crystalyne Curley (Tachee/Blue Gap, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tselani/Cottonwood, Low Mountain) sponsored Legislation 0192-24, which proposes the FY2025 Legislative Branch budget. Legislative Branch Chief of Staff Manuel Rico and Legislative Financial Advisor Clarinda Begay served as agents for the legislation.

During the session, Budget and Finance Committee (BFC) Chair Shaandiin Parrish (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) served as speaker pro tempore for the Naabik'íyáti' Committee.

“This is the first time this legislation is being presented to the Naabik'íyáti' Committee,” Speaker Curley said. “If there are any discrepancies in the budget forms, we are ready to make updates. This budget aligns with the allocated numbers in the Budget Instruction Manual.”

Senior Budget Analyst Nanette Francisco from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) presented a close-out report on the Legislative Branch's FY2024 budget and an update on FY2025, including department budgets, expenditures, and legislative concerns. Francisco confirmed that the Office of the Speaker had addressed most legislative concerns.

Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Cove, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Red Valley Tse'alnaozt'i'i, Sheepsprings, Beclabito, Gadiiahi/To'Koi) raised concerns about low department expenditure rates, as reported by OMB and the Office of the Controller.

"At the close-out report, we want to see spending above 75 percent. I'd like to know how the office is monitoring the budget," Crotty said. "Even my committee, the BFC, ended the year with only about 30 percent of its budget spent."

Crotty also suggested that delegates should have more opportunities to discuss budget formulation with branch chiefs to guide committee spending. She expressed concern about vacancies affecting budgeting: "Once funds are locked into personnel, they stay there, and that's my concern with vacancies."

Law and Order Committee Chair Eugenia Charles-Newton (Shiprock) asked whether legislative staff were paid within the average range for their positions. Speaker Curley emphasized that she urges program managers and directors to fill vacancies, and Chief of Staff Rico confirmed that all staff are paid according to their qualifications. He also noted that a general wage adjustment has been applied to applicable staff, which further impacts the budget.

Resources and Development Committee Chair Brenda Jesus (Oaksprings, St. Michaels) suggested reassessing revenues returned to the Nation by its enterprises to supplement recommended budgets. "What are we doing to replace revenue? Some enterprises are operating globally and not giving revenue back to the Nation. It's a responsibility they owe to the Nation," Jesus said.

Council Delegate Danny Simpson (Becenti, Lake Valley, Nahodishgish, Standing Rock, Whiterock, Huerfano, Nageezi, Crownpoint) expressed concern about introducing the close-out report at this stage. He preferred a quicker progression to budget discussions during the FY2025 Comprehensive Budget hearings.

BFC Chair Parrish explained that the close-out report's expenditure rates would help guide the upcoming budget talks.

Before voting on the main motion, Delegate Dr. Andy Nez passed an amendment to move \$73,952 from an unclassified title within Government Development to the Human Rights Commission for the position of a Human Rights Investigator.

Speaker Curley stated that, in formulating the Legislative Branch budget, she prioritized the unmet needs of the standing committees over those within the Office of the Speaker. "Hopefully in this recommended budget, the funding will remain available," she said. "I commend the committees that have met strategically to address their priorities and budget. If other committees need assistance, let's address your needs."

Legislation 0192-24 was approved unanimously with a vote of 14 in favor and none opposed. The recommended budget will now move forward to the proposed FY2025 comprehensive budget for deliberation by oversight committees.

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