

Written by Staff Reports
Friday, 08 July 2022 07:46



PHOENIX, Ariz. — Speaker Seth Damon and members of the State Task Force Sub-Committee of the 24th Navajo Nation applaud the signing of the historic \$18 billion Fiscal Year 2023 budget signed into law June 28 by Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey. The bi-partisan budget allocates \$55 million for road infrastructure projects, veterans services, housing construction, tribal education programs, and the Kayenta judicial complex that was passed by the Arizona State Senate and House of Representatives the week of June 20.

Senator Theresa Hatathlie (LD7), Representative Jasmine Blackwater-Nygren (LD7), and Representative Myron Tsosie (LD7) worked with Governor Ducey, Senate President Karen Fann, House Speaker Rusty Bowers, and Appropriations Chairwoman Regina Cobb to push forward the funding priorities of the Navajo Nation in Legislative District 7.

“The Navajo Nation appreciates the leadership of our Arizona delegation for working across the aisle with their Republican colleagues and Governor Ducey to approve this \$55 million investment. This budget was only possible because Senator Hatathlie, Representative Blackwater-Nygren, and Representative Tsosie worked with community leaders, chapter officials, and at the grassroots level to identify these infrastructure projects. We commend their hard work and steadfast leadership on behalf of our schools, veterans, and Navajo families,” Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh) said.

House Bills 2858 and 2862 include funds for children, veterans, roads, public safety, housing, education, and the construction of facilities for Arizona tribes, including the following Navajo Nation projects:

Written by Staff Reports
Friday, 08 July 2022 07:46

- Lukachukai Veterans Multi-Purpose Complex - \$500,000
- Veteran Service Officers to provide services in rural communities - \$2.2 million
- Funding for tribal ceremonies funding for discharged tribal military members and those dealing with Post Traumatic Stress Disorders - \$1 million
- Highway 89 Roundabout in Page, Ariz. - \$5 million
- Loop Road improvements in Ganado, Ariz. - \$1 million
- N39 Road funding shortfall for Sweetwater, Ariz. - \$6 million
- N9402 Road improvements for Lupton and Houck, Ariz. - \$10 million
- Judicial Complex in Kayenta, Ariz. - \$2 million
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous People funding for the Office of the Attorney General - \$2 million
- Tribal Child Trauma Training - \$100,000
- Little Colorado Visitor Center - \$1 million
- Multi-Purpose Center for Teesto, Ariz. - \$1 million
- Community Center for Dilkon, Ariz. - \$3 million
- Navajo and Hopi tribal housing - \$4 million
- Navajo Technical University environmental laboratory in Chinle, Ariz. - \$4 million
- Diné College Student Center in Tuba City, Ariz. - \$8 million
- Funding for Indian education, language, cultural and historic preservation - \$5 million

“We prioritized community-based, shovel-ready projects, and programs that would help our most vulnerable communities during this pandemic. Most of these projects have been years in the making and we give credit to previous state representatives and senators who were here before us,” Blackwater-Nygren said. “The \$55 million is an investment to the Navajo people and my colleagues are proud to have pushed forward this state budget.”

The Arizona Legislature has historically overlooked its 22 Tribal Nations, pushing aside its priorities and citing state jurisdiction as a reason to not invest in tribal communities. According to Hatathlie and Tsosie, that narrative changed this budget session.

“Our state leaders in Arizona changed the narrative and fiercely advocated for our Navajo

Written by Staff Reports
Friday, 08 July 2022 07:46

Nation priorities. In the spirit of bipartisanship, our Democratic and Republican lawmakers came together in the best interest of Arizona. We must remember their advocacy as our roads, veterans, young people, Native languages, and tribal colleges became a top priority,” Council Delegate Mark Freeland (Becenti, Lake Valley, Náhodishgish, Standing Rock, Whiterock, Huerfano, Nageezi, Crownpoint) said.

Freeland thanked Ducey for his part in signing the bill into action.

“We commend Governor Doug Ducey for signing the state budget into law and making history for our 22 sovereign nations,” Freeland said.

The State Task Force Sub-Committee has been working with Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah leaders during budget negotiations to allocate millions in state funding for 110 Navajo Nation chapters. Members include Freeland, Vice Chairman Paul Begay, Council Delegate Pernell Halona, Delegate Herman Daniels Jr., Delegate Charlaine Tso, and Delegate Kee Allen Begay Jr.

“The legislature also passed a historic \$1 billion investment to secure Arizona’s water future that we hope will ensure Lake Powell and Antelope Point Marina are protected. We must protect our water supply, strengthen our conservation strategies, and ensure clean water is available for future generations. The Navajo Nation commends our Arizona lawmakers for ensuring we get \$55 million for our infrastructure and water needs,” Begay (Coppermine, K’ai’bii’tó, LeChee, Tonalea/Red Lake, Bodaway/Gap) said.

In a prepared statement, Ducey added, “Over the last eight years, I’ve worked hand-in-hand with the good women and men of the Arizona Legislature to tackle the challenges facing our state and pass policies to position Arizona as the land of opportunity. I am so grateful for their partnership.”

Ducey then went on to list some of the things that were accomplished this legislative session.

“This year’s legislative session is sure to be one to remember — and not only because of the

\$18 Billion bi-partisan budget signed by Arizona governor with \$55 Million allocated for the Navajo Nation

Written by Staff Reports
Friday, 08 July 2022 07:46

historic bipartisan budget agreement. We took record revenues and invested in priorities that directly impact the lives of our fellow Arizonans: education, public safety, border security, health care, roadways paying off our debts, and saving for the future,” Ducey said.

Staff Reports