

Written by gallupsun
Monday, 13 November 2023 10:59

COYOTE CANYON, N.M. — Members of the 25th Navajo Nation Council joined Navajo Nation President Dr. Buu Nygren in a historic event as he signed into law amendments to the Navajo Nation Procurement Act Nov. 3.

Legislation No. 0203-23 was unanimously approved by the Council Oct. 16. The resolution amends the Navajo Nation Procurement Act for the first time in 32 years and the Navajo Nation Business Opportunity Act to reduce “red tape” and expedite internal processes to help programs, departments, and Navajo business owners.

At the signing ceremony, legislation sponsor Council Delegate Seth Damon said the amendments will cut red tape and will help to optimize the drawing down of funds to meet federal deadlines.

“The Navajo Nation has put together a procurement policy that eases the process while adhering to Navajo Nation guidelines, and federal and state policies,” Damon said. “Today marks a huge achievement in which we are cutting red tape. In past administrations, we tried but we didn’t have the working collaboration with the President’s Office. This is a huge, monumental piece of legislation that’s going to help us draw down funds faster and provide our people with a better tomorrow.”

He noted that the new amendments will help to expedite the process of securing construction materials, supplies, and services that are needed to complete hundreds of infrastructure projects that were funded through the American Rescue Plan Act. The federal deadline to spend or encumber ARPA funds is Dec. 31, 2024.

Nygren said that all business and economic development on the Navajo Nation is driven by the Navajo Nation Procurement Act and the Business Opportunity Act.

“We are tasked with spending ARPA money over the next year and these amendments will really help push the resources needed. It’s going to help Navajo business owners and enhance business and economic opportunities on the Navajo Nation,” President Nygren said.

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Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development, Business Regulatory Department Manager, Notah Silversmith thanked Damon, Speaker Crystalyne Curley and Nygren for approving the legislation and having it signed into law.

“We advocate for the Navajo Business Opportunity Act in giving preference to Navajo-owned businesses on the priority source listing,” Silversmith said. “Accordingly, the Procurement Act prioritizes sourcing business from Navajo vendors. I’d like to thank my staff who helped work on this and President Nygren for his support.”

Damon thanked the Navajo Nation Department of Justice, the Navajo Nation Council Budget and Finance Committee, BFC Chair and legislation co-sponsor Shaandiin Parrish, former BFC Chair Lorenzo Bates, and former Council Delegate Tom Chee.

