

Navajo Nation Council approves appropriations to cover operating expenses

Written by Staff Reports
Friday, 16 June 2023 03:06



WINDOW ROCK, ARIZ. — The 25th Navajo Nation Council passed Emergency Legislation No. 0124-23 on June 2, approving just over \$2.4 million from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance to cover programs expenses for the remainder of fiscal year 2023 for the Office of the President and Vice President, the Office of the Controller, and the five Division of Aging and Long-term Care Support Agency Offices.

The legislation was sponsored by Council Delegate Seth Damon (Baahaali, Chilchiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tsayatoh) and co-sponsored by Council Delegate Shaandiin Parrish (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta).

A similar legislation had come before the council during a special session on May 25, and during that session, several delegates presented concerns over the amounts that were being proposed.

Damon said that the current legislation included reduced requested amounts that provided for personnel costs for DALTCS and addressed deficits presented by the Navajo Nation Veterans Administration.

The legislation requested \$750,000 to cover OPVP's operating expenses for the remainder of FY2023, almost \$300,000 to cover OOC's program expenses for the remainder of FY2023, and almost \$1.4 million to cover program expenses for the five DALTCS Agency Offices for the remainder of FY2023.

Approximately \$43,000 of OPVP's request was attributed to an over-expenditure made by the

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Western Agency Veterans Administration which occurred between October 2022 to January 2023. According to Navajo Nation Veterans Administration Executive Director Bobbie Ann Baldwin, corrective measures had been put in place to address this issue.

To safeguard against over-expenditures moving forward, Council Delegate Helena Nez Begay (Coppermine, K'aibii'to, LeChee, Tonalea/Red Lake, Bodaway/Gap) and Parrish motioned for an amendment that directed the 25th Navajo Nation Council, OPVP, NNVA, OOC, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Department of Justice to develop a plan that corrects the Western Agency Veterans Administration's current budget deficiency. The amendment passed with a vote of 22 in favor and one opposed.

"I applaud the 25th Navajo Nation Council for looking critically into this supplemental appropriation to cover the Executive Branch's FY2023 operating expenses," Speaker Crystalyne Curley (Tachee/Blue Gap, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tselani/Cottonwood, Low Mountain) said. "This legislation impacts more than just one branch or division; it impacts services that extend to all our Navajo people, including our veterans and elders."

The 25th Navajo Nation Council approved emergency Legislation No. 0124-23 with a vote of 19 in favor and two opposed.

Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren will have 10 calendar days to consider the resolution once it is delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President.

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