



Navajo Nation Council Delegates urge President Nez to support supplemental appropriation to Navajo public safety

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 20, 2020

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — During Friday’s special session of the 24th Navajo Nation Council, over \$2.4 million was approved unanimously for the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety (NNDPS) to support public safety issues during the COVID-19 pandemic. Navajo Nation Council Resolution No. CMY-34-20 allocates funds from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance (UUFB) under a one-time, non-recurring supplemental appropriation.

Council Delegate Eugenia Charles-Newton (Shiprock), chair of the Law and Order Committee and prime sponsor for the legislation, stated, “Our police officers, criminal investigators, EMTs and even our fire fighters are assisting on two fronts—working to control the pandemic-related issues and provide safety services. LOC believes our frontline workers need to be paid accordingly. I urge President Nez to sign this bill into law and show his support to our frontline workers. They are depending on this funding.” She stated that the purpose of the bill is to increase support for the Navajo Nation’s public safety agencies to alleviate pressure and to continue delivering adequate safety services in Navajo communities.

Delegate Charles-Newton added that the bill provides additional funds to areas within NNDPS that directly address COVID-19 public safety issues, such as personnel, supplies, communications and other expenses. Delegate Charles-Newton said the UUFB funding is critical to ensuring that public safety services are uninterrupted and personnel receive fair compensation for all hours worked.

“We are glad that the Navajo Nation Council has appropriated the \$2.4 million to help our law enforcement and first responders. This is one way that the Navajo Legislature will help our public safety programs and to make sure they have the necessary funding to fully operate during this pandemic. I ask the Holy People to bless each and every first responder who is out there making the effort to save lives on the frontlines,” said Council Delegate Otto Tso (Tónaneesdizi), vice chair of the Law and Order Committee.

“Many of these first responders have families and are spending more time helping our great Nation than being at home with their loved ones. We appreciate all that they do and Council leadership will continue to work to get them what they need,” said Delegate Charles-Newton.

Council Delegate Eugene Tso (Chinle) expressed his thanks to his colleagues for passing Resolution No. CMY-34-20 and said that the Navajo Nation has a responsibility to ensure the safety and support for NNDPS. He urged President Nez prioritize public safety support as the NNDPS continues to navigate many issues arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. He stated, “The COVID-19 crisis has put our police officers and first responders in an increasingly vulnerable position. They risk their lives battling an enemy virus they can’t see. I pray every dawn that the Holy People will keep them safe. I thank the Navajo Nation Council for supporting this UUFB bill, which would benefit first responders and protect them.”

Resolution No. CMY-34-20 was approved by a vote of 22 in favor and 0 opposed. President Nez will have 10 calendar days to act on the resolution once it is delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President.

###

CONTACT EMAIL: nnlb.communications@gmail.com
Byron C. Shorty, INT Communications Director, (928) 287-2085.