



# 24<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council

## Office of the Speaker

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Speaker Presents Second Quarter Report, Council Accepts**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – On Monday, Navajo Nation Council Speaker Seth Damon presented the Speaker's Report to his colleagues on the Navajo Nation Council. They voted to accept the report as a written report 12-6.

In his report, Speaker Damon highlighted how the Council began orientations on their respective oversight jurisdictional entities, advanced out of committee executive and legislative branch nominations, advocated before county, state, and federal partners, and introduced new and innovative legislations — all while working on the issues related to the potential closure or acquisition of the Navajo Generating Station (NGS) and Peabody Kayenta Mine.

Speaker Damon also noted several of the initiatives spurred by his colleagues over the last quarter.

In late March, Delegate Key Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Blue Gap/Tachee, Tselani/Cottonwood) brought forth an orientation for his colleagues on FirstNet implementation. The orientation explained the timeline for implementing the first responders' telecommunications network and also provided an opportunity for delegates to advocate for the needs of their communities.

On March 28, the Council passed NABIMA-20-19 which creates the Plan of Operations for the Navajo Nation Complete Count Commission for the 2020 Census.

The report also highlights the work of the Judicial Branch's programs. Over the past two months, The Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission (NNHRC), a unit of the Legislative Branch, held nine public hearings to assess mistreatment toward Navajo and Native American students in border towns and regional cities.

Delegate Jamie Henio (Alamo, Ramah, Tóhajiilee) attended the Gallup hearing and spoke before the commission and attendees. He emphasized how important the commission's hearings and findings are and that he would work to amplify the work of the commission.

In the second quarter report, the speaker underscored how two communities benefitted from the advocacy of returning delegates. Both Dennehotso and Nahata' Dziil celebrated the opening of two economic development enterprises, led by Delegates Nathaniel Brown

(Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) and Raymond Smith, Jr. (Houck, Klagetoh, Nahat'a Dziil, Tsé Si'áni, Wide Ruins) respectively.

During the Dennehotso convenience store opening, Delegate Brown documented his community's struggle to obtain a place to buy basic necessities. At the Nahata' Dziil Basha's and shopping center opening, Delegate Smith linked the development of the commerce center to broadening economic opportunity along I-40 and within Nahata' Dziil.

As a part of the report, the speaker sought to allay fears on the FY 2020 budget, emphasizing that there is projected to be a \$5.4 million increase in revenue, according to the Office of the Controller.

Though, during the floor discussion on Monday, Delegate Herman Daniels, Jr. (Shonto, Naa'tsis'áán, Oljato, Ts'áh Bii Kin) noted that in his community and the areas surrounding NGS and Kayenta Mine there will be serious economic hardship for Navajo citizens who may have to leave to find work elsewhere.

As a response to this concern, Speaker Damon stressed in his report the need to be good relatives in this upcoming time of need for some Navajo families.

"The impending closure of NGS and Kayenta Mine brings forth many deep concerns for hundreds, if not thousands, of Navajo families. During this transition period, I ask that all Navajo citizens exercise K'é and extend their compassion and warmth to those who may be facing serious need soon," Speaker Damon said in his report.

Before accepting the report as a written report, Delegate Otto Tso (Tó Nanees Dizi) extended his appreciation for the Speaker's first quarter of leadership.

"He works with us each individually and we know that speaker has been fighting on Navajo's behalf. That's key," Delegate Tso stated before voting to accept the Speaker's Report.

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