



THE NAVAJO NATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

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Navajo President Joe Shirley, Jr., appreciates council delegates who voted against \$125 million loan for new legislative complex

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., said today that he appreciates the 21 Navajo Nation Council delegates who voted to defeat the controversial \$125 million loan to construct a new legislative complex.

“They’re not only standing with me, they’re standing with the people,” he said.

On a measure that required 59 yes votes to pass, the council on Thursday voted 54 to 21 on Legislation 202-08 that would have allowed the council to borrow \$125 million to build new legislative and, presumably, other facilities.

However, the President said he was concerned that there is a possibility that the council could recall the legislation on Friday to make another attempt at passage.

“The Navajo Nation Council knew I was against borrowing money to build a legislative complex,” he said. “The \$50 million they wanted to borrow ballooned to \$125 million.”

He said the financial impact to the Navajo Nation government would not be able to sustain the burden that would be placed on it by the debt that would have to be repaid over 20 years or longer.

According to the legislation, 10 percent of tribal revenue would be used to repay the loan. The Navajo Nation Office of Management and Budget said that would amount to \$19.7 million per year at current levels and rise as tribal income grows.

“They’re not only standing with me, they’re standing with the Navajo people.”

– Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr.

“The executive branch can’t take any more cuts. Period,” the President said. “It’s going to hurt the people’s programs, direct services. That cannot be.”

During his State of the Navajo Nation Address on Monday, the President expressed his strong opposition to the loan proposal, citing as one of his reasons the council’s waiver of Navajo Nation laws that are intended to protect the financial integrity of the Navajo Nation.

“Why do we enact these laws if we’re not going to obey them?” President Shirley said. “We need to be a nation that is ruled by law, and I think the people would appreciate that.”

The 21 council delegates who voted to defeat the legislation are Pete Ken Atcity, Harriet K. Becenti, Sampson Begay, Willie Begay, Lorenzo Bedonie, Alice W. Benally, Katherine Benally, Jack Colorado, Benjamin Curley, Raymond Maxx, Jonathan Nez, Bobby Robbins, Sr., David Shondee, Danny Simpson, Willie Tracey, Jr., Leonard Tsosie, Tommy Tsosie, Thomas Walker, Jr., Harold Wauneka, Elbert R. Wheeler and Harry J. Willeto.

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