



The Navajo Nation
Yideeskáądi Nitsáhákees

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Navajo President Buu Nygren, OPVP warn of government shutdown should Navajo Council continue to delay passing comprehensive budget

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren’s office notified the tribe’s executive branch divisions, departments and employees to prepare for layoffs or a government shutdown because of the lack of a Council-approved comprehensive budget.

On Tuesday, Patrick Sandoval, chief of staff in the Office of the President and Vice President, explained to the Nation’s 20 division directors, program managers and department employees that the Navajo Nation Council is responsible for adopting the comprehensive budget by Sept. 10.

“This mess is the result of the Budget and Finance Committee refusing to honor a longstanding tradition of following the Three Branch Chiefs Agreement on the budget allocation,” Sandoval said Wednesday.

By law, President Nygren should have received the budget by Sept. 10. He then would sign it into law before Sept. 30 to ensure a comprehensive budget is in place by Oct. 1.

On Aug. 7, Navajo Nation Attorney General Ethel Branch issued a legal opinion that said in light of Navajo fundamental law, the B&F Committee must consult with the three branch chiefs through meaningful consultations to ensure the sanctity

of *náat’aaniis* – Navajo leaders – coming together to discuss the needs of their branches.

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Sandoval said President Nygren made repeated attempts to urge the B&F Committee to work with the Council to pass the Fiscal Year 2025 comprehensive budget before Sept. 10, but no budget has been passed, nor has OPVP received notice of a council session to address it.

“Call your delegate. Call the speaker’s office,” Sandoval said. “Let them know the Navajo people need their budget. The President said he would sign the budget if he had it, but the council has not done its job and passed the legislation.”

In the “Presidential Budget Preparation Message on the FY25 Comprehensive Budget,” allowed by the Appropriations Act and issued on Aug. 26, President Nygren said the B&F Committee is putting the Nation at risk of a government shutdown by not passing the comprehensive budget agreed to by the Nation’s three branch chiefs.

Both the executive and judicial branches provide direct services through human resources, social services, housing, road construction and maintenance, scholarships, courts and other projects.

When the Nation has a continuing resolution instead of a comprehensive budget, President Nygren said, full scholarships may not be paid out, students may have to withdraw from or delay classes, items that require annual payments, like insurance premiums, cannot be paid in full, and the allocations for proprietary and fiduciary funded programs may be jeopardized, among other disadvantages.

“Our long-serving and dedicated employees, who are non-lawyer experts on the budget, have

repeatedly advised OPVP that there is still time for a comprehensive budget,” Chief of Staff Sandoval said. “We urge the council to hear their voices.”

“I would like the Navajo Nation government to continue moving forward to ensure the needs of the Navajo people are met,” President Nygren said.

“This includes ensuring that there are no interruptions to the services the Navajo people receive and/or to the projects being developed to meet their needs,” he said. “As such I need to sign a comprehensive budget into law before the end of September.”

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