



The 21st Navajo Nation Council

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Health insurance for employees discussed during Council work session

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The 21st Navajo Nation Council discussed two items during a work session held today. One item discussed the possibility of extending third party administration services between the Navajo Nation and Health Management Associates Inc. The second item, which went into executive session, encompassed taxation matters relating to the Navajo Nation Council.

For better understanding of the Health Management Associates Inc. (HMA) legislation, Legislation No. 0751-09, sponsored by Council Delegate Roy Laughter (Chilchinbeto/Kayenta), the Council declared a work session and requested a survey be completed highlighting comments or concerns of current HMA coverage and HMA status updates before considering an extension of the contract.

The Council also wanted answers as to why legislation proceeded after the Navajo Nation Department of Justice issued an opinion advising not to proceed due to violation of the procurement code.

The procurement law of the Navajo Nation Code requires public advertising and bidding in this instance. If HMA legislation passes, the procurement law will be waived and will bypass this process, which the Council claimed is important in saving financial resources.

If the Council extends the terms of HMA's contract and waive the procurement act, HMA would continue its 13 year service as a third-party administrator for the next four years. This will eliminate the requests for quotes from other insurance companies, who may have a lower price and better coverage.

In addition, once legislation is passed, urgency will be eliminated setting precedence for the Navajo Nation and giving preferential treatment to HMA over other third-party contractors. The bill will also present possible conflicts of interest and possible improprieties.

Laughter's legislation is scheduled to go before Council's spring session beginning on April 19.

The Council will convene again on April 1 for the second day of a two day work session. Legislation No. 0592-09, sponsored by Council Delegate George Arthur, regarding Coal Mining Lease No. 14-20-0603-8580 and Coal Mining Lease No. 14-20-0603-9910 between the Navajo Nation and the Peabody Western Coal Company will be discussed. Also on the agenda is the Northern Arizona Food Bank item, which will be introduced by Council Delegate Lena Manheimer.

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