



## The 21<sup>st</sup> Navajo Nation Council

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April 6, 2010

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## **Budget and Finance Committee passes bill amending Title 12 of the Navajo Nation Code, legislation to go before Navajo Council**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – The Budget and Finance Committee of the 21<sup>st</sup> Navajo Nation Council met today during a regular scheduled meeting and passed Legislation No. 0181-10 amending Title 12 of the Navajo Nation Code. The amendments create a new Gaming Revenues Fund Management Plan, which will distribute net gaming revenues to all 110 Navajo Nation Chapters.

Pursuant to BFMA-03-10, the committee enacted similar legislation on March 19 in which an amount equal to five percent of net gaming revenues be distributed only to the host gaming chapter – Church Rock Chapter – and other future host gaming chapters. Under that legislation, the Gaming Revenues Fund Management Plan distribution was to be approved by the Budget and Finance Committee with recommendation from the Navajo Gaming Regulatory Office. That legislation, sponsored by Council Delegate Ernest Yazzie (Baahaali/Church Rock), passed the committee, 4-3.

Legislation No. 0181-10, however, amends the previous Title 12 legislation (BFMA-03-10) sponsored by Yazzie. This legislation limits power from the Budget and Finance Committee as distributor of the funds and instead gives that distribution and approval role to the Navajo Nation Council upon recommendation of the committee following a ten day comment period to the Navajo Gaming Regulatory Office.

As well, a new Gaming Revenues Fund Management Plan allocates net gaming revenues for the immediate and long-term needs of the Navajo Nation to develop infrastructure, health, housing, education, scholarship, job training, elderly care, veterans' benefits, police and fire services and economic development.

Under the amendments, each of the 110 chapters will receive an amount equal to five percent through annual appropriations. Net gaming revenues are generated from the Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise.

Council Delegate Hoskie Kee (Littlewater/Baca-Prewitt/Casamero Lake), sponsor of the legislation (Legislation No. 0181-10), explained to the committee the purpose of the legislation and said, "Chapters need money, chapters make up our constituents."

"The main focus for the amendment is the distribution side of it. With the fund management plan and your approval, net revenues from gaming would be given to all 110 chapters," added Kee.

Council Delegate Leonard Chee (Birdsprings/Leupp/Tolani Lake) expressed concerned and questioned the amendments.

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"The Council had given delegated authority to this committee to make that determination as far as distribution goes." Chee explained. "We were given delegated responsibility and now we are going to do away with our delegated responsibility."

"We need to look at the overall Navajo Nation, not just our Chapters," added Council Delegate Nelson Begaye (Lukachukai/Tsaile/Wheatfields) who supported the Title 12 amendments. "This is Navajo trust land. According to trust land status, I believe all chapters should benefit from this."

The legislation passed the committee, 4-2. It will now go before the Navajo Nation Council for final consideration and approval.

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