



The Navajo Nation Council — Office of the Speaker

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Health, Social Services Committee hear report of Utah Navajo issues

Council Delegate Davis Filfred recommends water summit on Navajo Nation

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The Health and Social Services Committee of the 21st Navajo Nation Council met with former Navajo Nation Council Delegate Mark Maryboy (Mexican Water/Aneth/Red Mesa) on Jan 12 to discuss matters affecting the Utah portion of the Navajo Nation.

Maryboy expressed his concern for health disparities in his former jurisdiction as a council representative, and stated the inequities of health care services from the Shiprock Northern Navajo Medical Center and Four Corners Regional Health Center. Both health systems are said to be “very territorial to patients” and cater solely to patients in their respective boundaries forcing Utah Navajos to utilize off-reservation health services when such health services are to be provided by Indian Health Services on the Navajo Nation.

In addition to the lack of services from the two health care systems, Maryboy reported a recent water study conducted in the Red Mesa area of the Navajo Nation indicated high levels of arsenic and uranium.

Council Delegate Davis Filfred (Mexican Water/Aneth/Red Mesa) recommended a water summit on the Navajo Nation.

“Water is the main issue to health problems,” Filfred said. “Maybe there should be a water summit regarding issues in the Red Mesa area, as well as in the Dilkon area where water contamination is a big issue.”

In response, Council Delegate Evelyn Acothley (Bodaway-Gap/Cameron/Coppermine) noted the issue in the Red Mesa area is commonplace on Navajo.

“It will take lots of planning and communication among Navajo Division of Health, PL-638, I.H.S. [and other agencies],” Acothley said. “This is one of our strategic plans for the next year. There is only a year left and I’m trying to resolve this issue.”

The strategic plan Acothley refers to is based on the committee’s Strategic Plan for 2010, which may include plans to address issues in the Utah Navajo area. The committee accepted Maryboy’s report with a vote of 7-0.

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