



The 21st Navajo Nation Council

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Navajo Council concludes day one of winter session

Declaration on the state of emergency was a topic of heavy concern

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The 21st Navajo Nation Council convened today for the first day of its 2010 Winter Session at the Navajo Nation Council Chamber.

The Council received the State of the Navajo Nation address from Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley Jr. and the Speaker's Report to the Council from Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan. Other reports were made from Navajo Attorney General Louis Denetsosie.

The declaration on the state of emergency was a topic of heavy concern expressed by presenters and the Council. On Jan. 21, the Navajo Nation declared a state of emergency after the recent snowstorm caused tough and dangerous conditions for citizens across the Navajo Nation.

The snow accumulation affected and will continue to affect communities nationwide as the snow turns into water causing muddy conditions. However, Council delegates continue to work with their chapter officials and state officials to continue relief efforts.

Various communities such as those in the Black Mesa area, Lukachukai and the Chuska mountain range have experienced the effects of heavy snowfall – those areas have received as much as four feet of snow.

With the encouragement and support of Council delegates, many chapters passed resolutions declaring a state of emergency. Black Mesa Chapter recently passed a resolution requesting relief aid from tribal, federal, state and county jurisdictions to help combat the shortage of vegetation to people and livestock.

Council Delegate Elmer Milford (Fort Defiance) expressed his concern for relief efforts in the Crystal, N.M., area and said, "The regular graders are not available for use to get up to the areas affected the most by snow. The New Mexico National Guard has helped out. We need to address this issue as soon as possible because there are residents with medical needs."

In an effort to bring more support and emergency funds directly to chapters, Council Delegate Young Jeff Tom (Mariano Lake/Smith Lake) sponsored legislation to appropriate \$1 million to chapters on the Navajo Nation to address the winter weather emergency.

Recognizing the current situation, Council delegates supported the proposed legislation with a 69-1 motion and it was added to the agenda. The plan is to have the appropriated funds go out as soon as possible to help communities in need.

The Council also received written reports from the various standing committees, boards and commissions, Chief Justice Herb Yazzie, Bureau of Indian Affairs Regional Director and the Indian Health Services Area Director.

Day two of the 2010 Winter Session will continue tomorrow. You can download a copy of the full agenda at www.navajonationcouncil.org.

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