



The 21st Navajo Nation Council
Contact: Alastair L. Bitsoi, Public Information Officer
Phone: (928) 871-7228
Cell: (928) 255-2943
Fax: (928) 871-7255
abitsoi@navajo.org
www.navajonationcouncil.org

July 13, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Council passes draft Western Navajo Agency Decentralization Pilot Project, supplement appropriations tabled for summer session

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The 21st Navajo Nation Council met today for a special session and passed one item on its agenda – the draft Western Navajo Agency Decentralization Pilot Project – and tabled three pieces of legislation related to supplemental appropriations.

The Western Navajo Agency Decentralization Pilot Project (Legislation No. 0218-10) passed the Council floor with two amendments, 52-9. Passage of the legislation allows the Office of Navajo Government Development and the Western Agency Council to continue its efforts in delegating authority to the agency level.

“This will almost streamline and simplify the process in the Western Navajo Agency,” Council Delegate Leslie Dele (Tonalea) said.

Navajo governmental entities such as the Division of Finance, Department of Justice and Payroll and Personnel Department among other entities would bring much needed services and transparency to the agency level.

Furthermore, the Council chose not to override President Joe Shirley Jr’s line-item veto of Resolution CJN-25-10 by passing Legislation No. 0388-10, which would have overrode the president’s line-item veto. Resolution CJN-25-10 contains supplemental appropriations that were approved by the Council during a special session on June 8 with a vote of 60-13 and subsequently lined out by the president’s line item veto on June 23.

“This Council does not have authority to override an action that is not stipulated in Navajo statutes,” Council Delegate Ervin M. Keeswood Jr. (Tse Daa Kaan) explained. “We cannot do anything the way it is. The Council can create statutes at a certain time but because we do not have that power we cannot act on this.”

Council Delegate Young Jeff Tom (Mariano Lake/Smith Lake), who sponsored the legislation, said since there was no action or motion on the item it is not a dead issue and could appear on the summer session agenda. Tom made a directive requesting Chief Legislative Counsel Frank Seanez to issue an opinion by July 18 on whether Council can override the line-item veto because there is no statutory law in place that guides the line-item veto power.

The Council also accepted reports from the ‘638 Health Care Association and Tuba City Regional Health Care Corporation regarding the Title V Self-Governance Compacting Initiative with a vote of 61-2 and Tuba City Health Services’ Diabetes Prevention Program with a vote of 54-0. Council Delegate Hope McDonald Lone Tree (Coalmine Canyon/Toh Nanees Dizi) requested to have the reports on the special session agenda for discussion.

The chief executive officers from the Tuba City Health Care Corporation, Winslow Indian Health Care Center Inc., and Utah Navajo Health Care System Inc., reported to the Council of their intent to declare Title V status, which would allow them the opportunity to provide specialty health care services and better overall health care to the Navajo people.

Council Delegate Katherine Benally (Dennehotso) said this is the next natural step for the three health care organizations.

-more-

"I see this is the next right thing for the organizations," Benally said. "I believe they have proven themselves not only to the Navajo Nation but to the world of health care. This is a new challenge they are asking for. I am certainly in support of it especially specialized services we really need."

At next week's summer session, Legislation No. 0371-10, which is sponsored by Council delegates Thomas Walker (Birdsprings/Leupp/Tolani Lake), Evelyn Acothley (Bodaway-Gap/Cameron/Coppermine) and Davis Filfred (Mexican Water/Aneth/Red Mesa), would authorize any existing and future Title I Self Determination Contractors such as the three health care organizations to enter into Title V Self-Governance compacting.

Two other pieces of legislation (Legislation No. 0377-10 and Legislation No. 0378-10) sponsored by Council Delegate Tom and a legislation (Legislation No. 0405-10) sponsored by Council Delegate Omer Begay (Cornfields/Greasewood Springs/Klagetoh/Wide Ruins), which are supplemental appropriations, were tabled until the summer session for reasons and issues involving the lack of proper documentation and full quorum.

Legislation No. 0377-10 would have appropriated \$3 million in Chapter Housing Discretionary Funds to Navajo Nation Chapters and Legislation No.0378-10 would have also appropriated \$3 million to chapters for their Public Employment Programs. Legislation No. 0405-10, which was added on to the special session agenda, would have provided \$2.5 million to chapters to address drought conditions.

###