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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The 21st Navajo Nation Council

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Intergovernmental Relations Committee supports measure to decentralize government to agency level

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. -- The Intergovernmental Relations Committee of the 21st Navajo Nation Council passed legislation that would approve the drafting of the Western Navajo Agency Decentralization Pilot Project by the Office of Government Development.

The measure passed the committee on a 5-4 vote and will proceed to the Ethics and Rules Committee for the consideration of final approval during the Navajo Nation Council's summer session.

In an effort to bring Navajo government programs and services to the agency level, Council Delegate Leslie Dele (Tonalea) sponsored legislation to streamline the Navajo governmental bureaucratic process through the Western Navajo Agency's Decentralization Pilot Project. The decentralization plan would be introduced to the Navajo Nation Council as a pilot project which could also lead to more development in this agency and eventually Nation-wide.

Supporters of the plan explained the project will lessen the burden of traveling six hours round trip to and from Window Rock and Toh Nanees Dizi (Tuba City, Ariz.), as well as from other communities from throughout the far Western Navajo Agency.

Council Delegate Dele envisions the decentralization plan to similarly model a county government, but will be referred to as the Western Navajo Agency government -- a unique entity to the Western Navajo Agency.

"Our people want local authority at the agency level," Dele said. "The next step is going through every standing committee for input."

The Western Navajo Agency government would have an elected Western Navajo Agency Director/Manager, an executive secretary, a Human Resources Office; a Justice Department; a Finance Department; Public Safety Office; Local Government and Community Development Office, a Department of Social Services Office; a Navajo Land Department; an Office of Education; an Economic Development Office, a Transportation Office and Judicial Administration Office.

The Office of Navajo Government Development is in charge of researching, drafting and finalizing the plans for the Western Navajo Agency Decentralization Pilot Project.

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