



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 16, 2012

MEDIA CONTACTS
Jerome Clark | 928.637.5603
Carmenlita Chief | 928.255.3428
nlnb.communications@gmail.com

Emergency Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever response funding legislation passed during Navajo Nation Council Fall Session signed into law

WINDOW ROCK – Emergency legislation that the 22nd Navajo Nation Council passed during their Fall Council Session – approving the supplemental funding for the implementation of prompt public health measures against the spread of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever – was signed by President Ben Shelly on Nov. 8.

With Legislation No. CO-51-12 signed into law, supplemental funding from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance account will be appropriated to the Navajo Veterinary and Livestock Program and the Navajo Department of Fish and Wildlife in the respective amounts of \$405,319 and \$220,109 to carry out emergency response and prevention measures against RMSF.

“Containing the spread of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever is an urgent matter,” said Council Delegate Walter Phelps, “I’m pleased that President Shelly recognizes the emergency nature of addressing this disease and safeguarding the health and well-being of our Diné people, as we at the Navajo Nation Council have recognized.”

Delegate Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi Tó ii) was the prime sponsor of the emergency funding legislation, which went before the full Council on Oct. 18.

The Council fully supported the response and outreach initiatives outlined in the legislation with a vote of 18-0 in favor.

The emergency funds will enable the two programs to implement response efforts needed to help prevent future human cases of RMSF from occurring, as was recommended in an Oct. 4 report by the federal Centers for Disease Control Epi-Aid team.

With the approval of emergency supplemental funding, the NVLP and the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife now have the fiscal means to address the overpopulation of dogs on the Nation and implement effective animal control programs aimed at RMSF prevention, said Delegate Phelps.

Decreasing the dog overpopulation problem is crucial for RMSF prevention because dogs carry the ticks that can transmit the disease to humans.

In movement toward this effort, the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife will hire four temporary laborers to assist the Navajo Nation Animal Control Program with the capture and impoundment of stray dogs.

The NVLP will utilize the bulk of their supplemental funding to purchase a fully-outfitted mobile veterinary vehicle unit where staff will perform spay/neuter services at various chapters across the Nation.

In addition, funding will enable the NVLP to hire additional staff to assist with chapter veterinary services, animal surrender operations, animal adoptions, and outreach education – all geared toward efforts to control the dog population.

NVLP manager Glenda Davis commended Delegate Phelps and the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee for recognizing the importance of initiating RMSF prevention measures.

“The Health, Education, and Human Services Committee has been very supportive of our efforts to inform the public about this disease, and getting the message out there about the steps people can take to prevent the spread of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever,” said Davis.

###