



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
October 23, 2012

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## **Law and Order Committee approves cross-commissions agreement between Navajo and New Mexico State law enforcement authorities**

WINDOW ROCK – The Law and Order Committee on Monday voted 4- 0 to approve an agreement between the Navajo Nation and the New Mexico State Police Department that will allow for greater public safety protection measures through increased law enforcement presence on the New Mexico portion of the Navajo Nation.

The Memorandum of Understanding will put into place rules and regulations allowing state police officers to provide assistance to Navajo Nation law enforcement when responding to incident calls on the Navajo Nation.

“This has been something that we’ve been looking forward to since the last [agreement] expired a year ago,” said Council Delegate Russell Begaye (Shiprock), sponsor of Legislation No. 0422-12.

New Mexico State Police Department personnel will receive training specific to the Navajo Nation traffic and criminal codes, in addition to cultural competency training, which the committee thinks are important to understanding and protecting the Navajo people.

“I think it is a good partnership between the New Mexico State Police and the Navajo Police,” said Maj. Darren Soland, who represented the New Mexico State Police Department at the committee meeting.

The new agreement will update a 1981 agreement between the Navajo Nation and the state of New Mexico which previously did not allow the Navajo Nation to commission New Mexico state police officers to enforce Navajo law.

Acting Navajo Chief of Police Capt. Ivan Tsosie says the new agreement enables cross-commissioning of both Navajo Nation and New Mexico state officers which will allow the law enforcement entities to enforce both Navajo and state laws on the New Mexico portion of the reservation.

“This is one of those historic times when we’re able to work with each other across our jurisdictional lines,” said Delegate Begaye with enthusiasm for the agreement’s new extensions.

Lending his support for passage of the legislation, Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) said that the agreement has been “long overdue.”

“The cross-commissioning is effective if both departments work together on the commission. It benefits our people, and it also benefits both jurisdictions, especially when there is a 911 call being made,” Delegate Yazzie said.

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