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**Speaker Naize expresses opposition to the
proposed deregulation of the Arizona electric market**



Photo: Speaker Johnny Naize addresses representatives from various Arizona energy corporations and energy regulators at a workshop regarding the proposed deregulation of the Arizona electric market.

PHOENIX – On Tuesday, Speaker Johnny Naize (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) addressed representatives from various Arizona energy corporations and energy regulators at the Arizona State Capitol, to express opposition to the proposed deregulation of the electric market in the state of Arizona.

“The idea of deregulation has captured the attention of the Navajo Nation because the Navajo Nation is severely threatened by this proposal,” said Speaker Naize. “It will further deepen the unemployment rate which is already above 50 percent.”

Tuesday's meeting was organized by the Arizona Residential Utility Consumer Office, established by the Arizona Legislature in 1983, to represent the interests of residential utility ratepayers in rate-related proceedings involving public service corporations before the Arizona Corporation Commission.

Earlier this year, the Arizona Corporation Commission who is charged with overseeing the quality of service and rates charged by public service utilities, opened up the debate regarding the possibility of deregulating the electric market.

Speaker Naize explained that if deregulation took effect, it would threaten jobs at the Four Corners Power Plant, Navajo Generating Station, Peabody Coal Co., and the BHP Navajo Mine, which would also have a negative impact on border town economies.

"The people who work at these plants live near border towns and rely on those border towns which include Flagstaff, Gallup, Winslow, and Page," Speaker Naize said. "So it will have a tremendous impact on the entire state of Arizona."

Supporters of deregulation suggest that a free electric market would provide consumers with options for utility service which could possibly drive down the price of electricity for consumers.

In a joint statement issued in July between Speaker Naize and Speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives Andy Tobin, the two pointed out that Arizona's current electric regulatory low cost model has historically insulated electric and water user rates.

Speaker Naize also pointed out that deregulation has proven to be unsuccessful in other states and has in fact resulted in higher utility costs for consumers in those states.

"I truly believe what is good for the Navajo Nation is good for the state of Arizona, so I asked the Arizona Corporation Commission to carefully consider the Navajo Nation's position," said Speaker Naize.

The Arizona Corporation Commission is expected to decide whether or not to deregulate the electric market in the state of Arizona by Oct. of this year.

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