



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
October 17, 2013

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## **Navajo Nation Council approves \$4.1 million to fund costs associated with the acquisition of BHP Navajo Mine**

**WINDOW ROCK** –During a special session held on Wednesday, Council members voted 17-2 in favor of Legislation No. 0305-13, approving \$4.1 million from the Navajo Nation’s Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance to fund initial and immediate costs and obligations associated with the completion of ongoing negotiations and to close on the transactions for the acquisition of Navajo Mine from BHP Billiton.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland) provided assurances that the mine acquisition would be a successful venture, including the proven track record of BHP Billiton and the Four Corners Power Plant to generate and burn coal for electricity, the “dedicated” and “skilled” workforce already in place at both sites, the Nation’s nearly one-hundred years of coal supply, and that technology will continue to advance to provide cleaner methods of coal energy production.

“Technology will show that in some point in time, coal will become a much more valuable resource. There is a future for coal,” said Delegate Bates.

Voicing opposition to bill, Council Delegate Lorenzo Curley (Houck, Klagetoh, Nahata Dziil, Tsé Si áni, Wide Ruins) expressed disappointment in President Ben Shelly’s veto of \$3 million from the Nation’s UUFB, for projects in the Former Bennett Freeze Area which was approved by Council during the budget session held in September.

“The president vetoed money for Bennett-Freeze because he wanted money for this,” said Delegate Curley. “What I see is that we sacrificed housing interests for the Bennett Freeze.”

Council Delegate Danny Simpson (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish, Tse’ii’ahi, Whiterock) said he supports “green” energy development, while noting that the Nation would lost \$70-\$80 million annually, including one-third of revenues for each of the Nation’s 110 chapters if the Navajo Mine and FCPP closed.

“I’m pro-green but there has to be a transition,” said Delegate Simpson. “It’s not going to happen overnight and it’s not going to happen two years from now.”

Also speaking in favor of the legislation, Council Delegate Dwight Witherspoon (Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Hardrock, Pinon, Whippoorwill) described the proposed mine acquisition as a way of maximizing the Nation’s revenue based on its resources, while providing the opportunity to transition to renewable energy.

“I don’t like coal in terms of its health impacts,” said Delegate Witherspoon. “The creation of NTEC has within its parameters that they have to use their profits to transition, specifically at least 10-percent of their profit revenue, to renewable energy development. It costs money to make that kind of transition, as well. “

At the conclusion of the two hour discussion, Council members voted 17-2 to approve Legislation No. 0305-13.

The bill now goes to President Ben Shelly for review and consideration.

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