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**Resources and Development Committee approves
report concerning implementation of solid waste facilities**

LEUPP, Ariz. – On Tuesday, the Resources and Development Committee approved a report provided by the Navajo Nation Division of Community Development, regarding its multi-year plan and potential solid waste management sites within the Navajo Nation.

The written report entitled, “Navajo Nation Long Range Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan” was submitted to RDC chair Council Delegate Katherine Benally (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) from the director of the DCD, Leonard Chee, on July 28.

According to the report, there are no solid waste facilities or landfills on the Navajo Nation, which has led to over 639 illegal open dumpsites dating back to 2002.

The report states that nearly 2,000 violation notices have been issued to individuals. However, illegal dumping and burning of trash continues to remain a problem within the Navajo Nation.

“Nation Nation is capable of building landfills, but in order for it to work we have to have transfer stations and these transfer stations will feed to these certain proposed landfills. Based on costs, taking waste from local chapters to outside transfer stations can be really expensive,” stated James Benally with the Navajo Nation Solid Waste Program.

Currently, disposing of solid waste requires many residents to transport their waste to a transfer station or collection point.

“Approximately 55% of Navajo Nation has household pickup services,” according to the report, “Of the 110 Navajo Chapters throughout Navajo Nation, 54 Navajo Chapters have either a transfer station or collection point.”

“We need to figure out a way to make transfer stations more cost-effective. Navajo people are starting to use transfer stations now. In the old days, they used to dump it in the arroyo, but they don’t do that anymore. Now, they actually haul them to transfer stations and it’s a good thing but we need to keep encouraging that,” stated RDC member Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake).

The report states that the initial cost to build a compliance landfill would average \$9.8 million dollars including the funding needed to facilitate the structure. However, the cost could vary depending on the amount of waste being processed on a daily basis.

“There are others that are spending a lot of money, like the hospitals and schools, to dispose of their waste. Schools should be spending money on books for our kids. These are all good reasons to put up a landfill. I think in the long run it will pay itself off,” added Delegate Benally.

In the late 1990s, the Navajo Nation Solid Waste Act and Navajo Nation Solid Waste Regulations were passed by Council to provide guidance for solid waste compliance which includes, the standards for solid waste landfill facilities, transfer stations, and recycling mechanisms.

The Navajo Nation Division of Community Development formulated the Solid Waste Management Program in 1998 to help aid in the closures of open dumpsites throughout Navajo Nation. The intent is to provide cost-shared solid waste disposal centers within Navajo Chapter Houses.

In a July 28 memo from Chee to Delegate Benally, several recommendations are listed including conducting a solid waste stream analysis to determine the daily per capita rate to determine the quantity and composition of waste generated on the Navajo Nation, update figures in the plan to reflect 2010 census data, and to secure a professional engineer to perform certain tasks.

RDC members voted to accept the report 4-0.

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