



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 28, 2014

MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253
Jolene Holgate | 928.380.4174
Chrissy Largo | 928.637.5603
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Navajo Nation Council takes action on several key legislations on second day of Winter Session

WINDOW ROCK – On Tuesday, the Navajo Nation Council acted on Legislation No. 0340-13, which attempted to override Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly’s veto of Council Resolution CO-57-13, the Navajo Housing Authority Reform Act of 2013.

The NHA Reform Act aimed to amend Title 6 of the Navajo Nation Code, relating to the selection and appointment of Commissioners to the NHA board. The act would have allowed the President to appoint Commissioners, who would then be confirmed by the Naabik’iyáti’ Committee.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) explained his concern regarding the President’s veto of the bill and his attempts to meet with President Shelly to clarify any discrepancies.

“I have tried to meet with the President, and each time I went to his office, he was not available to meet with me. In one instance, I followed him to Twin Arrows to meet with him briefly after a meeting, but he did not say whether he would say yes or no [to veto the legislation],” said Delegate Tsosie. “He could’ve called me to meet and discuss the intent of the legislation and any concerns he had.”

According to a memorandum dated Nov. 5, 2013, President Shelly said that the veto was due to unclear language regarding the number of Commissioners, the selection and confirmation of Commissioners when the President does not appoint Commissioners within 60 days, and concerns over the authority of the board to appoint Commissioners to national boards.

Immediately following Delegate Tsosie’s presentation, Council voted 10-10 to vote down Legislation No. 0340-13. The legislation required a two-thirds vote, or 16 supporting votes, to pass.

Council approved Legislation No. 0364-13, which amends Title II of the Navajo Nation Code to change the meeting dates for the Law and Order Committee.

Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichii, Steamboat), who sponsored the legislation and serves as the vice chair of the LOC, stated that the change is due to conflicting schedules of LOC members, and has led to quorum issues.

The legislation says the LOC will meet three times a month—on the second, third, and fourth Mondays of each month.

Council voted 20-1 to pass Legislation No. 0364-13. The legislation required two-thirds approval from Council.

Lastly, Council voted down Legislation No. 0003-14, which sought to remove Speaker Johnny Naize (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) from his position as Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council, due to recent bribery and conspiracy charges filed in the District Court of the Navajo Nation.

Legislation sponsor Delegate Shepherd stated that the Speaker “shall be in good standing” as a member of the Council, and that the charges hinder his responsibilities as Speaker and reflects negatively on Council.

Council Delegate Katherine Benally (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) voiced support for Speaker Naize, stating that he is innocent until proven guilty in the court of law, adding that Council should be reminded to leave any “personal vendettas” out of their decision and continue to support one another to work toward the betterment of the Navajo Nation.

Council voted down Legislation No. 0003-14 with a vote of 12-11. The legislation required two-thirds approval by Council to pass.

The Navajo Nation Council serves as final authority for each of the three legislations.

Council is scheduled to reconvene for day three of the Winter Session on Wednesday at 10 a.m. in the Council Chamber.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org