



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MEDIA CONTACTS
Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253
Jolene Holgate | 928.308.4174
Chrissy Largo | 928.637.5603
nrlb.communications@gmail.com

Resources and Development Committee receives update regarding the proposed Grand Canyon Escalade Project

WINDOW ROCK – On Tuesday, the Resources and Development Committee received a report regarding the Grand Canyon Escalade Project.

According to the report, if constructed, the Grand Canyon Escalade Project would be considered a world class destination that would offer a trip via tramway to the bottom of the Grand Canyon as well as amenities including music, dining, shopping and sightseeing.

“There are two main agreements that we negotiated within the last year and a half. The first one is the master agreement. It is the framework for the development of the operations project,” stated Michael C. Nelson, attorney and project management team member for the Grand Canyon Escalade Project.

If authorized, the project would begin construction in the spring of 2017 and estimates suggest that the project would create hundreds of jobs at the proposed site.

“The Navajo Nation will receive a franchise fee of 8% to 18% of gross revenues based upon visitor volume. This project will be sustainable because the tourists are already here,” stated Eunice L. Tso, also a project team manager and consultant.

For more than 20 years, the Grand Canyon National Park has averaged more than 4 million visitors annually according to the report.

Although, the proposed project offers economic incentives, issues regarding sacred sites continue to be raised among Navajo communities.

“About sacred sites, we understand that that is a big issue for some people. We’ve reached out to the medicine men in the area, as many as nine, have written in support of the project. We continue to reach out to the medicine men in the western area that understand the significance of the area and working with them to further educate ourselves,” stated Tso.

RDC member Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) questioned the communication between the Diné Medicine Man Association and the Grand Canyon Escalade Project team.

“We encouraged you at another one of our meetings a long time ago, to have a visit with the Medicine Man Association. We did encourage that at that time because of the confluence and raising cultural and religious significance of the project,” stated Delegate Tsose.

Nelson assured the Council members that the project team has met with the Diné Medicine Man’s Association to discuss the issues.

“As far as meeting with the medicine men, we have reached out to them, we have met with a number of them, and we have taken a number out there. I would say that they are not unanimous in their views on what happens down there. It is difficult to say if there’s a consensus,” stated Nelson.

The proposed project would require approval from the Navajo Nation Council.

RDC members voted 4-0 to accept the report.

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