



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Chapter regionalization referendum measure to be considered by Council

WINDOW ROCK – The Navajo Nation Council is scheduled to convene in a special session on Aug. 8 beginning at 10:00 a.m. in the Council Chamber in Window Rock, to consider Legislation No. 0220-16, which seeks the approval of a referendum measure that would allow registered Navajo voters to decide whether or not the Navajo Nation should regionalize the 110 chapters into 24 regional governments.

With a vote of 8-4, the Naabik'iyátí' Committee on Thursday approved the legislation sponsored by Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake).

In May 2015, the Resources and Development Committee established the Title 26 Task Force for the purpose of reviewing accountability measures at the chapter level, exploring ways to empower chapters, and to streamline the Five Management Plan System and transparency. The task force has met regularly and discussed the development of the regionalization concept.

The Navajo Nation currently has 110 local governing chapters that operate under various forms of government. Under terms outlined in the legislation, the chapters would be reorganized into 24 regional governments with salaried regional commissioners and other staff who would be tasked with conducting up to four town hall meeting per year.

According to the legislation, each chapter with less than 1,000 registered voters would be represented by one commissioner, and chapters with more than 1,000 registered voters would be represented by two commissioners. It also states that the chapters would remain as non-governmental entities and communities.

If the referendum were to occur and be approved by voters, the Council would then be authorized to pass enabling legislation to amend Title 26 of the Navajo Nation Code to implement the transition from chapter governments to regional governments within a four-year period.

For the referendum to pass, the measure would require majority approval of all registered voters who cast a ballot.

The legislation was also considered by the Resources and Development Committee, which issued a “do pass” recommendation with no amendments on July 26.

The Office of the Speaker and Navajo Nation Office of Broadcast Services will once again partner to live-stream the session via the Council's designated Ustream channel. To view live proceedings during Monday's session, please visit ustream.tv and search for "Navajo Nation Council" in the search box. The proposed agenda for the special session is available at navajonationcouncil.org.

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