



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 15, 2016

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### **Law and Order Committee supports funding for 911 system, receives update on Alcohol Tax**

**WINDOW ROCK** – Law and Order Committee members on Monday approved Legislation No. 0370-16, which seeks approximately \$3.8 million from the Síhasin Fund for the implementation of an emergency 911 system, an Amber Alert system, and for the further development of a rural addressing system.

Legislation co-sponsor Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gadi'í'áhi/To'Koi, Red Valley, Tooh Haltsooi, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tsé ałnáoz't'í'í) presented the legislation to the LOC members, along with Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety executive director Jesse Delmar and Michelle Tom with NNDPS.

Delegate Crotty explained that \$1,950,000 would be used for NNDPS's Department of Emergency Management to development regional infrastructure to support an emergency 911 system for the entire Navajo Nation. Approximately \$850,000 would be invested in infrastructure development for an Amber Alert system and an additional \$1 million for the implementation of a Rural Addressing System.

NNDPS officials said the funding would allow for the purchase of advanced equipment that would provide an "inclusive package" to meet the needs of a 911 system and to provide statistics for state and federal governments that may help NNDPS secure additional funding in the future.

LOC member Council Delegate Otto Tso (Tó Nanees Dizi) recommended that NNDPS work with officials from the states of New Mexico, Utah, and Arizona to determine if the Navajo Nation may utilize their resources to implement an Amber Alert system at a lower cost for the Nation. He also stated that he was informed that the New Mexico governors office had indicated that the state is willing to coordinate with the Navajo Nation to implement an Amber Alert and that the state requested that the Nation designate a point person to work with.

Delegate Crotty said that the budget may have to be updated and that the amount will likely increase. The updated budget will likely be introduced at a later date.

At the conclusion of Monday's discussion, LOC members voted in support of Legislation No. 0370-16 with a vote of 2-0. The bill moves forward to the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee for further consideration.

On Monday, LOC members also received a report from the Office of the Navajo Tax Commission executive director Martin Ashley, regarding the sales tax revenue collected from the Alcohol Tax that took effect in Oct. 2015.

In July 2015, the Navajo Nation Council approved Resolution CJY-31-15 sponsored by LOC chair Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau), which amended Title 24 of the Navajo Nation Code and initiated a 3.25% tax derived from gross receipts from all alcoholic beverages sold in Navajo gaming facilities and multiplying the gross receipts with the applicable tax rate.

The tax is only applicable within the Nation's three gaming facilities that serve alcohol — Fire Rock Navajo Casino, Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort, and Northern Edge Navajo Casino.

According to Ashley's report, in fiscal year 2016 the gross sales tax for three quarters accumulated to approximately \$65,000 in sales tax. He noted that the gross revenue is still subject to set-asides, which will reduce the overall amount by approximately 20-percent.

In accordance with CJY-31-15, the tax revenue will be retained in a special fund known as "The Division of Public Safety Alcohol Tax Fund" to be administered by the director of the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety. However, NNDPS is required to develop a Fund Management Plan before the funds can be used for the benefit of public safety on the Navajo Nation.

At the conclusion of the report, LOC members voted 2-0 to accept the report from the Office of the Navajo Tax Commission.

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