



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Resources and Development Committee recommends a 60-day extension for Many Farms Chapter to implement corrective action plan

TSE BONITO, N.M. – On Tuesday, the Resources and Development approved Legislation No. 0077-17, which accepts the audit follow-up review of Many Farms Chapter’s corrective action plan implementation and imposing sanctions for failure to implement the corrective action plan. The audit was conducted in 2014 and the follow-up review of the chapter’s corrective action plan was conducted from July to December 2015.

According to the follow-up review report, Many Farms Chapter failed to resolve 32 of the 44 corrective action measures.

Legislative sponsor Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) stated that the chapter should not be sanctioned due to how the follow-up review was conducted.

“Many Farms Chapter shouldn’t be sanctioned because the auditor’s office didn’t conduct the follow-up review carefully. The chapter claims that during the follow-up review period, one auditor was assigned to work with the chapter, but there was a transition of auditors during the review process. There were two different evaluations and reports in the end and it made the process confusing. There should be consistency. A new review needs to be done,” stated Delegate Begay.

On March 21, the RDC directed the Office of the Auditor General to present additional information on how the follow-up review was conducted and directed the Navajo Nation Administrative Service Center to assist the chapter with the review process.

RDC member Council Delegate Leonard H. Pete (Chinle) asked the chapter administration and chapter officials how long it will take the chapter to resolve the corrective action plan measures.

“There should be consistency when audits and follow-up reviews are conducted. Another review should be done at the chapter. If we recommend for an extension to complete another follow-up review, how long will it take the chapter to resolve all the measures?” asked Delegate Pete. “Also, did Chinle ASC ever help the chapter or respond to the directive?”

Many Farms Chapter president Katherine Arthur, stated that the chapter could resolve all the corrective action plan measures within 60-days and noted that the Chinle ASC did not respond to the directive to help with the review process.

RDC member Council Delegate Davis Filfred (Mexican Water, Aneth, Teecnospos, Tólikan, Red Mesa) questioned why the sanction would only apply to chapter's elected officials and not the chapter administration.

"The chapter administration should be sanctioned as well. Chapter officials are not at the chapter everyday. This doesn't seem right with me," stated Delegate Filfred.

According to Navajo Nation Code Title 12 section 9(C), the Navajo Nation Controller shall withhold 20-percent of any payment prospectively due the chapter officials until such time proof of implementation of the corrective action plan is demonstrated at which time the auditor general shall immediately report the compliance to the controller and the chapter, who shall then release the withheld payment to the chapter official.

Auditor general Elizabeth Begay stated that Title 12 allows sanction only for chapter officials, not the chapter staff. Title 12 can be amended to allow any sanction provisions, added Begay.

The Resources and Development Committee approved Legislation No. 0077-17 with a 4-0 vote with the recommendation for Many Farms Chapter to be allowed 60-days to complete the corrective action plan. Budget and Finance Committee serves as the final authority for the bill.

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