



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Resources and Development Committee approves Cove Chapter's updated Community-Based Land Use Plan**

**COVE, Ariz.** – On Wednesday, the Resources and Development Committee met at Cove Chapter and approved legislation to re-certify the community's land use plan, which was developed by the local "Natural Arch Community Land Use Planning Council" and supported by community members through a chapter resolution passed in September 2017.

Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gadi'i'áhi/To'Koi, Red Valley, Tooh Haltsooi, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tsé ałnáoz't'í'i), who represents the Cove community and sponsored the bill, commended the Community Land Use Planning Council for their dedication and efforts to engage as many community members as possible during the development of the updated land use plan.

Community Land Use Planning Council president Lee B. Roy, Sr., said the group held a public hearing last September, which was followed by a 30-day comment period that allowed local community members to share their input and concerns with the proposed plan.

Roy also highlighted several of the chapter's recent accomplishments that include the developments of a new community cemetery, a new school facility, comprehensive solid waster management plan, and the completion of new walking and biking trails.

According to a presentation provided by the group, the Cove community encompasses over 50,000 acres of trust land and has over 600 registered voters as of 2017. The chapter is located approximately 40-miles southwest of Shiprock, N.M.

The chapter officials also presented an overview of the community's goals and objectives, including providing adequate housing units, infrastructure development, community development, efficient use of natural resources, protecting the environment, economic development and tourism opportunities, and creating recreational amenities.

RDC member Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi To ii) recommended that the plan also incorporate the estimated 58 abandoned uranium mine sites within the community once testing and assessments are completed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to ensure safe water for community members.

He also recommended that the chapter include local roads needs to allow the Navajo Nation Division of Transportation to consider the roads as part of the Tribal Transportation Improvement Program, pointing out that the roads cannot be considered for inclusion by NDOT unless they are part of the community land use plan.

RDC member Council Delegate Jonathan Perry (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish, Tse'ii'ahi, Whiterock) thanked the chapter for their transparency and public engagement efforts in updating the land use plan.

He also suggested that the Navajo Nation Council consider revising Title 26 of the Navajo Nation Code to state that community-based land use plans should require a 10-year plan to provide a long-term strategy for chapters. The current statute states that chapter governments shall reevaluate and readjust their community land use plan every five years to meet the needs of their changing community.

Prior to the final vote by the committee, Delegate Crotty requested the RDC to amend home site lease policies to waive fees for home site leases for Navajo veterans and elderly people to help provide housing for all community members.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Resources and Development Committee approved Legislation No. 0024-18 with a vote 3-0, and serves as the final authority for the bill.

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