



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 17, 2018

MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253
Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174
Crystalyne Curley (928) 286-7918
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Resources and Development Committee supports proposed Controlled Substance Definition Act of 2018

WINDOW ROCK – On Wednesday the Resources and Development Committee considered Legislation No. 0268-18, which seeks to enact the “Controlled Substance Definition Act of 2018” that would amend several sections within the Navajo Nation Criminal Code Title 17. The purpose of the bill is to conform Navajo Nation laws to comply with federal regulations in regards to the percentage of Tetrahydrocannabinol, also known as THC, contained in marijuana and hemp and is the primary intoxicant compound found in marijuana that determines its strength.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Lee Jack, Sr. (Dilkon, Greasewood Springs, Indian Wells, Teesto, Whitecone) requested the committee’s support to strengthen the Navajo Nation Criminal Code by reducing the level of THC concentration in cannabis to an amount allowable on the Navajo Nation.

“Navajo Nation law currently allows 1.4-percent of THC in marijuana and hemp on the Nation, which was approved by Council in 2000, however, federal regulations pursuant to the Federal Farm Bill allows less than 0.3-percent of TCH in the country. The higher percentage of TCH allowable on the Nation does not comply with federal laws and this legislation will fix it. If approved, the percentage of TCH would be reduced to 0.3-percent,” said Delegate Jack.

According to the legislation, the Federal Farm Bill, also known as the Agricultural Act of 2014, lowered the amount of THC from 1.4-percent to 0.3-percent and that the Navajo Nation is not consistent with federal law by allowing higher amounts of THC than federal law permits.

In support, RDC member Council Delegate Jonathan Perry (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish, Tse’ii’ahi, Whiterock) recommended the legislation sponsor to provide public outreach and education regarding the policies related to controlled substances allowable on the Navajo Nation.

“When the subject of industrial hemp was introduced on the Council floor there was great confusion between the usage of industrial and recreational hemp. I support industrial hemp because it would allow the Nation to participate in a growing economy that utilizes hemp to

produce products such as clothing, plastics, paper, and others. On the other hand, recreational hemp has a different intent,” said Delegate Perry.

The legislation states that the enactment of the bill would not authorize the cultivation, growth possession, development or propagation of industrial hemp until the Navajo Nation creates a regulatory system for industrial hemp and obtains the necessary and applicable permits.

RDC vice chair Council Delegate Benjamin L. Bennett (Crystal, Fort Defiance, Red Lake, Sawmill) stated that complying with hemp federal regulations could allow the Navajo Nation to plan and move towards economic opportunities related to industrial hemp.

“Industrial hemp has become a growing business across the country and the Nation needs to consider this bill for the future,” said Delegate Bennett.

The Resources and Development Committee approved Legislation No. 0268-18 with a vote of 3-1. The Navajo Nation Council serves as the final authority for the bill.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org or find us on Facebook and Twitter, keywords: Navajo Nation Council