



The Navajo Nation Council — Office of the Speaker

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January 6, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Speaker Morgan announces Jan. 7 Special Session agenda

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The Honorable Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan announced the agenda for a Navajo Nation Council Special Session Jan. 7 at the Navajo Nation Council Chamber. The session will begin at 10 a.m. with three reports and 11 legislative action items listed under new business. There are no items listed under old business.

In the report section, Honorable Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan, Honorable President Joe Shirley, Jr. and Vice President Ben Shelly and Honorable Chief Justice Herb Yazzie will provide “end of the term” reports to the Council. Under old business, there are no pieces of legislation to be addressed.

In new business, there are 11 legislative action items the Council will consider.

Of the 11 legislative items, the Council will consider passage of the Navajo Nation Liquor Control Act of 2010, which previously was listed on the Dec. 22-23 Special Session agenda. Sponsor Ernest Yazzie Jr. was not present during the December session when the item went before the Council, and is being reintroduced a second time. If passed and enacted, the Navajo Nation Liquor Control Act of 2010 would permit the lawful possession, sale, delivery, manufacturing, and transportation of alcoholic beverages on the Navajo Nation. The Navajo Tax Commission would maintain the regulation and licensing of liquor establishments, manufacturers, distributors, and retailers on the Navajo Nation.

One of Mr. Yazzie’s supporting arguments for sponsoring such legislation derives from the Navajo Treaties of 1849 and 1868 and the *Kerr-McGee Corp. V. Navajo Tribe of Indians* decision, which recognizes the Navajo Nation’s authority to govern activities within its boundaries. Mr. Yazzie also cites that the legalization of alcoholic beverages brings economic develop opportunities to the Navajo Nation.

Currently, the Fire Rock Navajo Casino in Church Rock, N.M. and the Antelope Point Resort and Marina near Page, Ariz., allow for the consumption, the delivery and transportation of alcoholic beverages.

Honorable Danny Simpson, a member of the Government Services Committee, is sponsoring the Vulnerable Adult Protection Act of 2010. Mr. Simpson said the proposed law would protect vulnerable adults, including the elderly Navajo population.

Doris Dennison, a physically disabled woman and proponent of the legislation, testified before the Public Safety Committee on Tuesday and informed committee members of her story of being abused by her ex-husband, and how there is no specific law currently in place that addresses the abuse of vulnerable adults.

“I have been following this legislation since it started,” added Dennison, who has witnessed similar measures fail before the Council in the past. “When you have completed all the necessary steps for help and receive no help, this is the legislation that many of us could rely on. This legislation spells it all out for what can be done for restitution.”

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The Public Safety Committee approved Mr. Simpson's legislation to advance it to the full Council for adoption.

Honorable Harry Claw, a member of the Health and Human Services Committee, is sponsoring the Alchini Bi Beehaz'aanii Act of 2010 in an effort to better address the needs and improve the welfare of Navajo children.

Various Navajo Nation governmental entities, including the Division of Public Safety, Division of Social Services, Department of Justice, Council Standing Committees, Judicial Branch, Office of the Prosecutor and the Office of the Public Defender, among others, worked collectively over the last two years to draft the proposed law.

Thomas Cody, legislative analyst for the Division of Social Services, said the Alchini Bi Beehaz'aanii Act of 2010 preserves and restores harmony and protects children using measures consistent with Navajo Nation statutes and Diné bi beenahaz'aanii.

"The reason for changing the current law is to incorporate our traditional teachings - the teachings of K'é and philosophy," said Mr. Cody, one of the expert agents to the legislation. "Our current system does not work. Right now, our system is a revolving door. The proposed law allows for family conferencing, which will help in creating family harmony."

The proposed legislation, if enacted, would comprise of six categories: General Provisions, Dependency Proceedings, Children in Need of Provision Proceedings, Delinquency Proceedings, Termination of Parent-Child Relationship Proceedings and Indian Child Welfare Act Provisions.

Another legislation the Council will consider is the approval of Arizona Public Service's \$264 million purchase of Units 4 and 5 at the Four Corners Power Plant from Southern California Edison, who currently has shares to those Units. The purchase of Units 4 and 5 will result in the closure of Units 1, 2 and 3 in an effort to decrease emissions and decrease energy usage from 2,100 megawatts to 1,540 megawatts. If approved, the Council would also extend its lease agreement with APS, whose lease with the Navajo Nation expires in 2016.

Honorable Thomas Walker, chair for the Health and Social Services Committee, is sponsoring legislation that would oppose the transportation of Uranium Ore over and through the Navajo Nation.

For a complete copy of the Special Session agenda, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org.

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