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Navajo President Shelly Calls for Clarifying Statement from Division Director

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly directed Natural Resources Division head to deliver a statement of clarification regarding a June 19 meeting.

According to “Resources and Development Committee discusses options to address feral horse problem despite presidential line-item veto” press release on June 21, Frederick H. White, Natural Resources director, said he didn’t understand why President Shelly line item vetoed CMY-37-12.

White offered the following clarifying statement.

“First of all, there was a significant amount of discussion pertaining to the Feral Livestock issue including lack of law enforcement, engagement of chapter government and local families, horse round ups, lack of funding, coordination, export of feral livestock to outside markets like Mexico and other matters. In my report to the Resources and Development Committee, I stated that President Shelly vetoed the legislation because President Ben Shelly was of the understanding that he did not have enough support documentation like chapter support resolutions for the Feral Horse Legislation from Navajo Nation communities. And also President Shelly was concerned with all legislations that totaled to over 20 million dollars on his desk and as a result he would need to address this concern with vetoing the legislations like the Feral Livestock legislation.

After hearing the Department of Agriculture’s report to the committee and discussion we had between parties involved, I stated that President Shelly may have not have been advised that there was significant amount of planning that had occurred up until now.

I understood that President Shelly does understand the seriousness of the issue regarding feral horses on the Navajo Nation. However, in his opinion, documentation and the draft plan did not insure that the local people are aware of these decisions.

My statement to the Resources Development Committee regarding President Shelly's line item veto was out of context.

I understand President Shelly wanted a plan that incorporated chapters, grazing officials and Land Boards. And as a result, the Division of Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture are currently revising the plan to address feral horses on the Navajo Nation that will include chapters, grazing officials and Land Boards. And, in addition, a revised budget for the legislation that would entail expenditures that President Shelly recommends.

Most importantly, I was wrong for not being clear in my communication that may have caused this confusion. I hope that we can work together for the betterment of the Navajo Nation. Thank you."

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