



Contact: Erny Zah
Director of Communications
Cell: (928) 380-0771
navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov

For Immediate Release
Nov. 6, 2013

Navajo President Shelly Signs 911 Legislation, Leasing Act and Vetoes NHA Improvement Act

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly signed legislation that gives the Navajo Nation Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NNTRC) authority to implement and manage a 911 emergency response system on the Navajo Nation.

“I am pleased to sign this legislation. We have to give our Navajo Nation residents the opportunity to call for help in emergency situations. We have been working to create the infrastructure to enable a 911 emergency response system on the Navajo Nation. We look forward to making more progress in this area,” President Shelly said.

Legislation CO-51-13, which enabled the NNTRC to implement a 911 system, was one of the pieces of legislation from the fall session of the Navajo Nation Council that was signed on Wednesday. President Shelly also signed a bill that updated Navajo leasing regulations and he vetoed a Navajo Housing Authority reform measure.

President Shelly signed the Navajo Nation General Leasing Regulations Act of 2013, legislation CO-53-13, into law. The act streamlines current leasing approvals by establishing procedures to approve all land leases with the exception of mineral leases.

“The Navajo Nation needs to create opportunities for growth. One of the ways we can do that is to streamline land lease procedures. This will allow businesses and homes a streamlined process to have leases approved. I welcome these changes,” President Shelly said.

President Shelly vetoed legislation CO-57-13, which would have updated Navajo Housing Authority board selection approvals. He vetoed the legislation stating that the language in the legislation needed to be clearer and that the Naabik’iyati’ Committee doesn’t have to approve assigned or appointed commissioners.

President Shelly outlined his reasons for his veto in a memo to Navajo Nation Council Speaker Johnny Naize.

In Section 606 and 607 of the bill was “confusing and not clear” about how many commissioners would serve on the board that oversees NHA.

In addition paragraphs in Section 606 and 607 restate the need to appoint a commissioner within 90 days, and since the two paragraphs state the same need, one paragraph was not necessary.

Thirdly, Section 614 would have gave the Naabik’iyati’ Committee to approve appointed and assigned commissioners. However, President Shelly, in his veto memo, stated this practice could infringe upon NHA’s efficiency.

“The NHA, like other tribal entities, was created and delegated to carry out administrative function efficiently, without the cumbersome process of governmental bureaucracy. Requiring NHA to go through the legislative process negates the efficiency objective,” President Shelly wrote.

Earlier this week, President Shelly signed legislation CO-56-13 that would have reduced fees for voter-based initiatives to be place on voter ballots.

Signed on Nov. 4, in his memo to Speaker Naize, President Shelly wrote the Navajo Council should consider other referendum measures recommended by the Office of Government Development and the Commission on Navajo Government Development based from a 2012 convention.

“We ask that the Navajo Nation Council reconsider the referendum measures on lowering the initiative signatures requirements; amendment laws approved by initiative/referendum; amending N.N.C. (subsection) 102,” Andrew Curley, commission vice-chairman, wrote in a letter addressed to President Shelly and Speaker Naize.

President Shelly cited Curley’s letter in his veto memo to Speaker Naize.

“I robustly urge the Navajo Nation Council to reconsider remaining referendum measures,” President Shelly wrote. “We need to listen to our Navajo people entirely.”

Other legislation signed from the fall session included the Navajo Nation Energy Policy of 2013, Navajo Transitional Energy Company operating amendments enabling the purchase agreement for Navajo Mine near Farmington, N.M., and an allocation of nearly \$4.1 million to NTEC as company start up costs.

“We are making progress on the Navajo Nation. We must continue to work hard for the Navajo people and ensure that the Navajo Nation is progressing toward positive changes for our people,” President Shelly said.

###