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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE: Wednesday, July 19, 2006

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE CONTINUES LOBBYING EFFORT AT NATIONAL LEVEL

The Navajo Nation Council's Public Safety Committee was successful in informing and educating members of Congress about the dire situation of public safety on the Navajo Nation due to lack of adequate jail facilities and the pending closure of the Tuba City jail.

Because of the Public Safety Committee's aggressive lobbying effort, language was included in the FY 2007 Senate Commerce Justice Science appropriations report that would require the federal Department of Justice to report on the conditions of Navajo detention facilities to the Senate Committees on Appropriations.

The Senate recommended \$31,065,000 for tribal law enforcement efforts. The funds can be utilized for training, hiring equipment, court improvement projects, and alcohol and substance abuse reduction programs.

In the report, the committee noted the severe condition of Navajo Nation detention facilities and directed the federal DOJ to report on Navajo detention facilities within five months after date of enactment. The federal DOJ would also be expected to describe what actions have been or will be taken by the department about the situation.

"Through these efforts, the committee is greatly appreciative to Senator Pete Domenici for including language in the appropriations bill that directs the DOJ to assess our situation and to take it back to the Appropriations Subcommittee which should lead to the policy justification for major funding by the federal government," Public Safety Committee Chairperson Hope MacDonald LoneTree said.

"Without these basic tools, we have little hope of establishing an acceptable level of public security, which is truly the first responsibility of any government," MacDonald LoneTree said.