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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Judiciary Committee Chair extends an invitation to the public to a special committee meeting about Diné Fundamental Law

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – A special Navajo Nation Judiciary Committee meeting is scheduled for 10 a.m. Friday, June 15, 2007 at Diné College in Tsaile, Ariz.

Kee Allen Begay Jr., Judiciary Committee chairperson, is inviting community members and those with a vested interest in the Diné Fundamental Law to attend the meeting.

“The committee simply wants input from the public and those with a beneficial interest in the Diné Fundamental Law,” Begay said. “Hopefully, during the meeting the history and the usage of the Diné Fundamental Law will be discussed. If we say that we are a sovereign nation, why utilize law from outside the Navajo Nation? As an oversight committee chair, I’d like to see Navajo traditional court proceeding.”

Items to be discussed during the meeting include receiving a report from the Edward T. Begay, the former Honorable Navajo Nation Council Speaker, about his interpretation and usage of the Diné Fundamental Law. The Honorable Herb Yazzie, Chief Justice of the Navajo Nation Supreme Court, will discuss how the Diné Fundamental Law is applied in the Navajo Nation Supreme Court.

A report from the Navajo Nation District and Family Court Judges on the Diné Fundamental Law is also scheduled as well as a report from Barbara Lucero, Navajo Nation Bar Association President, about the Diné Fundamental Law.

Ferlin Clark, Diné College President, will also contribute a report about the Diné Fundamental Law.

Lastly, a roundtable discussion is scheduled where the judicial committee members and presenters will discuss the Diné Fundamental Law.

“This is a very sensitive issue and we are anticipating some ups and downs in this effort for our Navajo people and the future of the Navajo people,” Begay added. “As we are working on this issue, we are also working to upgrade the Navajo Nation court facilities. Hopefully, a true Navajo court proceeding be taking place in the new facilities. Then we will say that we are a sovereign Navajo Nation.”

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Page 2-2-2/Begay/Judiciary Committee Meeting

Recently, the interpretation of the Diné Fundamental Law that is from the Title 1 of the Navajo Nation Code has been disputed. The section of the law that has been disputed essentially states that the Navajo people have the right to freely choose their leaders.

The law is based on Navajo traditional, customary, natural and common law.