

Navajo Nation Council Office of the Speaker
Contact: Sararesa Begay, Public Information Officer
(928) 871-6384
sararesabegay@navajo.org
<http://www.navajonationcouncil.org>

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Arizona Senate and House Bills Requesting Funding for Dilkon Court Each Pass Initial Hearings

PHOENIX – Two bills in the Arizona Senate and House requesting funding for the Dilkon Court facility have each passed initial hearings.

One bill requesting \$2.26 million that is sponsored by Sen. Hale (D-District 2) passed the Senate Appropriations Committee unanimously Tuesday.

Sen. Hale spoke for the bill request for the full \$2.26 million funding, and he said the bill need through the budgeting process. The bill that Hale sponsored is referred as “SB 1457” for \$2,260,000.

He said that the bill is being moved forward, and he’s “very grateful for all the support from the Judicial Committee. I also thank the Navajo Nation Judicial Branch particularly Chief Justice Herb Yazzie, Dilkon District Court Judge Louise Grant and Court Administrator, Darlene LaFrance, and members of the Arizona State Senate Appropriations Committee, and President Joe Shirley Jr.”

Sen. Hale said the Navajo representatives provided handouts, and presented the Dilkon community members’ needs very clearly.

He said the Appropriations Committee members who were present when the vote was taken, all voted in favor of the bill by a vote of 8-0-3.

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“Furthermore, the Democratic Caucus is in support of the bill,” Hale added. “I presented this item to the caucus leadership as a priority for the governor’s and leadership’s negotiation of the budget.”

Hale said that he was informed Thursday morning “that the negotiation of the budget is slated to begin next week.”

“I am committed to continue my efforts to ensure that this project gets state funding; the eventual appropriation may be less than the \$2.2 million approved by the Appropriation Committee, but it helps the Navajo Nation as it seeks matching monies from other sources to fully fund this very important project.”

Last Thursday, the Human Services Committee members of the Arizona State House of Representatives unanimously approved \$300,000 for a new court facility in Dilkon after hearing testimony by Herb Yazzie, Navajo Nation Chief Justice, the Judiciary Committee members of the Navajo Nation Council, Dilkon court staff and the Navajo Nation lobbyist Katosha Nakai of Lewis and Roca LLP.

This bill is sponsored by Rep. Albert Tom (D-District 2), and is referenced as “HB 2592.”

“I’m very encouraged by the number of people who came to testify in support of my bills,” Rep. Tom said. “It gave me hope that more people, ranging from everyday people to tribal leaders, will participate more often in the legislative process. I was especially pleased to see two honorable judges of the Navajo Nation, Chief Justice Herb Yazzie and District Court Judge Louise Grant testify.”

Rep. Tom said he, “looks forward to working with tribal leaders this summer and fall, when the legislature is not in session, to develop even more bills to benefit District 2.”