

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:

Navajo Nation Council unable to override President Shirley's veto

WINDOW ROCK - The 21st Navajo Nation Council was unable to override Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley's veto on two gaming bills from last session Thursday at the Dine' Education Center during a special council session.

During the last council session, President Shirley had vetoed legislation that would have allowed To'hajiilee and Shiprock chapters to organize gaming enterprises. The council needed 59 votes which is a two-thirds majority to override the vetoes, but failed to override on each legislation.

Council delegate Lawrence Platero (To'hajiilee) who sponsored the To'hajiilee legislation said overriding President Shirley's veto would enhance economic development and jobs for his community.

The vote to override was 46-35, and resulted in a failure to achieve the two-third margin required.

The next override legislation centered on the Shiprock Chapter and community.

Council delegate Pete Ken Atcitty (Shiprock), who sponsored the bill, said that all gaming enterprises are entirely owned by the Navajo Nation, and there is no disagreement on that as he argued on behalf of his bill to override the Shiprock veto.

Atcitty continued that council has passed regulations that allow chapters to create their own gaming enterprises.

In addition to a gaming enterprise, the Shiprock casino would include retail space, a hotel and golf course, said former council delegate Wallace Charley.

Charley said that being successful takes risks.

"It's a challenge," Charley said. "Let's, you and I, take that challenge, take that risk."

The override vote for Shiprock was 43-39, again failing to reach 59 votes.

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Additionally, in other council business, the legislation allowing Amos F. Johnson (Black Mesa/Forrest Lake) and Harry H. Clark (Chinle) to switch committees was also voted down, as requested following an agency caucus.

Council delegate Larry Noble (Steamboat/Low Mountain/Jeddito) and Apache County District No. 5 Public Relations Officer Karen Francis presented several plaques to delegates on behalf of Apache County Supervisor Tom White Jr. who is former council delegate who represented the Fort Defiance Chapter for participating in last year's Memorial Day Vietnam Memorial Motorcycle Run from Window Rock, Ariz. to Washington, D.C.

Those recognized included Council Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan (Iyanbito/Pinedale), Omer Begay Jr. (Cornfields/Greasewood Springs/Klagetoh/Wide Ruins), and Ray Berchman (Oak Springs/St. Michaels), Curran Hannon (Oak Springs/St. Michaels).