



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 27, 2014

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Naabik'iyáti' Committee establishes the 'Department of Health Creation Task Force'

WINDOW ROCK—During a special meeting held on Wednesday, the Naabik'iyáti' Committee voted 8-5 to approve Legislation No. 0029-14, establishing the “Naabik'iyáti' Committee Department of Health Creation Task Force” to consult and work with various individuals and entities to revise a separate legislation which proposes the establishment of a Navajo Nation Department of Health.

Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) introduced Legislation No. 0029-14 following a meeting on Jan. 3 between Naabik'iyáti' Committee members, Navajo Division of Health, Vice President Rex Lee Jim, and representatives from various health providers.

The Jan. 3 meeting was held to address Legislation No. 0346-13, the proposed Navajo Department of Health Act of 2013, which aims to rename the Nation's current Division of Health and to consolidate certain responsibilities and authorities under the proposed department.

The Naabik'iyáti' Committee considered and tabled Legislation No. 0346-13 on Dec. 5.

Council Delegate Dwight Witherspoon (Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Hardrock, Pinon, Whippoorwill) who sponsored the bill to establish the Department of Health said the proposed establishment is needed, “because no entity currently has the responsibility to monitor, evaluate, regulate and protect Diné citizens regarding quality and culturally appropriate health care.”

Following the approval of several amendments on Wednesday, including one proposed by Council Delegate Jonathan Nez (Shonto, Navajo Mountain, Oljato, Ts'ah Bii Kin) to include five representatives from various “638 programs” the committee approved the establishment of a task force consisting of a total of 16 members.

Council Delegate Charles Damon II (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí', Rock Springs, Tsayatoh) and Navajo Nation Vice President Rex Lee Jim will serve as co-chairs of the task force.

The other 14 members include Council Delegates Dwight Witherspoon, LoRenzo Bates, and Leonard Tsosie, five “638 program” representatives, Home Care Health Providers representative Elvina Emerson, and one representative from each of the following: Division of Health, non-emergency health care transport provider, Diné Traditional Healers, non-Indian health care provider, one health care provider to represent the communities of Alamo, Ramah, and Tohajilee.

“638 programs” are defined under Public Law 93-638, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, which authorizes the U.S. Secretaries of the Interior, Health, Education, and other government agencies to enter into contracts with federally recognized tribes to allow tribes to administer funds, giving them greater control over their welfare.

The legislation states that the co-chairs are tasked with keeping the Naabik’iyátí’ Committee and the Council informed of the status and progress of the revisions, to produce a revised legislation for the Naabik’iyátí’ Committee no later than April 10 and for the Council no later than the start of the Spring Council Session which begins on April 21.

The Naabik’iyátí’ Committee serves as the final authority for Legislation No. 0029-14.

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Health, Education, and Human Services Committee approves legislation regarding Corrective Action Plan for Department of Workforce Development

ALAMO, N.M. – Last Wednesday, the Health, Education and Human Services Committee approved Legislation No. 0032-14 regarding the follow-up of Navajo Department of Workforce Development Corrective Action Plan implementation and imposing sanctions against the department manager for failure to implement the CAP.

NDWD provides two types of services called comprehensive and supplemental programs to assist adults, dislocated workers and youth that reside within the Navajo Nation.

The Navajo Nation Office of the Auditor General conducted a follow-up review of the NDWD corrective action plan (CAP) to determine whether NDWD implemented the CAP to resolve findings outlined in an audit report which found that the financial and management control systems remain weak and operational deficiencies did not meet its mandates.

The original CAP was approved by the Budget and Finance Committee in Feb. 2009.

“Overall, the corrective measures within the CAP were not implemented by NDWD. Therefore, the deficiencies presented in the initial audit report still exist. NDWD Program Manager could not provide evidence of ensuring staff adherence with program guidelines,” stated Auditor General Elizabeth Begay.

“I am aware Alamo School Board is one of the grantees that received Workforce Investment Acts monies. Since our grant fund has been in place since 2010, we comply with funding paperwork and our funding allocations have been extended based on our grant plan,” stated Roselyn Shirley, Department Manager of Navajo Department of Workforce Development.

The Office of the Auditor General reviewed activities covering a sixth-month period beginning October 1, 2012 through March 21, 2013.

“They had three years to correct the deficiencies and we found out on our follow-up review that they failed. They had a timeline to implement these measures so that they can improve their operation. Their deficiencies still remained,” stated Begay.

HEHSC member Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi To ii) suggested a directive to create a Task Force Group to assist with the Corrective Action Plan.

“The value of a task group would be that it will provide the program with a preventative measure to strengthen and help make the program strong. So it can serve our children, and our people that are trying to make use of the program,” stated Delegate Phelps.

According to the follow-up review, NDWD was unable to meet its 20-business day goal for processing payments to students in a timely manner. Students were left without funds at the start of their training and in the initial audit, 94 student files were reviewed and revealed that students did not receive their financial assistance until 40-60 days after the Authorization for Payment was submitted.

“When a program does not meet the needs of individuals then what good is the government? What good are those people that serve in those positions?” asked Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels) who sponsored the legislation.

Also included in the follow-up review results are sanctions against the Department and Department Manager for failure to comply with the CAP.

“There are system problems we acknowledge. We understand that the delegates’ concern and constituency bringing forth their concerns. But, I think if we work together, we can solve the problem. Looking for solutions is very critical at this time. This can be improved,” stated Thomas Ranger, Division Director for the Division of Human Resources.

HEHSC members approved the legislation with a vote of 3-0, which included a directive to implement a Task Force group.

Legislation No. 0032-14 now goes to the BFC for final consideration.

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Law and Order Committee receives report on law enforcement concerns in Alamo

ALAMO, N.M. – The Law and Order Committee received a report on Monday regarding law enforcement concerns in Alamo, and discussed the possibility of assigning a full-time Navajo Nation police officer to the area, located approximately 85 miles southeast of Albuquerque.

Alamo School Board executive director and former Socorro County Sheriff's Office deputy chief Michael Hawkes, said he has advocated to have a police officer assigned to the Alamo area due to safety concerns regarding school children and the community.

"We are not out of the norm as far as criminal activity, in fact I can tell you that what is most daunting is the increased influx of heroin use, burglaries, and violent crimes in Alamo," said Hawkes. "We are willing to assist in any way we can to make this happen."

Hawkes stated that the Alamo School Board would provide free housing and office space to the officer who would be working and patrolling the school grounds and community full time.

Representative and longtime advocate for the improvement of public safety in the area, Council Delegate George Apachito (Alamo, Ramah, Tohajiilee), voiced his concern regarding the police response time.

"The police response time to Alamo is disheartening because it can take anywhere from 3-6 hours for an officer to respond and we need to fix that delay," said Delegate Apachito.

LOC vice chair Council Delegate and former police officer Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichii, Steamboat) expressed his support of the school board's initiative and suggested that they also implement an educational public safety program for kids at the community schools.

"I was a school resource officer in Ganado, and although I was there as an enforcer, I was able to interact and teach kids regarding potential problems they may face such as peer pressure, drugs, gangs, and alcohol," said Delegate Shepherd. "It would be beneficial to also look at grants that can aid in offering a program like this to Alamo."

LOC members voted 2-0 to accept the report.

A report later provided by the Navajo Nation Department of Justice informed the committee that the Memorandum of Agreement between Socorro County and the Navajo Nation is currently in place, and cross-commission training and certification will begin in the near future.

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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February 26, 2014

NLD & DNR to vacate contaminated building by Friday, February 28, 2014

Window Rock, AZ – The Navajo Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) served the Navajo Land Department a notice to vacate the 74 year old building adjacent to the Navajo Nation President & Vice-President's Office on Monday, January 27, 2014 due to high level of contaminants which have been endangering the lives of the employees and causing imminent danger to the employees health and to the general public. The building will officially close on **Friday, February 28, 2014**.

The 74 year building housed the Division of Natural Resources administration, Division of Human Resources and Navajo Land Department - a total of 28 employees. The following offices will be relocating to the following buildings within Window Rock vicinity and Tse Bonito, NM:

1. The Ft. Defiance Homesite Lease Office, Project Review Office and some of the GIS Staff will join the staff at the Navajo Historic Preservation Department East of the former Navajo Land Department building in Window Rock, Arizona.
2. The Navajo Land Department Administration, Title & Records/Navajo Land Title Data Systems and the Division of Natural Resources administration are temporary moving to Western Indian Ministries, Hilltop, Tse Bonito, NM.

We urged the public to give the Navajo Land Department about 6 months to get back into full operation. All Ft. Defiance Agency homesite leases and documents, as well as, Project Review documents will need to be decontaminated before files can be moved out of the former Navajo Land Department building. We urge the public to be patient with our office and allow time for the Navajo Land Department to get back into full operation. However, the other agency homesite offices are continuing to provide direct services. Navajo Land Department and staff apologizes for the inconvenience this may have caused your families and other entities. For more information, please call (928) 871-6401.

- 30 -



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Resources and Development Committee accepts the financial audit of Alamo Chapter

WINDOW ROCK – Last Tuesday, the Resources and Development Committee approved Legislation No. 0031-14, accepting the financial audit of the Alamo Chapter for the 15-month period ending December 31, 2012, submitted by the Office of the Auditor General and approving a Corrective Action Plan.

“For the 15-month audit period, we identified funds that did not have an approved budget in place. The staff could not locate the budgets and there was no evidence of budget discussions. Furthermore, by expending the funds in the absence of approved budgets, the Chapter incurred unauthorized expenditures,” stated Robert Jumbo with the Office of the Auditor General.

“How can you have a chapter run without a budget? I don’t understand why chapters are being allowed to expend money without a budget. Who suffers in the end? Our Navajo people. They don’t get the service and everybody is shamed and we go on with life like nothing happened,” stated RDC member Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreón, Whitehorse Lake).

The majority of the Chapter resources are provided through appropriations from the Navajo Nation central government and Socorro Electric Cooperative (SEC). The Alamo Chapter entered into a contract with SEC, Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc., also known as Tri-State and agreed to an allocation of electric power to Alamo Chapter.

For the 15-month audit period, the audit findings reported that the Chapter expended \$41,244 from Tri-State Funds for Chapter Officials, committee members and staff travel expenses.

“The Tri-State fund was depleted to pay for Chapter Officials, committee members and staff travel expenses. The fund could have been otherwise available to provide services to the community members,” stated Jumbo.

According to Jumbo, the standard Five Management System policies and procedures manual require Navajo Nation Chapters to exercise adequate internal controls in daily operations and in the expenditure of its funds. The internal controls within the Alamo Chapter five management system are deficient in several areas. Such control weaknesses pose risks such as misuse of funds, authorized expenditures, thefts, unnecessary costs and poor financial decisions.

Delegate Tsosie voiced his frustration with the audit findings.

“How do we handle this? Especially when former officials run off? It is just not Alamo. It is happening all over. It’s getting to be sickening. I think when the Office of Auditor General is auditing, they need to implement an internal policy that allows you to interview former officials to explain their actions,” stated Delegate Tsosie.

A corrective action plan was discussed and created with the Alamo Chapter Officials and Administration which states the audit findings, corrective goals and timeliness to accomplish the CAP.

“We worked with the chapter to develop a corrective action plan. The chapter does have the corrective action plan on what they plan to do to correct the deficiencies identified in the report,” stated Jumbo.

The RDC committee directed the Office of the Auditor General to conduct a follow-up review in 12 months after the approval of the resolution of indication that Alamo Chapter is implementing the CAP.

The RDC members approved the legislation with a vote of 4-0.

Legislation No. 0031-14 now goes to the Budget and Finance Committee for final consideration.

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2014 Navajo Nation Gaming Compact stalls in N.M. Senate



Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and Sen. John Pinto convene in the halls of the Roundhouse in Santa Fe while awaiting the Senate's vote on the 2014 Navajo Nation Gaming Compact. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

SANTAFE—On Feb. 19, 2014, the N.M. Senate disapproved HJR 15, the 2014 Navajo Nation Gaming Compact, by a vote of 10-31.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly expressed disappointment after the vote and said the extensive lobbying effort by the pueblos was evident in the final tally.

each of the pueblos claimed to support tribal sovereignty, but yet they voted against our compact.

“We are thankful for our Navajo leaders in the legislature for working tirelessly on this,” he added.

The Navajo Gaming Task Force was also commended for the countless hours they poured

upon deaf ears and they ultimately voted down the compact. Many senators were talking during Sen. Pinto’s statement, another issue President Shelly took note of.

“It irked me that (the senators) were so disrespectful to not only a senior member of the Senate, but a senior citizen and a World War II veteran. Navajo people are taught to respect their elders. Seeing that disrespect really bothered me,” he said.

Only days earlier, on Feb. 18, the gaming compact passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 36-30 and President Shelly was optimistic about passage in the Senate.

“I want to thank the legislators who supported the terms of our Navajo Gaming Compact. Now, we have to go back to the drawing board and see what we have to do next,” President Shelly said.

The Navajo people invested over \$250 million in the casinos and closing the doors to any of the facilities would have a damaging effect on the Nation’s budget.

In the past week, President Shelly traveled to Santa Fe four times to garner support for the compact. He met with legislators and tried to share information on Navajo gaming. His concern was the upcoming election, especially if legislators were voted out.

Such an event would mean educating the new members on the importance of the gaming compact to the Navajo Nation and an inadequate timeframe to get it approved.

However, the lobbying effort from the pueblos was intense and was ongoing since the Nation

first began negotiations for the compact.

President Shelly said the joint compact with Navajo and the pueblos was troubled early on because of staunch opposition to Navajo’s proposed number of casinos.

“Navajo is unique because of our population and our land base, which is why we needed to negotiate our compact separately. This compact was not a template for the pueblo gaming compacts with the state,” he said.

Heather Clah, legal counsel for President Shelly, said the compact was fair and that she stood firmly by its contents.

“We have a good gaming compact for the Navajo Nation and it’s unfortunate that we must now evaluate our next move,” she said.

Clah said the leadership of President Shelly was admirable throughout the process.

“The gaming task force spent over three years negotiating the compact and it basically reflected the 2007 compact, so it was puzzling why it did not pass,” she said.

“We’ll regroup and find a proper solution, that is the strength of the Navajo Nation,” President Shelly said. “We’ve worked with the pueblos and supported them in the past. We need to find common ground and not work against each other.”



“The Navajo people will be negatively impacted by this vote, especially if we are forced to close our casinos.”

The stakes could not have been any higher, he said, as compact affects more than 950 current gaming positions and a vital revenue stream for the Nation.

“The Navajo people will be negatively impacted by this vote, especially if we are forced to close our casinos,” President Shelly said. “It’s upsetting that

into crafting the compact over the past three years.

Before the vote, Sen. John Pinto pleaded with the Senate for approval and said the Navajo casinos employ Spanish, African-American, Anglo and Navajo workers.

“We’re going to hurt them if we close this casino,” Pinto said.

His plea with the Senate fell



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February 20, 2014

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The Navajo Nation Community Housing and Infrastructure Development (CHID) receives \$5.1 million dollar grant award

Window Rock, AZ - The Navajo Nation Community Housing and Infrastructure Development (CHID) received \$5.1 million dollar grant award as a sub-recipient under Navajo Housing Authority (NHA) for fiscal year 2013 Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (NAHASDA) grant funding.

The NAHASDA funding is authorized under the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide grants, loan guarantees and technical assistance to Indian tribes for the development and operation of low-income housing on tribal lands and to promote self-sufficiency.

Mr. Chavez John, CHID department manager said that NHA receives the primary grant funding and will provide the department the funds to implement the housing construction projects; in addition they will provide the necessary oversight on these projects.

A Sub-recipient Agreement with between CHID and Navajo Housing Authority would be entered into to ensure compliance to federal statues and HUD regulations. This agreement will be subjected to the Navajo Nation 164-review process, before the required environmental reviews can be completed.

“After these initial steps, a Notice to Proceed will issued by NHA, then construction will begin immediately,” said John. “Then we will have two years to close-out these projects.”

According to John, the department’s construction crews, who have a proven track record of completion of high quality homes, will do the all the

construction. This will allow for department to save funds, control the construction schedules and provide quality assurance on these homes.

John states that the pre-planning of these homes was completed and now awaits initial start-up construction. These homes will feature the installation of energy efficient materials and construction methods.

“Our entire department staff and myself are excited and ready to begin these homes, and reassert our vital partnership with NHA,” said John. “ We fully understand the housing needs of the Navajo people, in this era of diminishing federal funds we have formed partnerships with other entities who have the same service delivery goals, and this is part of our strategic vision to address their needs”

The award funding is for planning and engineering of fifty (50) Homeownership homes and the construction of four-five (45) Scattered Homeownership units on the Navajo Nation.

The two programs authorized for Indian tribes under NAHASDA are the Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG) that is a formula based grant program and Title VI Loan Guarantee which provides financing guarantees to Indian tribes for loans to develop affordable housing. For additional information call the Community Housing and Infrastructure Department at (928) 729-4303.



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Law and Order Committee receives update report on Chinle Judicial Facility

GANADO, Ariz. – On Tuesday, the Law and Order Committee received an update status report regarding the Chinle judicial facility, the active cleanup of the proposed construction site, and the operation and maintenance costs.

Bureau of Indian Affairs Navajo Regional Office director, Sharon Pinto, reported to the committee that the land relinquishment of approximately eight acres for the facility has been completed, and currently cleanup of the site is the primary focus.

“The BIA has contributed about \$500,000 to the cleanup of the [proposed] building site, and it will cost an additional \$1 million to complete the cleanup,” said Pinto.

Pinto added that the cleanup of the site must meet the stringent standards of the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency’s protocols prior to the start of construction.

LOC vice chair Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichii, Steamboat) suggested a follow up meeting with the Navajo Nation Department of Corrections and Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety, to discuss the operation and maintenance needs of the Chinle project, as well as the facilities in Crownpoint and Tuba City.

“The Navajo Nation has put a lot of investment into the judicial facilities and we need to examine the specific needs of each site so we can prepare for the future facilities to be built,” said Delegate Shepherd.

In agreement, Pinto added that all entities involved with the judicial facilities should reevaluate the needs for each facility because it may not be cost effective for the Nation.

“We also need to be reasonable and realistic regarding the design and location of the judicial facilities. If we replicate the facilities, it will cost the Navajo Nation more to build and operate them because they are very large structures,” added Pinto.

According to the report, the Crownpoint facility is not receiving sufficient operation and maintenance funding and is not being used to its full capacity yet, whereas another area could have benefited from the same type of facility and services.

LOC member Council Delegate Elmer Begay (Dilkon, Greasewood Springs, Indian Wells, Teesto, Whitecone) expressed his support for the judicial facility projects, and said he hopes that Chinle will serve as an example to the Nation as a well-planned complex that will serve the needs of Navajo communities.

LOC members voted 2-0 to accept the report.

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Navajo Nation Council Special Session to be streamed live on the web

WINDOW ROCK – The Navajo Nation Council’s special session on Feb. 21, scheduled to begin at 10 a.m., will be streamed live on the web through the Council’s designated USTREAM channel.

“I invite Diné people from all corners of the world to tune into Council’s USTREAM channel to view Council’s proceedings during the Council’s special session,” said Speaker Johnny Naize (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood).

The special session will be held to address [Legislation No. 0118-13](#), recommending and approving the Navajo Nation chapter’s infrastructure improvement priority projects for FY 2013 through FY 2018, sponsored by Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels).

The legislation was considered and tabled by the Council during its Winter Session in January. The tabling motion included a directive to allow the delegates additional time to obtain chapter resolutions and documents to be added to the priority listing and to hold a special session no later than 30 days following the Winter Session.

To view the memo from Speaker Naize regarding the special session, please visit:

http://www.navajonationcouncil.org/MeetingSchedules/2014/FEB/21FEB2014_NNC_Special_Session_Announcement.pdf

The Office of the Speaker continues its partnership with the Navajo Nation Office of Broadcast Services to provide the live-streaming service to the public.

Visit <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/navajo-nation-council> to view the live-streamed proceedings of the Council’s special session. Alternatively, viewers may log onto the USTREAM home page and search for ‘Navajo Nation Council’ in the search box.

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Budget and Finance Committee approves amending the Arizona Funding Compact to benefit Navajo Technical University

WINDOW ROCK – On Tuesday, the Budget and Finance Committee voted 3-0 to approve Legislation No. 0038-14, amending the funding compact between the Navajo Nation and the State of Arizona to allow Navajo Technical University to receive a portion of Transaction Privilege Tax revenues collected on the Navajo Nation.

In his address to BFC members, legislation sponsor Council Delegate Dwight Witherspoon (Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Hardrock, Pinon, Whippoorwill) explained that pursuant to Arizona House Bill 2009, the state’s TPT Code was amended to allow \$875,000 to be used by NTU on an annual basis for the remaining term of the current compact which expires in 2020.

The funding is in addition to the \$1.75 million that the Navajo Nation currently receives annually for Diné College from TPT revenues.

According to the compact, the \$850,000 tax revenue is designated to support the maintenance, renewal, and capital expenses of NTU.

Delegate Witherspoon was joined by NTU President Elmer Guy, who said he along with Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels) testified before the Arizona State Legislature to explain to lawmakers that the funding will be used for capital outlay projects at NTU’s smaller sites in the communities of Chinle and Teecnospos.

President Guy also thanked members of the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee, Rep. Albert Hale D-St. Michaels (District 7), and former Sen. Jack Jackson Jr. D-Ganado (District 7) for their support and assistance in securing the additional funding.

The Health, Education, and Human Services Committee also considered the legislation during a special meeting held earlier in the morning, and referred it to the Budget and Finance Committee with a “do pass” recommendation with no amendments.

The Budget and Finance Committee serves as the final authority for the legislation.

The compact will take effect when signed by Gov. Jan Brewer which was initially scheduled to take place on Feb. 27; however, the signing may take place in March, according to President Guy.

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Health, Education, and Human Services Committee approve grant for Alamo/Tohajiilee Veterans Outreach Initiative

WINDOW ROCK – Last Wednesday, the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee approved Legislation No. 0017-14, approving approximately \$673,000 to fund the Alamo/Tohajiilee Healing to Wellness Court for the Veterans Outreach Initiative beginning October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2016.

Regina Roanhorse, a court administrator with the Navajo Nation Judicial Branch, spoke on behalf of the 11 judicial districts and said the Veterans Outreach Initiative is a product of the C Task 11, which is an established drug court for veterans, now called a “healing to wellness court.”

“We developed a really strong relationship within the veteran’s administration to try to connect their efforts with culturally appropriated services that needed our help,” stated Roanhorse.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichíí, Steamboat) said the Veterans Outreach Program would be the first of its kind within Indian Country and the United States.

“For me, I am for anything that can support our Veterans when they come home and this is a start even though it is in the area of Tohajiilee and Alamo, a remote area of the Navajo Nation. We can expand off of this and be able to bring some more Veterans Outreach Programs towards Navajo Nation. With your support, it will pave the way for future endeavors,” stated Delegate Shepherd.

According to the narrative submitted by the Alamo-Tohajiilee District Court, behavioral services are essential to health, that prevention works, and that treatment is a challenge but people can recover if they have access to services.

“We are finding out a lot of Navajo veterans have benefits through [Veterans Assistance] or through their own medical insurance, but they are not applying those benefits. They are not accessing these services and in order to access these services, it has to have a coordinator which leads to the Veterans Outreach Program,” stated Roanhorse.

Based on the narrative, there are 1,205,056 Native American Veterans in the United States and of that are 206,267 Navajo veterans.

“What we want is a tribal action plan that will invite our health providers to get people that have mental health issues, drug addiction and substance abuse addiction, which is co-occurring

disorders, to build a partnership to work effectively and efficiency to provide access for rehabilitation,” stated Roanhorse.

Veterans access to mental health and substance abuse services which include screening and clinical assessments are difficult to initiate at the local and federal level, according to Roanhorse.

Based on the narrative, 17% of combat veterans develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and other co-occurring illnesses that go untreated, therefore, it places veterans at a higher risk of being involved in the justice system.

“Certainly looks like a program that could pave the way for establishing a model that can be replicated,” stated HEHSC member Council Delegate Dwight Witherspoon (Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Hardrock, Pinon, Whippoorwill).

The HEHSC members approved the legislation with a vote of 4-0.

Legislation No. 0017-14 now goes to the Budget and Finance Committee for final consideration.

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**Council Delegate Danny Simpson will request override of
President Shelly's veto of the Healthy Diné Nation Act of 2013**

Bill to eliminate sales tax on fresh fruits and fresh vegetables also vetoed

WINDOW ROCK – On Thursday, Council Delegate Danny Simpson (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish, Tse'ii'ahi, Whiterock) addressed Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly's veto of Resolution CJA-04-14, the Healthy Diné Nation Act of 2013 which sought to impose a two-percent sales tax, in addition to the Navajo Nation's current five-percent sales tax, on "junk food" sold within the Navajo Nation.

The tax revenue generated would have been used by chapters to develop wellness centers, community parks, basketball courts, walking, running and bike trails, swimming pools, community gardens, family picnic grounds, and health education classes.

Delegate Simpson who sponsored the bill said by vetoing the resolution, President Shelly is not upholding "healthy living" which is one of the "five main pillars of focus" that his administration has continuously promoted since taking office.

"President Shelly outright contradicted his stance on healthy living by vetoing the resolution," said Delegate Simpson. "The President is sending a message that minor issues such as changing tax forms and reprogramming cash registers to identify junk food outweigh the health of Navajo people and the need to address the diabetes epidemic on our Nation."

In President Shelly's memo to Speaker Johnny Naize (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood), President Shelly said "the Navajo Nation government is not currently prepared to implement and collect taxes on junk food."

"This legislation is an unfunded mandate, as there are no funds identified or appropriated to pay for the tax administration. Although the Office of the Navajo Tax Commission has a primary responsibility of collecting and regulating taxes, if imposed on the ONTC, this new responsibility would only increase the burden on the already underfunded tax office," President Shelly wrote.

The Navajo Nation Council passed the Healthy Diné Nation Act on Jan. 30, along with a separate bill that sought to eliminate the current five-percent sales tax on fresh fruits and fresh vegetables, which was also vetoed by President Shelly on Wednesday.

President Shelly also cited a "lack of regulatory provisions" as it relates to overseeing the collection of the sales tax.

In response, Delegate Simpson said the President has not established a tax regulatory office to oversee or to regulate any of the Nation's current tax revenues.

"If the President wants to use a lack of regulation as his reason for vetoing, why hasn't he established a tax regulatory office to oversee all of the Nation's tax revenues?" asked Delegate Simpson.

Delegate Simpson began working on the initiative over two years ago with the help of community members who are part of group known as the Diné Community Advocacy Alliance.

DCAA member Denisa Livingston, expressed disappointment in President Shelly's decision, adding that by vetoing the Healthy Diné Nation Act the President is "leaving the responsibility to the federal government to address our health concerns."

"In all fairness, DCAA should have been given the opportunity to respond to the questions and concerns that President Shelly had. We have been diligent to respond to any issues regarding the two pieces of legislation. Unfortunately, the president did not have the courtesy to meet with us to discuss the issues to resolve any concerns," Livingston stated.

Delegate Simpson said the group has continued to receive support despite the President's veto.

"One supporter called it a 'great loss for the Navajo people and a win for the food and beverage industry,'" Delegate Simpson said.

Delegate Simpson plans to introduce legislation to override President Shelly's veto of both resolutions, which will require two-thirds approval, or 16 supporting votes, from the Council.

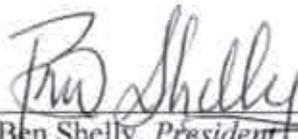
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For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org



MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Johnny Naize, Speaker
The 22nd Navajo Nation Council

FROM: 
Ben Shelly, *President*
THE NAVAJO NATION

DATE: February 12, 2014

SUBJECT: **Legislation CJA-04-14; Relating to Law and Order, Resources and Development, Budget and Finance, Health, Education and Human Services, and Naabik'iyáti'; Amending Title 24 of the Navajo Nation Code by Enacting the Healthy Diné Nation Act of 2013.**

Legislation CJA-05-14; Relating to Law and Order, Resources and Development, Budget and Finance, Health, Education and Human Services, and Naabik'iyáti'; Amending 24 N.N.C. §§605 *et seq.* Approving the Elimination of the Sales Tax on Fresh Fruits, Fresh Vegetables, Water, Nuts, Seeds and Nut Butters.

Pursuant to 2 N.N.C. §1005(C)(10), the above titled Legislation CJA-04-14 and CJA-05-14 is being submitted to the Navajo Nation Council, through the Office of the Speaker, within the ten (10) days requirement.

The Navajo Nation President has veto authority that is subject to Navajo Nation Council override by two-thirds (2/3) vote before the end of the next regular session. 2 N.N.C. §1005(C)(11). **I hereby exercise my veto authority for Legislation CJA-04-14 and CJA-05-14.**

It is important to mention first, that, Vice President Jim and I fully support healthy living and is a priority in our administration. We believe it is important to draw awareness of responsibility to the Navajo Nation and to promote healthy living by reducing obesity and other diseases. We further believe that the Nation will become a national leader in community health-based prevention and intervention through awareness.

However, after review of Legislation CJA-04-14, the Navajo Nation government is not currently prepared to implement and collect taxes on junk food.

This legislation is an unfunded mandate, as there are no funds identified or appropriated to pay for the tax administration. Although the Office of the Navajo Tax Commission (ONTC) has a primary responsibility of collecting and regulating taxes, if imposed on the ONTC, this new responsibility would only increase the burden on the already underfunded tax office.

We also need to consider other applications, such as educating our retail sales taxpayers, communication with all retail outlets, change of tax forms and instructions, reprogramming cash registers and other consistent regulatory operations. Although the Nation currently has compliance officers, additional resources would be needed to ensure proper education, training and implantation that will be necessary to address questions which may arise with this legislation.

Furthermore, due diligent research in the areas of Navajo business and consumers is needed. It is important to consider the implication it would make on our local businesses, especially the small businesses. For that reason, Legislation CJA-05-14, being a concurrent legislation, will hinder our tax revenue if such taxes are eliminated. This proposed legislation (CJA-05-14) would decrease the tax revenue to Chapters, Judicial/Public Safety Facilities fund, Scholarships and Economic Development by a significant amount.

The Navajo Nation is not ready to implement the collection of taxes on junk food. However, it is important that we must explore other alternatives, such as education on health issues. It is for that reason, I directed our Tax Commission, Social Services and Health departments to come together and pull recommendations, so that the Nation may be better prepared if such legislation should arise again.

RESOLUTION OF THE
NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL22nd NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL - FOURTH YEAR, 2014

AN ACT

RELATING TO LAW AND ORDER, RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT,
BUDGET AND FINANCE, HEALTH, EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES,
AND NAABIK'ÍYÁTI'; AMENDING 24 N.N.C. §§605 ET SEQ. APPROVING
THE ELIMINATION OF THE SALES TAX ON FRESH FRUITS, FRESH
VEGETABLES, WATER, NUTS, SEEDS AND NUT BUTTERS

BE IT ENACTED:

Section 1. Findings

The Navajo Nation finds the following with respect to this resolution:

- A. According to Navajo Area Indian Health Service there are 25,000 Navajos with diabetes and another 75,000 are pre-diabetic. The Sweet Success data reports the following in 2011: 31% of Navajo pregnancies were complicated by diabetes; 89% of these women had pre-pregnancy Body Mass Index (BMI's) in the overweight or obese range. *Division of Diabetes Treatment and Prevention, Indian Health Service Headquarters. (2012) Unpublished; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Indian Health Service, Division of Diabetes Treatment and Prevention, Annual Diabetes Clinical Outcomes Audit (2012); Navajo Sweet Success Annual Audit (A Tracking Tool), 2012. (Unpublished.) Navajo Area Indian Health Service, St. Michaels, Arizona.*
- B. At an average, it costs over \$13,000 per person annually to treat diabetes. The cost for treating diabetes related complications can exceed \$100,000. *O'Connell JM, Wilson C, Manson SM, & Acton KJ. (2012). The Costs of Treating American Indian Adults with Diabetes within the Indian Health Service. Research and Practice. American Indian Journal of Public Health.*

- C. Overweight and obesity are significant risk factors for many debilitating diseases and conditions that include heart disease, hypertension, colon and breast cancer, arthritis, sleep apnea, respiratory problems, reproductive complications, and diabetes. Overweight is the most important risk factor for the development for Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus in youth. *Jacobson, MF (June 2012). Liquid Candy How Soft Drinks are Harming America's Health. Center for Science in the Public Health Interest. Washington, D.C. 2005.*
- D. Sugar sweetened beverages are the largest single source of added sweeteners in the United States diet. *Jacobson, MF (June 2012). Liquid Candy How Soft Drinks are Harming America's Health. Center for Science in the Public Health Interest. Washington, D.C. 2005.* Sweetened beverages contribute to obesity. Each 12 ounce soft drink per day consumed by children increases their odds of becoming obese by 60%. High soft drink consumption increases the risk of diabetes by 83% in women. www.foodpolitics.com.
- E. In 2009 the obesity rate within the eight service units of the Navajo Area Indian Health Service range from 23% to 60% and the overweight rate ranged from 17% to 39% for all age groups. Indian Health Service, Government Performance Results Act, (GPRA) Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) Report (07/1/08-06/30/09) Unpublished GPRA Report). Navajo Area Indian Health Service, St. Michaels, Arizona.
- F. The current Navajo Nation sales tax rate is five (5) percent. The Navajo Tax Commission resolution, TAX-12-221, amending the Sales Tax Regulations reflecting the five (5) percent sales tax rate is attached hereto as Exhibit A. The proposed amendment to 24 N.N.C. §605 updates the change made by the Navajo Tax Commission resolution, TAX-120-221.
- G. It is the intent of the Navajo Nation Council, by approving the elimination of a sales tax on fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, water, nuts, seeds, and nut butters, to diminish the human and economic costs of obesity and

diabetes on the Navajo Nation. The intent is to encourage the purchase and consumption of fresh fruits, fresh vegetables and water to prevent obesity, Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus and other such health conditions.

H. The Navajo Nation finds it is in the best interest of the Navajo Nation to amend 24 N.N.C. §§605 *et seq.* by hereby approving the elimination of the sales tax on fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, water, nuts, seeds, and nut butters.

Section 2. Elimination of the Sales Tax on Fresh Fruits, Fresh Vegetables, Water, Nuts, seeds, and Nut Butters

The Navajo Nation hereby approves the elimination of the sales tax on fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, water, nuts, seeds, and nut butters.

Section 3. Amendments to Title 24 of the Navajo Nation Code.

The Navajo Nation hereby amends the Navajo Nation Code, Title 24, §§ 605 *et seq.*, as follows:

NAVAJO NATION CODE ANNOTATED

TITLE 24. TAXATION

§ 605. Rate of tax

A. The tax imposed by this Chapter is imposed at a rate of not less than two percent (2%), nor more than six percent (6%), which shall be specifically established by regulations promulgated by the Navajo Tax Commission. This tax shall not be imposed on the purchase of fresh fruits, fresh vegetables and filtered bottled water including nuts, nut butters, and seeds. Until another rate is established, the rate shall be ~~four~~—five percent (4 5%) of the applicable gross receipts from all retail sales (~~-04~~ .05 x applicable gross receipts).

§ 607. Definitions

Subject to additional definitions (if any) contained in the subsequent sections of this Chapter, and unless the context otherwise requires, in this Chapter:

F. "Fresh fruits and fresh vegetables" means produce in fresh form generally considered as perishable fruits and vegetables, whether or not packed in ice or held in common or cold storage.

J. "Nut Butters" means ground nuts blended to make a paste or spread

K. "Nuts" means a fruit consisting of hard or tough shell around an edible kernel.

R. "Seeds" means the grains or ripened ovules of fruits, vegetables, or plants such as sunflower seeds, flax seeds, pumpkin seeds, mixed nuts without sugared candies.

W. "Water" means drinking water that has no added sugar or other artificial sweeteners. It includes artisan, fluoridated, mineral, purified, sparkling, spring, or sterile (distilled) water.

[Paragraphs to be re-lettered in alphabetical order to accommodate amendments.]

Section 3. Effective Date

The amendments enacted herein shall be effective pursuant to 2 N.N.C. §221.

Section 4. Codification

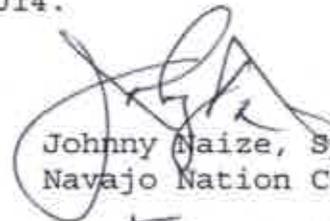
The provisions of the Act which amend or adopt new sections of the Navajo Nation Code shall be codified by the Office of Legislative Counsel. The Office of Legislative Counsel shall incorporate such amended provisions in the next codification of the Navajo Nation Code.

Section 5. Savings Clause

Should any portion of the amendment enacted herein be determined invalid by the Navajo Nation Supreme Court, or the District Court of the Navajo Nation, without appeal to the Navajo Nation Supreme Court, those portions not determined invalid shall remain the law of the Navajo Nation.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly considered by the Navajo Nation Council at a duly called meeting in Window Rock, Navajo Nation (Arizona) at which a quorum was present and that the same was passed by a vote of 17 in favor and 1 opposed, this 30th day of January 2014.


Johnny Naize, Speaker
Navajo Nation Council
Feb 04, 14
Date

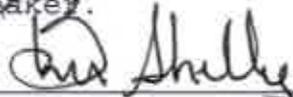
Motion: Honorable David L. Tom
Second: Honorable Katherine Benally

ACTION BY THE NAVAJO NATION PRESIDENT:

1. I hereby sign into law the foregoing legislation, pursuant to 2 N.N.C. § 1005 (C) (10), on this _____ day of _____ 2014.

Ben Shelly, President
Navajo Nation

2. I hereby veto the foregoing legislation, pursuant to 2 N.N.C. §1005 (C) (11), this 12th day of February 2014, for the reason(s) expressed in the attached letter to the Speaker.



Ben Shelly, President
Navajo Nation



MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Johnny Naize, Speaker
The 22nd Navajo Nation Council

FROM: 
Ben Shelly, *President*
THE NAVAJO NATION

DATE: February 12, 2014

SUBJECT: **Legislation CJA-04-14; Relating to Law and Order, Resources and Development, Budget and Finance, Health, Education and Human Services, and Naabik'iyáti'; Amending Title 24 of the Navajo Nation Code by Enacting the Healthy Diné Nation Act of 2013.**

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It is important to mention first, that, Vice President Jim and I fully support healthy living and is a priority in our administration. We believe it is important to draw awareness of responsibility to the Navajo Nation and to promote healthy living by reducing obesity and other diseases. We further believe that the Nation will become a national leader in community health-based prevention and intervention through awareness.

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Furthermore, due diligent research in the areas of Navajo business and consumers is needed. It is important to consider the implication it would make on our local businesses, especially the small businesses. For that reason, Legislation CJA-05-14, being a concurrent legislation, will hinder our tax revenue if such taxes are eliminated. This proposed legislation (CJA-05-14) would decrease the tax revenue to Chapters, Judicial/Public Safety Facilities fund, Scholarships and Economic Development by a significant amount.

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NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL22nd NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL - FOURTH YEAR, 2014

AN ACT

RELATING TO LAW AND ORDER, RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT,
BUDGET AND FINANCE, HEALTH, EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES,
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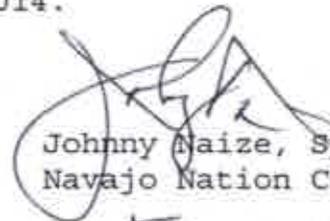
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CERTIFICATION

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Johnny Naize, Speaker
Navajo Nation Council
Feb 04, 14
Date

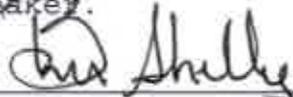
Motion: Honorable David L. Tom
Second: Honorable Katherine Benally

ACTION BY THE NAVAJO NATION PRESIDENT:

1. I hereby sign into law the foregoing legislation, pursuant to 2 N.N.C. § 1005 (C) (10), on this _____ day of _____ 2014.

Ben Shelly, President
Navajo Nation

2. I hereby veto the foregoing legislation, pursuant to 2 N.N.C. §1005 (C) (11), this 12th day of February 2014, for the reason(s) expressed in the attached letter to the Speaker.



Ben Shelly, President
Navajo Nation



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 12, 2014

MEDIA CONTACTS
Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253
Jolene Holgate | 928.308.4174
Chrissy Largo | 928.637.5603
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Resources and Development Committee approves report regarding Solid Waste Management on Navajo Nation

WINDOW ROCK – On Tuesday, the Resources and Development Committee approved a report regarding the Solid Waste Management Program on the Navajo Nation.

The SWMP was established under the Navajo Nation Division of Community Development to ensure that solid waste management is disposed of in a safe manner and that recycling options are available throughout the Nation, to provide a healthier environment.

Speaking on behalf of SWMP, Deputy Director of DCD said the primary purpose of the program is to develop a self-sustaining solid waste disposal system for the Nation’s 110 chapters. Yazzie stated that educating the chapters on how to handle their solid waste management has been a challenge.

“We’ve learned through the years that solid waste management is not a priority for chapters. Trash does not seem like a big issue at the chapter level,” stated Yazzie.

RDC member Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) expressed concern over the current status of projects involving the SWMP, adding that residents are illegally dumping ashes from their coal stoves due to a lack of dispensaries.

“I don’t know what this department does. It cannot even provide the simple job of providing at least one landfill in the Navajo Nation. Where is our solid waste program? Why can’t this program encourage the need for landfills within our community? It is our own department and structure that prohibits us from achieving these goals,” stated Delegate Tsosie.

Delegate Tsosie also pointed out that a large amount of money is spent off the Navajo Nation because people are forced to transfer their solid waste to the Gallup Solid Waste Division, located in Gallup, for a fee.

“We need a study to be conducted and a feasible place to analyze a system of landfills. These border towns are getting rich off us and our trash. We need a plan. How do we do it so that the chapters can make a business out of solid waste management?” asked RDC chair Council Delegate Katherine Benally (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta).

Delegate Tsosie recommended that the Navajo Nation emulate Gallup’s Recycling Center because they have an effective recycling center in place that recycles metal, newspapers, plastic, electronic waste and small appliances.

“We need some type of recycling center like this. We need to find a way to regionalize this service. Maybe have four chapters per transfer station. Once we set that into place, Navajo Nation can buy trucks that can haul trash away. We need to utilize Navajo dollars because we are spending a lot of money hauling trash to landfills outside the reservation,” stated Delegate Tsosie.

Yazzie noted that the SWMP is providing training and educational seminars to local communities about the development of transfer stations to regulate the Navajo Nation’s solid waste.

“The program promotes and provides chapter officials with workshops on developmental waste management plans pertaining to this issue. This is a continuous effort on part of the SWMP,” stated Yazzie.

Yazzie said that a recent effort to develop a landfill in the community of Rough Rock was unsuccessful due to land issues, adding that it would be a costly setup due to the operations and maintenance associated with operating a solid waste facility, which is estimated to be \$400,000.

“So, what is the plan for the Nation as far as SWMP is concerned? We have been asking for this plan, last year, and the year before. We need landfills and transfer stations. If it is in the best interest of the Navajo people, we will go with it,” stated Delegate Benally.

A request for a follow-up meeting between RDC and SWMP is scheduled to take place on April 1.

RDC members approved the report with a vote of 5-0.

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For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonacioncouncil.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 12, 2014

President Shelly vetoes junk food tax, cites regulatory concerns



Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly vetoed CJA-04-14, amending Title 24 of the Navajo Nation Code by enacting the Healthy Dine' Nation Act of 2013. He cited the lack of regulatory provisions as the main reason. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK—On Feb. 12, 2014, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly penned his signature to veto the Healthy Diné Nation Act of 2013 and cited concerns with funding, regulatory considerations that were not included in the legislation passed by the 22nd Navajo Nation Council during the winter session.

The Shelly-Jim administration has focused on wellness and has healthy lives as one of the five main pillars of focus since taking office. However, the lack of sufficient regulatory provisions limited the legislation's chance for approval.

After meeting with his general counsel and the Office of the Navajo Tax Commission, President Shelly said the legislation would create an unfunded mandate, as there were no funds identified or appropriated to pay for the tax administration. In addition, the new responsibilities would increase the burden on the already underfunded tax office.

"There is no impact analysis. What's the impact on the local businesses, especially the small businesses? Is this tax legislation going to become law without the Nation clearly understanding its impact on Navajo businesses," he questioned.

A Jan. 23 memo from Martin Ashley, executive director of ONTC, responded to questions posed by the Speaker Johnny Naize on Jan. 15 regarding the amount of funds collected from junk food items and the impact of the tax elimination on fresh fruits and vegetables.

"Office of the Navajo Tax Commission has not surveyed the retailers to determine how much of the sales is derived from junk food to answer the questions posed," the memo stated.

ONTC provided a schedule with estimated percentages of junk food revenues based on FY 2013 gross retail sales on the Navajo Nation, which totaled \$172.9 million. Included was a projection on the impact of

eliminating taxes on fresh fruits and vegetables.

The matrix on was based on 50 to 80 percent of the FY 2013 gross retail sales. Multiplied against the proposed 2 percent tax, the revenue projections varied from \$1.7 to \$2.7 million.

Conversely, the sales tax elimination on fruits, vegetables, water, nuts and other healthy foods were projected against 10 to 20 percent the FY 2013 gross retail sales and multiplied by the proposed 5 percent tax break.

The amounts varied from \$864,500 to \$1,729,000 in

consistent regulatory operations.

"This proposed tax will be imposed on the Navajo people, not the food and beverage industry or its distributors," President Shelly said. "The junk food importers will continue business as usual.

"The bottom line is that Navajo people will be taxed to pay for community wellness projects to address health concerns that are the trust responsibility of the federal government," he added.

Other considerations included questions if restaurants, fast food chains and mutton stands

"This proposed tax will be imposed on the Navajo people, not the food and beverage industry or its distributors."

decreased revenue to the Navajo Nation general fund. The cost estimates were based on 79 retail site locations on the Navajo Nation.

More research in these areas of concern need to addressed before the legislation is signed into law, President Shelly said, because Navajo businesses and consumers warrant due diligence on the matter.

Other considerations included the education of retail sales taxpayers on the legislation; communication with all retail outlets; changes in the tax forms and instructions; reprogramming cash registers to identify junk food taxable items; educating ONTC staff on compliance; and

would also be subject to junk food taxation.

The Navajo Nation is not ready for implementation of collecting taxes on junk food. President Shelly said we must explore other alternatives like focusing on education of health issues. Taxation is not the answer.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 12, 2014

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Law and Order Committee approves fund expenditure plan for fire safety services at Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort

WINDOW ROCK – On Monday, the Law and Order Committee approved a fund expenditure plan to allow the Navajo Nation Department of Fire and Rescue Services to provide fire, rescue, and pre-hospital care services at the Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort.

Legislation sponsor, LOC vice chair Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichii, Steamboat), said the NNFRS has entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise to provide safety services to the casino.

According to the MOA, the NNGE will deposit approximately \$6,000 on a monthly basis into an account established by the Office of the Controller, totaling approximately \$75,000 annually.

“The NNFRS is in need of resources for personnel, trainings, and updated fire safety equipment,” said Delegate Shepherd. “I am asking for the support of the [LOC] committee to approve this fund expenditure plan to meet the needs of the NNFRS.”

Navajo Nation Fire Department fire chief Larry Chee said that the NNFRS is also seeking external funding through grants and federal funding for fire safety programs.

“We are going after outside funding to aid us at the Twin Arrows Casino, and our ultimate goal is to have a new public safety [substation] constructed on site,” said Chee.

Speaking in support of the fund expenditure plan, LOC member Council Delegate Elmer Begay (Dilkon, Greasewood Springs, Indian Wells, Teesto, Whitecone) urged the NNFRS to seek additional funding for the general operations of the substation, and said it is important to educate the public regarding fire safety.

“After the fire station is in full operation, maybe the NNFRS can also provide fire safety training to the Navajo people at the Southwest Navajo Nation Fair, or even at other fairs throughout the Nation. We don’t have to limit it to just fairs, but as a regular training when the public requests for it,” added Delegate Begay.

The MOA will remain in effect as long as the NNGE conducts gaming at the site or until either party provides written notice of their intent to terminate the agreement.

At the end of the discussion, LOC members commended the NNFRS and fire chief for their continued advocacy of fire safety at the Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort, and stressed the importance of ensuring public safety at the highest level at the casino location, as well as the surrounding Navajo communities.

LOC members voted 3-0 to approve Legislation No. 0033-14.

The legislation now moves forward to the Budget and Finance Committee, who also serves as the final authority for the bill.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 11, 2014

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Health, Education, and Human Services Committee requests public comments regarding the Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board

WINDOW ROCK – In accordance with a directive issued on Sept. 26 by the Naabik'iyáti' Committee, the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee is requesting public comments from individuals regarding their experience with the Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board.

“Our committee needs feedback from students and researchers to determine how we can improve the Human Research Review Board,” said HEHSC chair Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels). “The feedback and recommendations that we receive will play a very instrumental role in improving the overall process and hopefully lead to increased research that will benefit our Nation.”

Established by the Navajo Nation Council in 1995, the HRRB is comprised of 15 members who are tasked with ensuring compliance with provisions outlined in Title 13 of the Navajo Nation Code, which are intended to protect against research that may be harmful to individuals and communities.

Applicants are required to follow a review and approval process and must obtain approval from the HRRB prior to conducting research within the boundaries of the Navajo Nation.

Delegate Hale also noted that students pursuing a masters or doctorate degree are often required to conduct research within a specified time period and in some cases, students have expressed concerns over delays in obtaining approval from the HRRB in a timely matter.

“We just need to concentrate on the student’s at hand in obtaining their research so that they can benefit the Navajo Nation. These students are on a budget. They have timelines and deadlines as well. Navajo Nation needs to consider a one-stop shop for these students to submit their requests and to get their research submitted, rather than the students jumping through hoops,” stated Delegate Hale.

The public comments will be compiled and made available for each council delegate to review and consider when addressing the overall structure of the HRRB.

For more information regarding the HRRB, please visit: <http://www.nnhrrb.navajo-nsn.gov/>.

The HEHSC requests that comments and recommendations be sent by e-mail to comments@navajo-nsn.gov or be mailed to the Office of Legislative Services at P.O. Box 3390 Window Rock, AZ 86515. Please submit comments no later than 5:00 p.m. on March 12, 2014.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 10, 2014

President Shelly orders Navajo Nation flags at half-staff

In honor and respect for the late Arthur J. Hubbard, Sr.



Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly ordered flags across the Nation to be flown at half-staff in honor of the late Arthur J. Hubbard, Sr. Hubbard was a former Navajo Code Talker and Arizona State Senator. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK—Today, the Navajo Nation mourns the loss of a living treasure, an American hero and a role model for young kids across the Nation. Arthur J. Hubbard, Sr. has passed and is no longer with us.

Hubbard stepped forward and volunteered to serve in the U.S. Marine Corps as a Navajo Code Talker as World War II plunged man against man and country against country from 1939 to 1945.

Beyond his military volunteerism, Hubbard also served in the Arizona Legislature from 1972 to 1984 as a senator and again worked for the Navajo people.

On Feb. 7, 2014, Hubbard

passed at the age of 102.

In honor and respect of his passing, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly ordered the Navajo Nation Flags across the Nation to be flown at half-staff.

“The Navajo Code Talkers are living treasures of the Navajo Nation. With the passing of Arthur Hubbard, Sr., we have lost a true American hero. The Nation offers our heartfelt condolences to the family during this time,” President Shelly said.

He noted that Hubbard lived a full life at 102 years and undoubtedly saw the growth of the Navajo Nation over the past century. President said Hubbard also witnessed the strength and

power of the Navajo language firsthand.

“Dine’ bizaad (the Navajo language) saved the world from tyranny and oppression. It is our language that will carry us forward into the next century and beyond,” President Shelly said. “We thank Arthur J. Hubbard, Sr. for his faithful military service and all other Code Talkers that protected our sovereignty and way of life.

“May the Holy People continue to look upon you and your families,” he added.

From 1942 to 1945, over 400 Navajo Code Talkers from the U.S. Marine Corps were trained as radiomen for service in the Pacific Theater during World War II. Their mission was not

declassified until 1968 and the enemy was never able to break the code of the Navajo Code Talkers.

In 2001, the original 29 Code Talkers were awarded Gold Congressional Medals and the remaining 225 Navajo Code Talkers received Silver Congressional Medals.

The flag of the Navajo Nation shall be flown at half-staff from sunrise on Feb. 10 until sunset on Feb. 14, 2014 at all public buildings and grounds across the Nation.



THE NAVAJO NATION

Proclamation

IN HONOR AND RECOGNITION OF THE LATE NAVAJO CODE TALKER
AND ARIZONA STATE SENATOR ARTHUR J. HUBBARD, SR.

WHEREAS, The Navajo Nation is greatly saddened by the loss of the late Arthur J. Hubbard, Sr., who served in the U.S. Marine Corps; and

WHEREAS, The late Arthur J. Hubbard, Sr. was a Navajo Code Talker who served the United States of America, the Navajo Nation, and U.S. Marine Corps with courage, honor and distinction; and

WHEREAS, The late Arthur J. Hubbard, Sr. served as a Private in the U.S. Marine Corps and was stationed in Camp Pendleton as one of four instructors for the Navajo Code Talkers from March to November 1945; and

WHEREAS, The late Arthur J. Hubbard, Sr. also served the Navajo people as a Senator in the Arizona Legislature from 1972 to 1984, contributing to the welfare, health and education of many Native American Tribes; and

WHEREAS, The Navajo Nation unites and offers prayers for his family and friends during this time of grief;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BEN SHELLY, President of the Navajo Nation, do hereby proclaim that all Navajo Nation flags shall be flown at half-staff in honor of the late Navajo Code Talker Arthur J. Hubbard, Sr., from sunrise on February 10 to sunset on February 14, 2014.

ORDERED THIS 10TH DAY OF FEBRUARY 2014

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ben Shelly", is written over a horizontal line.

Ben Shelly, President
THE NAVAJO NATION



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 10, 2014

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**Speaker Naize expresses condolences over the passing of
Navajo Code Talker and former Arizona State Senator Arthur J. Hubbard, Sr.**

WINDOW ROCK – On behalf of the 22nd Navajo Nation Council, Speaker Johnny Naize (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) extends his heartfelt condolences to the family of the late Arthur J. Hubbard, Sr., a former Arizona State Senator and Navajo Code Talker, who passed away on Feb. 7 at the age of 102.

“Our Nation and Diné Citizens were truly blessed to have had such a highly respected and distinguished warrior on our side that fought for our Nation, both as a Navajo Code Talker and as a state leader,” said Speaker Naize. “We will always honor and cherish his sacrifices to make our Nation stronger.”

Code Talker Hubbard was born on Jan. 23, 1912 in Topawa, Ariz., located on the Tohono O’odham Nation. He later answered the call to enlist with the U.S. Marine Corps and trained hundreds of men to transmit coded messages using the Navajo language during World War II.

In 1972, he became the first Native American to be elected to the Arizona State Legislature, serving as a State Senator for 12 years. Sen. Hubbard is recognized for his tremendous contributions in areas such as welfare, education, and health care which benefited many people across the Navajo Nation and the State of Arizona.

Code Talker Hubbard also served as a water rights advisor to the Tohono O’odham Nation, a Navajo culture and language instructor at Arizona State University, and played an instrumental role in establishing Diné College, the first college established within the Navajo Nation.

“My sincerest sympathies go out to the family of Code Talker Arthur Hubbard, Sr., an honorable and kindhearted person who served our country, state, and the Navajo Nation with great integrity,” Speaker Naize said.

President Ben Shelly is expected to order the Navajo Nation flag to be flown at half-staff in honor of Code Talker Hubbard.

Funeral services will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 11 at Pinnacle Presbyterian Church in Scottsdale, Ariz. Burial service will take place at 1:00 p.m. at the Cave Creek National Cemetery.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 6, 2014

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Resources and Development Committee approves supplemental funding for Tsé Si áni, Chichiltah and Chilchinbeto Chapter Houses

WINDOW ROCK – On Tuesday, the Resources and Development Committee approved Legislation No. 0027-14, which seeks supplemental funding from the Navajo Nation’s Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance in the amount of \$90,000 for Tsé Si áni Chapter for roof repairs, \$600,000 for Chichiltah Chapter for renovations, and \$300,000 for Chilchinbeto Chapter for renovations, totaling approximately \$990,000.

RDC chair Council Delegate Katherine Benally (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) emphasized that a total of eight communities throughout the Navajo Nation do not have a chapter house.

“We don’t have a building there and they haven’t had a building in over ten years. I believe that it is the government’s responsibility to provide the facility for the community,” stated Delegate Benally, in reference to the Chilchinbeto community.

The original Chilchinbeto Chapter House has reached its full depreciation and is over 30 years old. Currently, the Chilchinbeto Chapter conducts its business out of a temporary modular home that was deemed unfit for occupancy, according to the Navajo Nation Office of Environmental Health.

Delegate Benally proposed an amendment to change the word “renovation” to “planning and design” of a new facility to house the Chilchinbeto Chapter House.

“This really isn’t for renovation. This is for planning and designing of a new building. I do not want [the Office of Management and Budget] to say, ‘it’s for renovation but over here, you are asking for a contract for architectural work,’ I’m just making sure all our bases are covered,” stated Delegate Benally.

RDC members approved the amendment with a vote of 3-0.

The urgency of the matter was reiterated by legislation co-sponsor Council Delegate Lorenzo Curley (Houck, Klagetoh, Nahata Dziil, Tsé Si áni, Wide Ruins) who noted that the Tsé Si áni Chapter is currently dealing with roof leaks caused by rain and snow build up.

The Tsé Si áni Chapter House was constructed in 1966 and since then, the roof has become ineffective and now requires removal and replacement, according to a memo dated Sept. 16, 2013, from chapter manager Laura Lee Yazzie to Delegate Curley.

“Now that this legislation has gone through the SAS process, let’s agree on it to be forwarded to the Budget and Finance Committee for approval. I graciously plead for a favorable vote to secure funds for this meaningful project,” stated Delegate Curley.

Documents contained in the legislation packet also note that the Chichiltah Chapter House is temporarily closed due to unforeseen problems with water drainage and electrical maintenance.

According to a memo dated Feb. 3 `from the Office of the Controller, the UUFB currently has approximately \$30 million remaining.

RDC members approved the legislation with a vote of 3-0.

Legislation No. 0027-14 now moves onto the Budget and Finance Committee for consideration. The Navajo Nation Council serves as the final authority for the legislation.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 5, 2014

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**Health, Education, and Human Services
Committee receives report on Little Singer Community School**

LEUPP, Ariz. – On Monday, the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee received a report on the proposed planning and design phase of a new facility that will house the Little Singer Community School, which would replace the existing school in Birdsprings, Ariz.

Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi Tó'ii), who represents the community of Birdsprings, said he has advocated for the construction of the new school and expressed his concerns regarding the funding for the project.

“Our community wants to help because that is our role, to support the education of the children in our community,” said Delegate Phelps. “Currently, we are projecting that the construction project itself will cost about \$18 million.”

According to project manager Jeremiah LeMesa, construction is nearing the “shovel ready” stage, and is anticipating a grant from the Bureau of Indian Education for the design phase, which is based on a priority basis.

“The BIE has allocated \$950,000 to aid in the design [phase] of three tribal schools—two here on the Navajo reservation [Birdsprings and Cove, AZ], and one in [the state of] Maine,” said LaMesa. “We have completed the planning phase of the school and we are ready to begin the design phase.”

The BIE established a priority listing for the three schools, and is based on the project-readiness of each respective school. The funds will be awarded to the schools after funding for construction is fully obtained.

LaMesa also noted that funding from the BIE grant would be divided equally between the three schools, however, the community has advocated for Little Singer Community School to receive two-thirds, or approximately \$600,000 of the potential funding. Currently, the planning phase for the proposed school in the community of Cove has yet to be completed, added LaMesa.

EHSC chair Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels) expressed his support for the proposed construction and suggested that the committee begin lobbying efforts for the approval of the BIE grant funding in Washington, D.C. in March.

“We will be meeting with Congressional leaders soon, so we need to go through the necessary channels to begin lobbying for the BIE funds, as well as to amend the priority listing to put Little Singer at the top of the list,” said Delegate Hale.

At the conclusion of the discussion, EHSC members agreed to a deadline to collect the necessary information needed to begin lobbying for BIE funds for the design phase of the school, and to amend the BIE priority listing. The deadline is set for Feb. 24.

EHSC members voted 4-0 to accept the report.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 4, 2014

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Budget and Finance Committee approves cross-commission agreement with Coconino County for the Twin Arrows region

WINDOW ROCK – The Budget and Finance Committee voted 5-0 on Tuesday to approve a cross-commission agreement between the Navajo Nation and Coconino County to allow for greater public safety measures through increased law enforcement presence at the Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort, located near Interstate-40, approximately 24-miles east of Flagstaff, Ariz.

The intergovernmental agreement will allow the Coconino County Sheriff’s Department to enforce Navajo Nation criminal and traffic laws within the 405-acre parcel of land that encompasses the Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort, which lies within Coconino County.

In his presentation to fellow BFC members, co-sponsor of the legislation Council Delegate Jonathan Nez (Shonto, Navajo Mountain, Oljato, Ts’ah Bii Kin) said the agreement is very similar to other cross-commission agreements that the Nation has entered into with McKinley County, San Juan County in New Mexico, Navajo County, San Juan County in Utah, and with Arizona’s Department of Public Safety.

Delegate Nez added that he hopes the agreement will soon be expanded to include the rest of the Nation’s land that lies within the Coconino County boundaries.

“I am hoping that this will be the next step to cross-commissioning the entire county,” said Delegate Nez. “All of the other agreements have been approved for the entire county. So I’m hoping this will be the springboard for making that happen.”

Coconino County Supervisor, Lena Fowler represented the county at the committee meeting and extended her appreciation to the Navajo Nation Department of Justice, the Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise, and the Office of the President and Vice President.

“The [Coconino County] Board of Supervisors has approved the agreement and we look forward to implementing it,” Supervisor Fowler stated.

Similar to requirements under previous cross commission agreements, Coconino County Sheriff’s Officers will be required to complete a 16-hour training course prior to receiving a “mutual aid law enforcement” certification card to allow the officers to enforce laws on the “Twin Arrows parcel.”

The legislation was first considered by the Law and Order Committee on Monday, which referred it to the Budget and Finance Committee with a “do pass” recommendation with no amendments.

Following the BFC meeting on Tuesday, legislation prime sponsor Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi To ii) said the legislation will provide a mechanism for law enforcement officials to handle situations involving “non-Indians” and also allows for increased public safety for all patrons of the casino, adding that the agreement is only in place for 18 months with the option to renew.

BFC members voted 5-0 to approve Legislation No. 0019-14. The Budget and Finance Committee serves as the final authority for the legislation.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 4, 2012

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Law and Order Committee receives report from the Ethics and Rules Office

WINDOW ROCK – On Monday, the Law and Order Committee approved a report by the Navajo Nation Ethics and Rules Office, regarding the misuse of tribal purchase cards. Much of Monday’s discussion centered on the statute of limitations outlined in the Nation’s ethics code.

Currently in subsection 3769 of Title II of the Navajo Ethics in Government Law, it states “no action shall be brought under this chapter four years after cause of action has accrued,” in regards to the statute of limitation. In other words, by law, cases can go back only four years “based on discovery.”

LOC member Council Delegate Russell Begaye (Shiprock) expressed his support to change the law by stating that the statute of limitations should begin at the “point of discovery.”

“We need to modify and reword this legislation because there is a lot of P-card abuse that is happening. Right now, there are neither policies nor procedures in place. Transactions are not being reported and documentation from different departments do keep track of some records but not all transactions are recorded. Some departments even refuse to give us their records, so we have to issue subpoenas,” stated executive director of the Ethics and Rules Office, Vernon Roanhorse.

Roanhorse has worked with the Ethics and Rules Office for over a year and said his staff has been working on backlogged cases with statute of limitations dating back to 2009.

“Our biggest obstacle is trying to get documentation from these departments. They keep some of their records but not all the records that they should. This is the number one reason why we aren’t able to get these cases fully investigated,” stated Roanhorse.

Currently, the Ethics and Rules Office is investigating 133 active cases with only two investigators for the entire Navajo Nation, according to Roanhorse.

Delegate Begaye advocated to make the “statute of limitation” retroactive.

“Give us the part of the law that we need to change to make that happen because just making that change is significant. If you used the P-cards in a way that was disallowable in the past, then you should be held accountable for it,” stated Delegate Begaye.

According to Roanhorse, there have also been some cases in which employees are being forced to sign documents that do not justify the documentation of transactions.

“A lot of these transactions have no supporting documents which leave us to believe that they are fraudulently done,” said Roanhorse.

“We are working with the IRS as well. We may be the first Indian tribe to start intercepting tax returns. The IRS is really working with us because a lot of chapter houses are not reporting their income to the IRS. They are available and they are offering training but several of these chapter houses are not reaching out for help,” added Roanhorse.

LOC members accepted the report with a vote of 2-0.

Last week, Council Delegate Jonathan Nez (Shonto, Navajo Mountain, Oljato, Ts’ah Bii Kin) introduced Legislation No. 0028-14, seeking approval of purchase card policies and procedures.

Legislation No. 0028-14 is currently in the five-day comment period and will be available for committee action on Feb. 6.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 4, 2014

President Shelly reports before Committee on Compacts

Urges Legislature to approve 2014 Navajo Nation Gaming Compact



Top, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly reports before the Committee on Compacts for the second time in 2014 on Jan. 31. He urged the committee to pass the Navajo Nation Gaming Compact before the end of the Legislative Session. Below, President Shelly speaks to Sen. John Pinto. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

For the second time in as many weeks, President Ben Shelly presented the Navajo Nation Gaming Compact to the N.M. Legislature Committee on Compacts at the Roundhouse on Jan. 31, 2014.

President Shelly said it was important for the Committee on Compacts to be well informed regarding the Navajo Nation

Gaming Compact because their decision would have a major impact on the tribal economy and jobs.

He spoke about the geographic restrictions raised by other tribal leaders at the first meeting a week earlier.

“At the last committee hearing, several tribal leaders raised concerns on the future locations for the Navajo Nation’s

gaming facilities along the I-40 corridor and Albuquerque area,” President Shelly said. “While I respect the recommendations from the other tribes, the Navajo Nation will not agree to any geographic restriction.”

He said the provision infringed upon Navajo sovereignty and cited three reasons why the Nation will not agree to the geographic restriction provision.

It is the Navajo Nation’s inherent right to develop and pursue any economic venture on our tribal trust lands, he said.

President Shelly said with over 50 percent unemployment on the Nation, any restriction on tribal economic development is not only unfair, but also immoral.

He noted that the geographic restrictions are in violation of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act and that the Department of the Interior would not approve such a provision.

Case in point is the August 2013 opinion from DOI regarding the Menominee Tribe, which stated that IGRA does not grant an affirmative right for any nearby tribes to be free from economic competition.

In response to comments that gaming facilities should compete with outside gaming industries such as Las Vegas, President Shelly said the Navajo Nation Gaming Compact does adopt additional industry standards that meet the Nation’s needs.

The two main provisions in the industry standards would allow the Nation’s gaming facilities to be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week; and that food and

drinks would be available at a reduced rate under the player’s club program.

The third issue raised by President Shelly was in regard to the timeline for the approval of the gaming compact.

“During the last hearing, a tribal leader requested that the Navajo Nation Gaming Compact be tabled. We cannot endure further delay. We are on a very strict timeline to extend the term of the compact before it expires in 2015,” President Shelly said.

Upon approval by the Committee on Compacts, the Navajo Nation Gaming Compact would still need to be moved to the floor of the House and Senate for vote. After the N.M. Legislature’s approval, the compact would be sent to DOI for final approval in accordance with IGRA.

“Considering that this legislative session ends in approximately 20 days, it does not give us much time,” President Shelly said. “I respectfully request that this committee no longer delay and act on this matter.”

The first Committee on Compacts meeting convened on Jan. 22, and was scheduled as an education meeting focused on public comments. During that round of discussions, many pueblo leaders aired their grievances about the Navajo Nation Gaming Compact.

The common thread through all the public comments was the Navajo Nation’s five casinos and language on the population measure for the number of

casinos a tribe could have.

During both hearings, President Shelly stressed the importance of the gaming compact to the Navajo Nation and reminded the Committee on Compacts that they approved and moved the 2013 compact to the floor by a vote of 11-4 on March 11, 2013.

“The Navajo Nation worked tirelessly on the 2013 gaming compact and we were very disappointed that it was not placed on the Senate floor for a vote,” President Shelly said.

After the 2013 legislative session, the Nation met with

amended Section 9B by stipulating that the state will continue to have a remedy on any payment claims of the 2001 compact, as long as the state provides notice within two years after the effective date of the gaming compact.

“We are neighbors and we need to foster the government-to-government relationship between the State of New Mexico and the Nation,” President Shelly said. “As two sovereign and independent governments, we must be respectful to the positions, concerns and struggles

“We are neighbors and we need to foster the government-to-government relationship between the State of New Mexico and the Navajo Nation.”

DOI to discuss the 2013 compact. Under provisions in IGRA, DOI is the final authority for approval of tribal state gaming compacts.

From those discussions with DOI and Interim Legislative Committees, free play, Class II gaming and the condition that the Nation will have to pay any debts to the state before the execution of the gaming compact were all raised as issues.

“Taking all of these factors into account, the Navajo Nation made the decision to request amendments to address the concerns of the Department of the Interior and the State Legislature,” he said.

Amendments to the 2014 compact either removed or amended the provisions of those three issues. Specifically, the free play formula was removed and the accounting methods of free play will be conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and the National Indian Gaming Commission Standards.

Amendments to the 2014 compact also removed any reference to Class II gaming.

Finally, the 2014 compact

that the Nation and New Mexico face.

“The Navajo Nation has given its best good faith efforts to negotiate and present a compact to the state that is in the best interest for our Navajo people, New Mexicans and economic development,” he added.

The third and final meeting of Committee on Compacts will take place on Feb. 5, beginning at 10 a.m. in Room 322 of the State Capitol in Santa Fe, N.M. to consider and take action the Navajo Nation Gaming Compact.

The N.M. Legislative Session ends at noon on Feb. 20, 2014.



President Shelly and Jessica Hernandez, assistant chief of staff and general counsel for Gov. Susana Martinez, listen to concerns from the Committee on Compacts regarding the Navajo Nation Gaming Compact on Jan. 31, 2014. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



On Jan. 22, 2014, President Shelly first reported before the Committee on Compacts and said the Navajo Nation worked tirelessly on the gaming compact in 2013, only to be disappointed when it was not placed on the floor for vote. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Representative George K. Munoz (D-Bernallilo) said the Navajo Nation worked in good faith and negotiated the terms of the compact with the state and the pueblos and should be moved forward for vote. (Photo by Rick Abasta)