



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 13, 2012

MEDIA CONTACTS
Jerome Clark | 928.637.5603
Carmenlita Chief | 928.255.3428
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Law and Order Committee receives status updates on Navajo law enforcement cross-commissions agreements

UPPER FRUITLAND, N.M. – The Law and Order Committee on July 9 learned the status of seven individual cross-commissions agreements in process between the Navajo Nation and various law enforcement entities in Arizona, New Mexico and Utah.

Captain Ivan Tsosie from the Shiprock police district went before the committee, delivering a written report concerning the pending agreements on behalf of the Navajo Nation Department of Justice.

DOJ senior staff attorney, Regina Holyan, drafted the report, addressing it to LOC chairperson, Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau).

The law enforcement agencies mentioned in the report included the Arizona Department of Public Safety, New Mexico Department of Public Safety, City of Gallup, Navajo County (Arizona), San Juan County (Utah), and Bernalillo and Cibola counties in New Mexico.

Holyan reported that a memorandum of agreement with the Arizona DPS was conducted for fifty (50) AZDPS officers to be cross-commissioned in June.

Arizona DPS officers are expected to receive their Navajo commission cards and take an oath of office in Window Rock by the end of July. The officers will then “be duly commissioned to enforce traffic and criminal laws in the Arizona portion of the Navajo Nation,” Holyan wrote.

Since the agreement with Navajo County affected portions of Council Delegate Elmer P. Begay’s (Dilkon, Greasewood Springs, Indian Wells, Teesto, Whitecone) represented area, he asked for confirmation from Capt. Tsosie on whether the process was moving forward.

Since Navajo County Sheriff K.C. Clark last went before the LOC on March 5, Capt. Tsosie stated that the county still had concerns with insurance and liability provisions in the agreement and that DOJ was waiting to hear from the county to schedule a meeting to resolve the concerns.

Delegate Yazzie issued a directive to have all parties – officials from DOJ, Navajo County, and the county’s insurance group – reconvene to work on getting the proposed MOA out of its standstill.

As for the agreement with Bernalillo County, Capt. Tsosie reported that the sheriff has yet to request for a cross-commissions application from the nation.

He also reported there has been no further information from either the county or Tohajiilee Chapter since the beginning of July to move forward.

The Tohajiilee Chapter had requested the cross-commissioning with Bernalillo County, and last month involved Council Delegate Katherine Benally (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) to assist in the matter.

Regarding the New Mexico DPS agreement, the law enforcement agency is now proceeding with its official review and approval process. Once New Mexico DPS submits a signed MOA to the nation, DOJ will proceed with its official review and approval process, Holyan wrote.

The formation of the Cibola County agreement was requested by Ramah Chapter. As for its status, it was reported that DOJ is awaiting news from Cibola County Sheriff Johnny Valdez on whether New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez has signed the agreement.

“As soon as the New Mexico governor signs the MOA, Sheriff Valdez should forward the MOA to us for the Nation’s official review and approval,” Holyan stated.

In regard to the San Juan County agreement, DOJ reported that the “Navajo Department of Public Safety and San Juan County Sheriff Rick Eldridge are working out the proposed MOA provision concerning the report forms that Utah deputies and Navajo officers will use when enforcing the other agency’s traffic and criminal laws.”

When the two entities are satisfied with the new provision, the MOA will undergo official review and approval by the San Juan County.

Lastly, DOJ reports it is now in receipt of a copy of the proposed MOA between the City of Gallup and the Navajo Nation, and is reviewing the document.

At the conclusion of the status report, Delegate Yazzie rallied the committee to work with greater tenacity to solve issues that county officials have with their respective agreements.

###

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