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## **Council Delegate Jonathan Nez sponsored NAHASDA block grant funding legislation, Naa’bik’iyati’ Committee accepted**

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Legislation 0094-12, sponsored by Council Delegate Jonathan Nez (Shonto, Navajo Mountain, Oljato, Ts’ah Bii Kin), was considered and passed by the Naa’bik’iyati’ Committee on May 24 with a vote of thirteen (13) supporting and two (2) opposing.

The legislation dealt with “...endorsing and supporting the Fiscal Year 2012 Navajo Nation Housing Plan for the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-determination Act of 1996 (NAHASDA) Indian Housing Block Grant Funding.”

A resolution of the Board of Commissioners of the Navajo Housing Authority (NHA) stated that it requested “...the endorsement and support of the appropriate Standing Committee of the 22nd Navajo Nation Council of the Fiscal Year 2012 Indian Housing Plan for the Navajo Nation and to authorizes the submission of the Navajo Nation Housing Plan by the Navajo Housing Authority on behalf of the Navajo Nation.”

The Resources and Development Committee was the only oversight committee on the housing plan with the Naa’bik’iyati’ Committee as the final authority.

Legislation 0094-12 was previously discussed in a Naa’bik’iyati’ Committee on March 14, during which the committee gave the directive, with a vote of eleven (11) supporting and four (4) opposing, to first receive a report from NHA and representatives from the Denver HUD Office and the Southwest HUD Office before a decision was reached.

In their March 29 report to the Naa’bik’iyati Committee, NHA covered monitoring, oversight, compliance, fiscal management, strategic expenditure, management initiatives, administrative changes, and congressional appropriations.

The report provided an opportunity for Council Delegates to express the housing concerns and housing needs of the communities they represent.

Housing concerns expressed by Council Delegates on behalf of the communities they represent included the following: a review of occupancy policies, homes for veterans, filling vacant homes, high rent issues for low income families, home availability for higher income families, and Bennett Freeze rehabilitation.

“The Navajo Housing Authority revised its Indian Housing Plan by reallocating \$43.6 million from previous years to expand affordable housing activities to include: planning for the former Bennett Freeze area; a long term care center in Tuba City; elderly group homes in the Tsaile/Wheatfields and Kaibeto Chapters; a Veterans Home in Chinle; a Youth Center at Shonto; and additional housing units in South Shiprock Housing,” commented Council Delegate Jonathan Nez.

The \$43.6 million amounts are as follows: \$1 million is allocated for the former Bennett Freeze Area; \$4.5 million to the Tuba City Regional Health Care Corp for a long term care center; \$3.5

million to the Tsaile/Wheatfields elderly group home; \$6.6 million for the Kaibeto elderly group home; \$14 million for veteran homes; \$5.3 million for a Shonto youth center; and \$8 million for south Shiprock housing.

An additional \$46.3 million was also allocated for line items such as development and modernization, which is a grand total of \$90 million for the entire housing plan.

Fourteen council delegates signed onto the legislation as cosponsors. The 2012 Indian Housing Plan must now be submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development no later than July 18.

“Our Navajo people deserve nothing less than safe, descent, and affordable housing and this legislation moves us in that direction,” Speaker Johnny Naize commented.

Council Delegate Nez thanked the committee for their vote of approval, NHA employees for their hard work, and the NHA Board of Commissions for their efforts. Council Delegate Nez also expressed his appreciation on behalf of Diné communities impacted by the passage of the housing plan.

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