



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Naabik'iyáti Committee approves IGA between the Navajo Nation and the State of Arizona for U.S. Highway 89 maintenance**

**STANDING ROCK, N.M.** – Last Thursday, Naabik'iyáti Committee members convened at the Standing Rock Chapter House, located approximately 12 miles west of Crownpoint, NM, as part of committee's initiative to "take the government out to the people," said Speaker Johnny Naize (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood).

"We are happy to have you all with us today, and we are even more happy to see so many of you take part in your government," said Speaker Naize to the audience of approximately 50 people who attended the first in a series of Naabik'iyáti Committee meetings that will be held in chapter houses across the Navajo Nation.

Prior to the start of the meeting, committee members spent over an hour listening to concerns and suggestions from community members.

During the course of the meeting, Naabik'iyáti Committee members approved Legislation No. 0132-13, an intergovernmental agreement between the Navajo Nation and the State of Arizona which establishes the maintenance responsibilities of the Navajo Nation for several construction projects on U.S. Highway 89 in Cameron, Ariz.

The Arizona Department of Transportation will design and construct a four-lane urban section on U.S. 89 through Cameron from SR 64 to Little Colorado River that includes a new roundabout, new northbound roadway, 16 foot-wide raised median, 8 foot-wide sidewalks, four pedestrian underpasses, and two bridges over the LCR.

Upon completion of the \$35 million two-phased project, legislation sponsor Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi To ii), explained that the Navajo Division of Transportation will be responsible for sweeping and cleaning sidewalks and underpasses, minor sidewalk repairs, removal of weeds and snow, and the maintenance and repair of lighting fixtures.

Delegate Phelps added that the Cameron Chapter, the District III Council of the Western Navajo Agency, the Western Navajo Agency Council, and the Western Navajo Agency Roads Committee have passed resolutions in support of the projects and maintenance responsibilities.

NDOT principal civil engineer Darryl Bradley said the Naabik'iyáti Committee's approval would be the last step necessary before ADOT can advertise the projects and begin construction.

Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) expressed concern over language in the agreement stating that, “any claim or dispute arising hereunder submitted to binding arbitration shall be governed by the laws of the State of Arizona.”

“If there’s any litigation, we’re agreeing to throw out Navajo Nation laws,” said Delegate Tsosie. “Subjecting ourselves to Arizona laws is an item of concern.”

Delegate Tsosie, a member of the Resources and Development Committee, said the RDC tabled the legislation due to this concern, prior to RDC’s approval on May 22. However, he also stated that he understands that the projects also promote economic development for the community of Cameron.

Responding to a concern by Council Delegate Mel Begay (Coyote Canyon, Mexican Springs, Naschitti, Tohatchi, Bahastl’a’a’) regarding the question of who would fund the maintenance, Bradley stated that in the past, the Cameron Chapter had agreed to fund the maintenance.

However, chapters are unable to enter into an IGA with the state, Bradley said.

Bradley added that NDOT is receiving more requests for similar projects for communities throughout the Nation, and many have expressed consent to fund the maintenance and upkeep.

At the conclusion of the one-hour discussion, Naabik’iyátí Committee members voted 10-0 to approve Legislation No. 0132-13.

Upcoming Naabik’iyátí Committee meetings are tentatively scheduled to take place in Dilkon, Tuba City, and Shiprock.

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