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**Resources and Development Committee approves
legislation to take an 85 acres of land in Tse Bonito into Trust**

TOHAJIILEE, N.M. – On Thursday, the Resources and Development Committee approved Legislation No. 0255-13 which proposes to sign the general warranty deed for 85 acres of land, in Tse Bonito to the United States to be held in trust for the Navajo Nation, pursuant to P.L. 93-531 and P.L. 96-305.

“This legislation is very simple, this property is another piece of land that the Navajo Division of Transportation was able to obtain through a land exchange with the state of New Mexico,” said legislation sponsor Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi To ii). “We would like to take this land into trust and lease it to NDOT.”

Delegate Phelps further explained that the land would be taken into trust through a provision of the Navajo-Hopi Settlement Act. According to the Act, the lands taken into trust shall be used solely for the benefit of Navajo families residing on Hopi-partitioned lands.

“Any proceeds that we receive from the lease will be directed to the relocatee funds,” said Delegate Phelps. “The Navajo-Hopi Land Commission is working to develop a fund management plan for the leasing revenue.”

NDOT division director Paulson Chaco explained that leasing the land to NDOT would create revenue for the relocatee fund as well as save NDOT rental fees.

“If we were to lease this land from the space, we would have to make a bid close to \$10 million along with state fees and taxes,” said Chaco. “This is a deal we are both comfortable with. The funds will be coming from our budget.”

Following the presentation, RDC member Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) asked if the Nation was still capable of taking an additional 9,000 acres into trust under the NHSA.

Delegate Phelps explained that the NHLC was exploring various properties to acquire and that NHLC members also determined that the NHSA process was the most feasible way to place the land into trust.

“It is my understanding that Congress is proposing to do away with the Office of Navajo Hopi Indian Relocation. We need to discuss how to take the remaining 9,000 acres into trust,” said

Delegate Tsosie. "If they do away with the ONHIR office, the Navajo Hopi Settlement Act will be an empty law. Without the office we will not have this process."

Prior to voting on the main motion, Delegate Phelps added that the NHLC is working tediously to inform members of Congress that the ONHIR is a necessary tool for the Navajo Nation, and that there is still work to be done to assist relocatees.

The RDC approved Legislation No. 0255-13 with a vote of 4-0.

Legislation No. 0255-13 is now goes on to the Naabik'iyáti' Committee for final consideration.

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