



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Law and Order Committee receives report from Alamo Resources Committee

ALAMO, N.M. – The Law and Order Committee on Wednesday, received a report from the Alamo Resources Committee regarding public safety concerns within the community.

Earl Apachito, vice president for the Alamo Chapter, said that his community had three main concerns that has made it difficult to ensure public safety in his community: cross-commissioning agreements/training with New Mexico law enforcement, lack of Navajo Nation police coverage in Alamo, and a detention facility to house offenders.

ARC is comprised of members from the Alamo School Board, Navajo Nation Police, Socorro County Sheriffs Office, social services, prevention programs, and community members. ARC aims to address matters in the Alamo community through the cooperation of school, law enforcement, health, and social service entities.

“The Alamo Resources Committee meets about twice a month, or when we find available time to discuss issues concerning our committee,” said Apachito. “Right now our biggest concern is public safety emergencies and the lack of law enforcement presence.”

In support of the ARC, Council Delegate George Apachito (Alamo, Ramah, Tohajiilee) explained to his LOC colleagues the frustration Alamo community members have expressed to him and the committee.

“As anyone can see, Alamo is in a very remote area where emergency response can take hours, and I believe it would be beneficial for this community to have a [Navajo] police substation,” said Delegate Apachito. “Right now, Crownpoint police is assigned to our community and they are hours away.”

Delegate Apachito said the lack of police coverage could also be resolved through the implementation of cross-commissioning agreements between the Navajo Nation, the State of New Mexico, and Socorro County. He also noted that currently, only one Navajo police officer patrols Alamo on an extremely limited basis, and response time can take 6-8 hours if they are dispatched to Alamo.

LOC chair Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churckrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) informed the committee that cross-commissioning agreements between the Nation and New Mexico are in place, and it is only a matter of training Navajo, state, and county police officers.

Delegate Yazzie suggested stationing one police officer full-time in the Alamo community, and to provide rent-free housing to the officer.

“I have stated this challenge to all chapters before, and that is to set aside a salary in their budgets to hire a full-time police officer that would be dedicated to that specific area, so there is coverage in the community at all times,” said Delegate Yazzie. “I encourage all chapters to try and implement this.”

LOC member Council Delegate Duane Tsinigine (Bodaway/Gap, Coppermine, K’ai’bii’tó, LeChee, Tonalea/Red Lake) also suggested that the courthouse might be able to spare some office space for an officer to use.

“I would imagine the new courthouse in Alamo can provide a police sub-office until a justice center is built here, but in the meantime, the community needs to compromise soon to find a resolution for an officer,” said Delegate Tsinigine.

Delegate Tsinigine stated that Alamo is on the capital projects priority listing for a justice center, and the list can be amended in the future. Currently, Alamo is number nine on the list of ten proposed justice centers to be built on the Navajo Nation.

“If Alamo is able to show they are shovel-ready, the community can have the opportunity to move up on the list, but right now there are other communities that have approved land areas, designs, have obtained grants, and are ready to begin construction,” said Delegate Tsinigine.

At the end of the discussion, Delegate Yazzie encouraged the ARC to begin planning for their justice center, and requested to meet with them soon to discuss further cross-commissioning issues and obtaining additional law enforcement coverage for Alamo.

The LOC is scheduled to meet with the ARC on Feb. 24.

LOC members voted 2-0 to accept the report.

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