



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Naabik'iyátí' Committee enables Navajo communities to pursue federal assistance through the Promise Zones initiative**

**WINDOW ROCK** – The Naabik'iyátí' Committee on Thursday voted 12-1 to approve Legislation No. 0073-14, authorizing the submittal of one or more applications to the U.S. Department of Agriculture to have one or more regions on the Navajo Nation selected as Promise Zone(s), including but not limited to the Former Bennett Freeze Area and the Navajo Partitioned Lands.

The Promise Zones initiative was announced by President Barack Obama in January 2013, in an effort to revitalize high-poverty communities across the country. The initiative allows the federal government to partner with and invest in high-poverty urban, rural, and tribal communities to create jobs, increase economic activity, improve educational opportunities, leverage private investment, and reduce violent crime.

The Naabik'iyátí' Committee serves as the final authority for the legislation, which also authorizes Council Delegates, the Navajo Nation President and Vice President, and their designees to advocate for one or more areas to be designated as Promise Zone(s).

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi To ii) said the initiative has the potential to benefit many communities throughout the Navajo Nation, adding that President Ben Shelly has assigned staff to assist with the development of applications and to discuss the matter with Navajo communities.

“This is an opportunity that should be appealing to all of us to help our communities,” said Delegate Phelps, who also encouraged his committee colleagues to submit applications on behalf of their respective communities.

The federal initiative will designate a total of 20 Promise Zones across the U.S. by 2017. The first round of applications were submitted in November of 2013 and in January, the Obama administration designated five Promise Zones, which included the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

Selected designees receive benefits which include increased access to proven tools to help carry out strategies, preference for certain competitive federal programs, and technical assistance to make the most of funding that is already available.

During the discussion, committee members also approved an amendment proposed by Council Delegate Lorenzo Curley (Houck, Klagetoh, Nahata Dziil, Tsé Si áni, Wide Ruins) to include communities impacted by the 1974 Relocation Act to be considered as a Promise Zone designee.

Naabik'iyátí' Committee members approved the amendment with a vote of 9-3.

Delegate Phelps said a public meeting to discuss the Promise Zone initiative is scheduled to take place on May 15 at 9 a.m. at the Leupp Chapter House.

Following the Naabik'iyáti' Committee's approval on Thursday, Delegate Phelps said the next step is to engage the federal agency representatives who can provide technical support in moving forward.

"Our May 15 public meeting will be a great opportunity to not only provide public information, but to also bring key stakeholders together. We will follow the guidance provided for tribal application submissions. I expect that the process toward developing a successful application is going to be extremely competitive," Delegate Phelps stated.

For information regarding deadlines, criteria, and other information, please visit:

<https://www.onecpd.info/promise-zones>.

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