Naabik’íyáti’ Committee tables legislation seeking approval of the replacement lease for Navajo Generating Station, work session to be held

WINDOW ROCK — The Naabik’íyáti’ Committee on Thursday, voted 16-2 to table Legislation No. 0194-17, which seeks the Navajo Nation Council’s approval of an agreement between the Navajo Nation and the owners of the Navajo Generating Station to extend the operations of the power plant until the end of December 2019.

Along with the tabling motion, the Naabik’íyáti’ Committee directed the Office of the Speaker to schedule a work session on June 14 with the various stakeholders, including each of the five owners of the Navajo Generating Station to provide a forum to ask questions and to discuss and clarify the details of the document.

The current NGS agreement is set to expire in December 2019, however the owners determined that the process of decommissioning the power plant will take approximately two years, which would require the power plant to begin shutting down in July 2017. The proposed legislation would allow the power plant to continue operating until the end of 2019 and continue providing significant revenues and hundreds of jobs for the Navajo Nation.

The majority of Thursday’s discussion centered on an amendment proposed by Council Delegate Dwight Witherspoon (Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Hardrock, Pinon, Whippoorwill), which seeks to affirm the Navajo Nation’s position that no language contained within the document waives or diminishes the claims of the Navajo Nation to the 50,000 acre-feet of water used by the owners to operate the NGS power plant.

Following a lengthy discussion, the committee members vote 16-2 to approve the amendment, which will become part of the proposed legislation and agreement when it comes before the full Council for final consideration.

Council Delegate Seth Damon (Bááhááli, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí’, Rock Springs, Tsayatoh) then motioned to table the legislation, citing the need to have the owners and more technical experts on hand to answer questions and to clarify language within the document. The tabling motion was seconded by Council Delegate Leonard H. Pete (Chinle), and approved by the Naabik’íyáti’ Committee with a vote of 16-2.
The work session is tentatively scheduled for June 14, beginning at 1:00 p.m. at the Department of Diné Education auditorium. Legislation No. 0194-17 will require two-thirds of Council’s approval, or sixteen (16) supporting votes to pass.

Public comments for Legislation No. 0194-17 may be submitted until the legislation goes before the Navajo Nation Council for final consideration. Comments may be submitted by e-mail to comments@navajo-nsn.gov and written comments may be mailed to: Executive Director, Office of Legislative Services, P.O. Box 3390, Window Rock, AZ 86515.

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