



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Resources and Development Committee supports sanctions on the Division of Economic Development

TSE BONITO, N.M. – During a special meeting of the Resources and Development Committee on Tuesday, committee members voted in support Legislation No. 0107-18, which seeks to accept the Navajo Nation Auditor General’s follow-up review of the Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development’s Corrective Action Plan related to p-card purchases that were made between 2008 and 2010 by a former employee, and to impose sanctions due to the division’s failure to implement the Corrective Action Plan measures.

According to the legislation, the Auditor General conducted a special review of the division’s p-card purchases in 2011 and the Budget and Finance Committee approved the audit report and Corrective Action Plan in August 2012. In December 2017, the Auditor General conducted a follow-up review of the Corrective Action Plan, which showed that only one of the 12 corrective measures was implemented.

RDC member Council Delegate Jonathan Perry (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish, Tse’ii’ahi, Whiterock), who co-sponsored the legislation, asked for the committee’s support to impose sanctions on the division.

“The audit report found inappropriate p-card purchases by employees and they did not comply with procurement rules and regulations or travel policies and procedures. Furthermore, the employees were not held accountable for their p-card purchases,” said Delegate Perry.

RDC member Council Delegate Leonard H. Pete (Chinle) stressed that the division and the employees need to be held accountable for allegedly abusing and neglecting p-card purchase policies and regulations.

“Imposing sanction on divisions and departments is not enough to teach or discipline them. This legislation is simply a ‘slap on the hand.’ The Nation needs stricter laws to address these types of white collar crimes,” said Delegate Pete.

If approved by the Budget and Finance Committee, 10-percent of the division’s operating budget would be withheld and 20-percent of the salary of the executive director would be withheld, pursuant to Title 12 of the Navajo Nation Code.

RDC chair Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichíí, Steamboat), said division directors need to hold their employees accountable for unauthorized p-card purchases.

“This is behavior is totally inappropriate. I hope that the employees who abused the p-cards were terminated and prosecuted. The Navajo Nation does not need those types of employees who ignore and disregard policies and regulations. The interim director of [the Division of Economic Development] needs to take away those p-cards from the departments who misused them,” said Delegate Shepherd.

At the end of the discussion, the committee approved a directive for the current Division of Economic Development’s interim executive director, to cancel all p-cards that were misused within the division.

The Resources and Development Committee issued a “do pass” recommendation for Legislation No. 0107-18 with a 3-0 vote. The Budget and Finance Committee serves as the final authority for the bill.

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