



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253

Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174

Crystalayne Curley (928) 286-7918

nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Navajo Nation supports responsible transition to renewable energy by opposing the “Clean Energy for a Healthy Arizona” initiative

WINDOW ROCK – On Thursday, the Naabik’iyáti’ Committee approved Legislation No. 0211-18, reaffirming the Navajo Nation’s support of responsible transition to renewable energy by opposing the “Clean Energy for a Healthy Arizona” initiative.

In February, the “Clean Energy for a Healthy Arizona” committee filed an application with the Arizona Secretary of State, intending to circulate and file an initiative petition for the upcoming general election in November. If passed by voters, it would require affected electric utilities to provide at least 50-percent of their annual retail sales of electricity from renewable energy sources by 2030.

Legislation sponsor Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland) said the Navajo Nation does support renewable energy, but the process of developing renewable energy sources needs to happen in a responsible manner that takes into account the impact on utility costs, jobs, revenue, and other factors.

“This legislation does not oppose renewable energy,” said Speaker Bates. “We are opposing the process that this initiative is pursuing.”

The legislation states that the proposed initiative would impose a dramatic increase in electricity bills, particularly for low-income and fixed-income Navajo families. Speaker Bates noted that similar renewable energy requirements in the state of California have made electric rates 40-percent higher than the national average for consumers.

It further states that the initiative would likely lead to the closure of the Four Corner Power Plant and the Navajo Mine, which supplies coal to the power plant. The plant and mine have a \$225 million impact on regional economies and provide more than \$100 million in royalties, taxes, and fees to the Navajo Nation and other governmental entities and provides over 650 jobs, most of which are Native American workers.

Speaker Bates added that the state of Arizona already initiated renewable energy standards in 2006, when the Arizona Corporation Commission voted to require electric utilities to generate 15-percent of their energy from renewable sources by 2025.

“The people pushing this initiative did not take into account the sovereign status of the Navajo Nation and the impact that it would have on utility rates for Navajo families and our overall economy,” Speaker Bates stated. “We support renewable energy, but we do not support the process that this initiative is proposing.”

The Naabik’iyátí’ Committee voted 11-2 to approve Legislation No. 0211-18 and serves as the final authority for the bill.

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