24th Navajo Nation Council

Office of the Speaker

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Council Stands Behind Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women State Bills

Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty testifies on several state and federal bills.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council held its Naabik'íyáti' Committee Thursday to consider the first legislations of its term and to receive reports about various issues surrounding the Nation.

Three bills relating to missing and murdered indigenous women presented by Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gadi'i'áhi/To'Koi, Red Valley, Tooh Haltsooi, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tsé ałnáoz't'l'í) received unanimous passage by the committee.

Legislation 0032-19 supports New Mexico Bill 278 which creates a Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force that would study how to increase state resources for missing and murdered Native women and to identify barriers to address the program, among other directives. The bill has an emergency clause, and it would appropriate $100,000. The state bill is currently in line to be considered by the N.M. House Appropriations and Finance Committee.

"Navajo Nation continues to lead the charge in three states and the national level regarding this issue," Delegate Crotty said. "The data is sparse and we know some of the challenges, so we want to endorse this in all three states."

Legislation 0033-19 is a similar bill and is making its way through an Arizona House committee.

And, Legislation 0034-19 supports a Utah resolution that designates May 5 as Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and LGBT+ Awareness Day. Delegate Crotty intends to reach out to Navajo Division of Social Service's Strengthening Families Program to organize an awareness march that day.

Legislation 0035-19, supporting U.S. Senate Bill 229 entitled "Indian Programs Advance Appropriations Act," received the Council's support on federal legislation directing continuous funding from the U.S. government to tribal programs during a government shutdown; the measure passed with unanimous support.

Legislation 0024-19, sponsored by Delegate Mark Freeland (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish, Tse'ii'ahí, Whiterock), requests N.M. Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham (D) to rescind Executive Order 2013-006, an order signed by former Gov. Susana Martinez (R), that "resulted in a lengthy process for tribes to obtain state capital outlay funding," as the bill reads. It received unanimous passage by Naabik'íyáti'.

In other committee action, Legislation 0036-19 approving the appointments of Council Speaker Seth Damon (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí', Rock Springs, Tsayatoh) to the Navajo-Hopi Land Commission was passed by unanimous consent.

The following members were appointed: Elmer P. Begay (Dilkon, Greasewood Springs, Indian Wells, Teesto, Whitecone), Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Blue Gap/Tachee, Tselani/Cottonwood), Paul Begay (Bodaway/Gap, Coppermine, K'ai'bii'tó, LeChee, Tonalea), Herman Daniels, Jr. (Shonto, Naa'tsis'áán, Oljato, Ts'áh Bii Kin), Vince R. James (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Łichíí, Steamboat), Raymond Smith, Jr. (Houck, Klagetoh, Nahat'a Dziil, Tsé Si'áni, Wide Ruins), Otto Tso (Tó Nanees Dizí), Thomas Walker, Jr. (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi Tó'ii), and Jimmy Yellowhair (Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Hardrock, Pinõn, Whippoorwill).

Title II provisions mandate the nine-member commission be voting members of the Council representing the areas affected by the Navajo-Hopi land dispute.

Legislation 0019-19, a bill requesting the U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs to establish direct services on the Navajo Nation was referred back to the Health, Education & Human Services Committee for further consideration. The referral motion received a 13-5 vote.

Council members also approved reports by Lucinda Martin, health administrator for the Navajo Dept. of Aging and Long Term Care Support, and from Speaker Damon on the Navajo Generating Station and Navajo Transitional Energy Company. After the report, committee members voted 10-9 to meet in executive session for further discussion.

Committee members gave approval to hear confirmation hearings for nine executive office appointments at a Special Naabik'íyáti Committee meeting on March 12.

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