



The 21st Navajo Nation Council

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Resources Committee votes against overriding President Shirley's veto of Wind Energy Project at Gray Mountain

"We are not going to generate money off of this project. The company will make money off of this, with 80 percent to them and 20 percent to us," – Honorable Norman John

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – At Tuesday's special meeting, the Resources Committee voted against overriding Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr's veto of Resolution No. CS-42-10, a resolution that would approve lease negotiations between the Navajo Nation, Sempra Generation and International Piping Products, Inc., for a Wind Energy Project at Gray Mountain in Cameron Chapter.

Honorable Raymond Maxx, a co-sponsor to the override resolution, said the override is important to moving the Navajo Nation into a progressive position, particularly the development of a green Navajo economy. The 500 megawatt Wind Energy Project at Gray Mountain is a grassroots effort led by the community members of the Cameron Chapter.

"From the legislative branch's end, we want to move forward and progress, mainly in the renewable energy sector of business," said Maxx, who has played a key role in the lease negotiations with Sempra and IPP, Inc. "The longer the Navajo Nation waits the more likely we are to lose out on opportunities. I ask this committee for its blessings to move this project forward."

On Oct. 21, the Navajo Nation Council passed Resolution No. CS-42-10 on a vote of 41-23, and that was later vetoed by President Shirley on Nov. 8. The president vetoed the resolution on grounds that the lease negotiations between the Navajo Nation, Sempra and IPP, Inc., lacked proper review and approval by the Resources Committee, the waiving of Navajo taxes and alleged illegal bribes, among other issues.

During the Oct. 21 session, Honorable Norman John informed his fellow Council members that he was bribed by Sempra and IPP, Inc., and said he was not voting on the resolution for reasons involving the possible violation of Navajo Ethics and Government Law.

"I have to stand by what President Shirley said in his veto message because I am really adamant about this attempt to buy my vote," John said. "I have to stand by what I said on the Council floor. I am not against this but what I said will revert to Navajo Ethics and Government Law."

As sponsors and agents to the resolution, Maxx said he demanded proof of John's allegations and made the point that "working together" is significant to the development of a green project on the Navajo Nation.

"I stated my concern and if you are offered cash it is going to come forth. An offered was made to me and I did not take it and I will not tell how much is offered," John said, in his response to Maxx. "We are not going to generate money off of this project. The company will make money off of this, with 80 percent to them and 20 percent to us."

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According to the lease negotiations, Sempra Generation will fund 100 percent of the \$1.25 billion Wind Energy Project with construction completed by 2013. The project would create more than 400 construction jobs and 30 permanent jobs for Cameron Chapter and the Navajo Nation. The Wind Energy Project would generate lease revenue of \$1.3 million per year for Cameron Chapter and \$3.7 million per year for the Navajo Nation for 20 years

George Arthur, chairman for the Resources Committee, agreed with John's testament.

"I would have to agree with the position of the president," said Arthur. "It is no secret. I do not agree with the proceedings that took place. It is in the best interest of the Navajo Nation to establish an entity that will have less than 51 percent ownership. We are no longer at a point where we are forced into negotiations, such as those deals that took place in the 50s and 60s with our natural resources."

Despite the committee's vote, the resolution still moves on to the Ethics and Rules Committee and then to the Council floor for consideration of a possible override. To override the veto, the Navajo Nation Council would need to convene for a special session and pass the override resolution with 59 votes or more to become law.

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