For Immediate Release
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Navajo President Shelly Makes Case for Navajo Energy Policy During State of Nation Address

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly, during an energy focused State of the Navajo Nation address to the Navajo Nation Council, said the Navajo Nation Energy Policy needs to be passed by the Council.

The Council also heard about the 911 program, data center opening, update regarding the former Bennett Freeze area, and the Veterans Trust Fund.

Speaking mostly in Navajo, President Shelly iterated that the Navajo Nation Energy Policy would bring forth future direction as the Navajo Nation expands its energy portfolio. The president based his speech on the written report he submitted to the Council, which was passed 13 in favor and one opposed.

“(The Energy Policy) is a comprehensive document in which we poured nearly three years of work into, in order to set the stage and the future for energy,” the President stated in a written report to the Council.

“With our abundance of resources, both natural and renewable, it makes perfect sense to have a policy to guide us in decades to come. Our partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy’s two national laboratories has given us direction,” President Shelly wrote.
The written report also stated that Navajo Nation’s future with coal is in clean coal technology such as carbon sequestration and the use of carbon credits acquired through cleaner coal technology.

“We have been advised, with our new direction in clean coal, we will shore carbon credits, which hold a value. We will sell them to other power producing companies in North America as they do their part in coming into compliance,” President Shelly wrote.

President Shelly also talked about renewable energy.

“Renewable energy is also our destiny. In September, we opened a 45,000 square foot facility in Fort Defiance, the very first solar (panel) manufacturing and assembly plant in Indian country,” President Shelly stated.

Nabeeho Power is recruiting workers and plans to have as many as 400 workers in Fort Defiance, Ariz. when fully operational. In addition, President Shelly, said Paragon Ranch in New Mexico is undergoing a feasibility study for a solar energy project.

The report also updated the Council about the Navajo Nation’s 911 program.

“Our Telecommunication Regulatory Commission will create a way to bring a next generation 911, responsive to emergencies where 911 calls are handled here, and not from far away locations,” President Shelly wrote. He added that the Heath, Education and Human Services Committee and the Law and Order Committee have worked with the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission to make the legal changes to make way for the Navajo Nation to regulate the 911 program.

President Shelly also updated the Council about the first tier three data center that opened in August in Shiprock. He said that the Navajo Nation has the opportunity to be a prime location for future data centers because of the climate and stable environment.

Another point President Shelly made was about his line item veto of $3 million legislation for Bennett Freeze development. He said that a proper plans need to be in place so most of the money would directly benefit the residents.

“I have asked for the legislation to be done correctly. We will ensure that the land status be solely under Navajo Nation jurisdiction, and that a comprehensive plan for the prudent use of the $3 million be made before I reconsider,” President Shelly wrote.

The president added that the Veteran’s Trust amendments made last month will help Navajo veterans gain access to new homes and repairs to existing homes.

“Funds will be equally distributed to the five agencies to build 15 homes per agency using the existing waiting list,” President Shelly wrote.

The Navajo Nation Council is expected to discuss the Energy Policy legislation on Tuesday.

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