



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Naabik'íyáti' Committee adopts Navajo Nation's position on federal emergency permitting procedures



WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — On July 3, the Naabik'íyáti' Committee of the 25th Navajo Nation Council approved legislation responding to the U.S. Department of the Interior's emergency permitting procedures issued under President Trump's Executive Order 14156, which declared a National Energy Emergency. Legislation No. 0159-25, sponsored by Speaker Crystalyne Curley, formally adopts the Navajo Nation's written comments as its official position.

The Department of the Interior's May 1, 2025, "Dear Tribal Leader" letter requested input on proposed emergency procedures to accelerate energy development under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Endangered Species Act (ESA), and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

Speaker Curley and members of the Council reviewed the proposed federal changes and worked with the Navajo Nation Washington Office and technical experts to develop a comprehensive response.

The resolution outlines concerns that the emergency permitting procedures would significantly shorten environmental review timelines and reduce or eliminate tribal consultation. Under the proposed NEPA emergency framework, environmental assessments could be finalized within 14 days, and full environmental impact statements could be completed in 28 days, with limited or no draft review or public comment opportunities.

Speaker Curley emphasized that such changes may lead to bypassing tribal voices on projects that may affect trust lands, sacred landscapes, or environmentally sensitive regions.

“The federal government must uphold tribal consultation and respect our voices in this critical process. All federal agencies must engage with tribes in meaningful dialogue if permitting impacts our communities and people,” said Speaker Curley.

The response also objected to the inclusion of uranium as a covered energy resource eligible for expedited review, citing a longstanding history of environmental and health impacts on Navajo lands. The Navajo Nation stated that any new uranium development proposals must undergo thorough environmental review and meaningful consultation prior to approval.

“The inclusion of uranium in these fast-tracked procedures is deeply concerning. Our Nation is still dealing with the consequences of past uranium development. This is a matter of public health, land restoration, and justice,” Speaker Curley added.

Concerns were also raised about the expedited ESA and NHPA procedures, which would permit federal agencies to move projects forward after brief notification periods, without engaging in pre-decisional consultation with tribal nations. The Naabik’íyáti’ Committee noted that such procedures risk harm to endangered species, critical habitats, burial sites, petroglyphs, and other culturally significant locations, and would violate the federal trust responsibility.

The Navajo Nation urges the Department of the Interior to recognize existing tribal environmental review laws and to work collaboratively to ensure that any emergency procedures are implemented with transparency, formal government-to-government consultation, and legal safeguards for tribal lands and cultural resources.

The legislation was unanimously approved by the Naabik’íyáti’ Committee with a vote of 17 in favor with none opposed. Final authority rests with the Naabik’íyáti’ Committee. Speaker Curley submitted the formal written comments to the Department of the Interior on Monday.

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