



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

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Resources and Development Committee supports grazing and farming policy reform at leadership meeting



The RDC leadership meeting solicited a large number of attendees who voiced their concerns.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — On Saturday, June 21, the Resources and Development Committee (RDC) convened a leadership meeting to hear from grazing and farm board officials across all five Navajo agencies. The session addressed proposed Title 3 amendments, land use permit processes, irrigation infrastructure, and ongoing drought mitigation efforts impacting Navajo livestock and agricultural operations.

RDC Chair Brenda Jesus presided over the meeting, with Vice Chair Casey Allen Johnson and Council Delegates Shawna Ann Claw, Otto Tso, Cheryl Yazzie, Helena Nez Begay, and Nathan Notah in attendance. More than 30 officials provided testimony representing District Grazing Committees, Major Irrigation Farm Boards, and community stakeholders. The goal was to gather input to shape legislation that reflects the realities faced by producers.

“Today, we heard key concerns raised by grazing representatives included the need to increase compensation, standardize dispute resolution procedures, reissue longstanding grazing permits, and address the overpopulation of feral horses,” said RDC Chair Jesus. “Many emphasized the importance of resourcing enforcement personnel and restoring access to critical water infrastructure. We need to work together across agencies to address these issues.”

Officials also discussed probate transfers and the need for improved tally count systems

to support drought mitigation strategies and funding allocations. Navajo Department of Agriculture Director Jesse Jim reiterated that livestock management must be based on accurate herd data and seasonal grazing plans.

“We must begin recordkeeping, vaccinations, and proper breeding schedules to sustain our livestock economies,” said Jesse Jim. “It’s about making responsible, community-driven decisions not just about recreating livestock reduction.”

Farm board members highlighted deteriorating irrigation systems, idle lands, lack of enforcement on livestock trespassing, and challenges with the probate process.

Participants called for increased investment in irrigation maintenance, youth farming programs, and access to USDA resources to strengthen food production across the Nation.

“We need to see investment in our farms and equipment so our communities can grow food and be less dependent,” said Teresa Showa, a hydrogeologist and water rights advocate. “Without proper irrigation, our capacity for food sovereignty remains limited.”

Delegate Claw said grazing officials raised issues regarding outdated stipends, insufficient enforcement, and inconsistent land management policies across agencies. “Farming and livestock care are vital to our communities. These policies must be updated with clear direction and input from those who are working on the land every day,” she said.

Delegate Tso emphasized the need for interagency collaboration and stressed that recommendations from grazing and farm boards should be consolidated and brought before the Council for formal action.

“What we heard today is a call to improve how we support our producers—through consistent policies, resources, and training,” said Delegate Tso. “The federal government must also fulfill its responsibilities under existing agreements.”

The meeting concluded with commitments to review the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for grazing and farm boards, revisit outdated regulations, and improve communication between departments, chapters, and permit holders. The RDC will consider formal legislative proposals based on the feedback and recommendations shared during the session.

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