



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Resources and Development Committee receives report on uranium ore transport agreement**



**Interim Attorney General Heather Clah and Interim Deputy Attorney General Kris Beecher provided an update on the Uranium Ore Transport Agreement.**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – On Monday, the Resources and Development Committee received a report regarding the Uranium Ore Transport Agreement, recently signed between the Navajo Nation and Energy Fuels, Inc., a uranium ore producer that operates the Pinyon Plain Mine near the Grand Canyon.

On Jan. 29, Energy Fuels announced that an agreement was signed between the Navajo Nation Executive Branch and the company to oversee the transport of uranium ore from Energy Fuels' Pinyon Plain Mine in northern Arizona to the company's White Mesa Mill in southern Utah, along federal and state highways located within the boundaries of the Navajo Nation.

The report, presented by Navajo Nation Acting Attorney General Heather Clah and Acting Deputy Attorney General Kris Beecher, outlined additional protections included in the agreement.

These added protections include limiting transportation to specified routes and hours of the day, prohibiting transport during celebrations or holidays, defining emergency response procedures, and establishing clear notice and reporting requirements. The agreement also introduces more stringent insurance, driver qualification, and training standards.

Furthermore, the agreement mandates that transportation drivers obtain Navajo Nation transportation licenses, use state-of-the-art cover systems, secure provisions for escorts, and implement additional inspection procedures to ensure that all rules and agreements are adhered to.

Council Delegate Casey Allen Johnson (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Birdsprings, Leupp, Tolani Lake) requested the Department of Justice to cite the law that grants the federal government the authority to override the Navajo Nation's sovereign right to regulate uranium transportation.

Acting Deputy Attorney General Beecher explained that the agreement complies with federal preemption, a constitutional principle that asserts the supremacy of federal law over conflicting state laws.

"Federal law prohibits the banning of uranium transportation," Beecher explained. "The Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency will have primary oversight of the transport. Before transport begins, Energy Fuels must apply for a transport license from the NNEPA."

Acting Attorney General Clah stated that public outreach is currently underway, with the most recent update provided to the Mexican Water Chapter.

Beecher also highlighted an additional benefit of the agreement: Energy Fuels, Inc. will transport and remove an extra 10,000 tons of uranium waste from Abandoned Uranium Mines (AUM) on the Navajo Nation for processing at the White Mesa Mill.

"This will incur no cost to the Navajo Nation," Beecher said. "This removal and processing would otherwise cost the Nation \$2 million."

The Resources and Development Committee clarified that the agreement was not negotiated or approved by the Committee. The Resources and Development Committee continues to urge the Executive Branch to communicate and work with the legislative oversight committee.

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