



The 21st Navajo Nation Council

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

IGR committee confirms Navajo Green Economy Commissioners

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. -- Hon. Lawrence T. Morgan is proud to announce the formation of the first Navajo Green Economy Commission. The five commissioners who have been selected and confirmed by the Intergovernmental Relations Committee include Wahleah Johns, Samuel Woods, Keith Betsuie, Anna Rondon, and LeVon Thomas.

"Each of the Commissioners is highly qualified to carry out the intended goal of creating green jobs on the Navajo Nation," said Speaker Morgan. "Today, there are more opportunities than ever before to move towards the development of a green economy and the creation of green jobs. These Commissioners are passionate about bringing green opportunities to the Nation, and I look forward to the work they will accomplish on behalf of our people."

The Navajo Nation Council became the first American Indian tribe to pass legislation supporting green jobs on tribal lands: Legislation No. 0179-09, enacting the Navajo Nation Green Economy Commission (NGEC) Act of 2009, and Legislation No. 0180-09, enacting the Navajo Green Economy Fund Act of 2009. Both were passed during the summer session of 2009.

"On the same day we were confirmed, President Obama declared that clean energy will be the driver of our economy for the long-term. With enormous solar and wind resources, our Diné can benefit from and lead the way towards this clean energy future," said Johns.

The five Commissioners are tasked with seeking appropriate federal, state, and other funding for the Navajo Nation Green Economy Fund, and networking with local, state, national and international groups to advocate and build Navajo Nation green economy strategies. They will also be working with Navajo Nation divisions and entities to coordinate these efforts and help bring green funding to the programs. The Commission will focus will be on small-scale, community development projects for economic development to empower local communities.

"In the years to come, and as we begin to transition toward more alternative renewable energy forms as a Nation, it is my vision that chapters will be able to sustain their own local green projects, and the Commission will become tasked with coordinating large scale green projects throughout the Navajo Nation," said Speaker Morgan.

The passage of the Navajo Green Economy Commission and the Navajo Green Economy Fund

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started with a shared vision. Partnerships with various non-governmental organizations were instrumental in moving the vision of a green economy forward. The Navajo Green Economy Coalition, which consists of various non-profit organization representatives, garnered 23 Navajo Nation chapter resolutions and two agency resolutions in support of the Navajo Green Economy Legislation and Navajo Green Economy Fund, ultimately helping to turn ideas into legislative action at the Navajo Nation Council level.

"The input, guidance, and expertise from non-governmental organizations will continue to be of incredible worth as we move forward in our planning for a sustainable green economy," said Speaker Morgan. "I want to thank them again for sharing this vision with me."

The Navajo Green Economy Commission has received numerous inquiries since its passage and will begin its work immediately.

"Serving on this commission is a tremendous opportunity to lead the Navajo people to a greener and cleaner energy future," said Thomas. Thomas will serve as the youth representative on the Commission.

"I'm humbled to have been selected to this commission, and I look forward to seeing community-based green economies growing in the near future," said Rondon.

Speaker Morgan believes the concept of 'going green' is not a foreign concept to the Navajo people.

"Our livelihood has always depended on our intrinsic relationship with the land," said Speaker Morgan. "By moving towards a green economy, we will be re-shifting into a way of life that has always reflected our core values as Navajo people."

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