



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253
Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Delegates Yazzie applauds approval of Navajo Nation Alcohol Tax

WINDOW ROCK – Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) expressed his appreciation to his Council colleagues and President Russell Begaye on Friday for supporting and approving the Navajo Nation’s Alcohol Tax.

The Council approved the measure with a vote of 10-9 during the Summer Council Session on July 23, which was signed into law by President Begaye on Friday.

The new law amends Title 24 of the Navajo Nation Code, initiating a 3.25% tax derived from gross receipts from all alcoholic beverages sold in Navajo gaming facilities and multiplying the gross receipts with the applicable tax rate.

“Ultimately, the funds collected from the tax will help to save lives and allows our law enforcement officers additional resources to combat drunk driving,” stated Delegate Yazzie, who sponsored the legislation.

During his presentation to Council in July, Delegate Yazzie said the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety would use the tax revenue for sobriety checkpoints in each police district on the Navajo Nation.

“Every year our communities and families lose loved ones to drunk driving and it’s heartbreaking to know that these incidents are completely avoidable,” added Delegate Yazzie.

In accordance with the resolution, the tax revenue will be retained in a special fund known as “The Division of Public Safety Alcohol Tax Fund” to be administered by the director of the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety.

The new tax is projected to earn between \$73,000 and \$80,000 annually and will only be applicable within the Nation’s three gaming facilities that serve alcohol —Fire Rock Navajo Casino, Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort, and Northern Edge Navajo Casino.

Council Delegate Otto Tso (Tó Nanees Dizí) also thanked President Begaye for signing the bill into law, adding that the members of the Law and Order Committee remain committed to supporting and promoting laws that will benefit the Nation’s law enforcement officers.

The resolution directs the Division of Public Safety to develop a Fund Management Plan. Upon approval of the plan, the tax will take effect no later than October 1, 2015.

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