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January 29, 2015

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Council members meet with New Mexico legislators to move forward Gaming Compact

SANTA FE, N.M. – On Wednesday, several members from the 23rd Navajo Nation Council attended the New Mexico House Government, Elections, and Indian Affairs committee meeting regarding the proposed Gaming Compact between the Navajo Nation and the State of New Mexico.

The revenue sharing formula in the proposed Gaming Compact shows that over the duration of the 23-year compact, revenue for the state would range from 9% to 10.75% of net win revenues, which would expire on June 30, 2037. The Nation signed onto the 2001 Gaming Compact in 2003, and is set to expire on June 30, 2015.

Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland) went before the New Mexico House committee regarding the Navajo Nation's position on the Gaming Compact.

"We informed the committee and the New Mexico state lawmakers that the Navajo Nation passed a resolution through the Council's Naabik'iyáti' Committee in support of the Gaming Compact, and that the Council would like to see the compact move forward and passed by the state legislators," said Speaker Bates.

In addition to attending the meeting, Council members met with the Governor's deputy director of policy Heather McDaniel, to advocate for funding of infrastructure projects that were allocated to Navajo chapters in New Mexico, and discuss issues regarding the release of funding for capital improvement projects.

Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) had concerns regarding the CIP list that the Navajo Nation sent to the state requesting for funding of the projects.

"We want Navajo projects identified that may have problems. We could have one big meeting next week during Indian Affairs Day to figure out a way to release the monies, and if we could get a listing of the current projects, we can identify where the projects are at and their issues," said Delegate Tsosie.

Council Delegate Jonathan Nez (Shonto, Naatsis'áán, Oljato, Ts'ah Bii Kin) said the delegation of Council members accomplished their goal in meeting with state legislators to garner support for the Gaming Compact, as well as maintaining an open dialogue with the Governor's Office to iron out any issues that are preventing CIP's from being constructed.

Council members will also attend the New Mexico "American Indian Day" on Feb. 6 to speak on issues facing the Navajo Nation, as well as continue advocating for the Gaming Compact and capital improvement projects listing.

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