

LAND WITHDRAWAL DESIGNATION REGULATIONS

§ 1. Purpose.

The purpose of these Regulations is to clarify and expedite the Land Withdrawal Designation process on the Navajo Nation, and explains that a Land Withdrawal Designation does not authorize development or disturbance on Navajo Nation land. This Land Withdrawal Designation process does not apply to how to get a lease. Prior to any development on the land, a lease must be obtained in addition to the withdrawal. The purpose of a Land Withdrawal Designation is to designate an area of land for future development by,

- a. Ensuring that the rights of grazing permittees, who are in compliance with their grazing permits, are properly addressed as applicable and as required under 16 N.N.C. §§ 1401 *et seq.* and to prevent any subsequent claims to the land; and
- b. Ensuring that the affected Chapter supports the Land Withdrawal Designation and use of the land.

§ 2. Scope.

These regulations apply to all Land Withdrawal Designations on the Navajo Nation.

§ 3. Delegation

- a. The Resources and Development Committee hereby delegates to the Director of the Navajo Land Department the power and authority to give final approval of all Land Withdrawal Designations on the Navajo Nation. The Director may sub-delegate this authority to a person under the Director's supervision, but this delegation of authority shall not be re-delegated to any other Department or Division within the Nation without the consent and approval of the Resources and Development Committee of the Navajo Nation Council.
- b. Resources and Development Committee hereby delegates authority to the Navajo Land Department to administer and manage Land Withdrawal Designations on the Navajo Nation, with the express power to adopt rules to further implement these regulations.

§ 4. Definitions.

- a. Community Development: Community Development encompasses infrastructure, economic development projects, installation of public facilities, community centers, housing, public services, businesses, schools, hospitals, government offices, and other similar projects.
- b. Designation Holder: Any person or entity who has obtained a Land Withdrawal Designation.
- c. Industrial Development: Economic activity concerned with the manufacture, and processing of materials or construction.
- d. Land Withdrawal Designation: A formal action used to designate and reserve a parcel of land for:
 - i. Community Development
 - ii. Industrial Development
- e. The Navajo Nation Business Site Leasing Regulations of 2005 (Business Site Leasing Regulations): Navajo Nation regulations that make business site leases mandatory for all businesses operating on the Navajo Nation.
- f. The Navajo Nation General Leasing Regulations of 2013 (General Leasing Regulations): Navajo Nation regulations that apply to all leases and permits for the use or possession of Navajo Nation trust land, with the exception of business and mineral leases.
- g. The Navajo Nation Government: The Navajo Nation Government is comprised of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, as well as political subdivisions. For the purpose of land use, ownership, and these regulations, enterprises, businesses, housing authorities, or other entities created or owned by the Navajo Nation are not entities of the Navajo Nation Government.
- h. The Navajo Nation Trust Land Leasing Act of 2000 (Navajo Leasing Act, 25 U.S.C. §415(e)): A federal law that regulates the leasing of Navajo Nation lands. It allows the Nation to lease certain lands without Secretarial approval.
- i. Resolution of Support: A Resolution of Support is a resolution passed by an affected Chapter stating that they are in support of a particular entity or business locating within their chapter on withdrawn land.

§ 5. Use and Occupation of Navajo Nation Land.

A Land Withdrawal Designation does not authorize an entity outside the Navajo Nation Government to use, occupy, or disturb Navajo Nation land. The Navajo Leasing Act, Business Site Leasing Regulations, and General Leasing Regulations apply to all land use on the Navajo Nation. A lease is always required if the land is being developed by any entity outside the Navajo Nation Government.

§ 6. Land Withdrawal Designations for Navajo Nation Government.

The Navajo Leasing Act, Business Site Leasing Regulations, and General Leasing Regulations do not apply to the Navajo Nation Government. The Navajo Nation Government may develop on land designated by a Land Withdrawal Designation without a lease for government purposes only.

§ 7. Procedure to Acquire a Land Withdrawal.

- a. Every individual, chapter, or entity desiring a Land Withdrawal Designation on the Navajo Nation shall submit an Application for Land Withdrawal to the Navajo Land Department (NLD). The Application shall be accompanied by the following supporting documents:
 - i. A letter of application or cover letter;
 - ii. A proposal for the planned use of the land; and
 - iii. A legal survey or GPS land description indicating the location.
- b. An entity requesting a Land Withdrawal Designation shall then submit their proposal to the Chapter to obtain a Resolution of Support.
 - i. All Chapter Resolutions should contain standard language approving a Land Withdrawal for either community development or industrial development.
 - ii. Resolutions of Support for community development Land Withdrawal Designations shall contain the following language: "The _____ Chapter hereby supports and recognizes this land withdrawal for community development, which may include, but is not limited to, the following purposes: housing, education, economic development, healthcare facilities, public use, or governmental use. Industrial development is not supported for this area." To change the use, Chapter approval must be obtained.

- iii. Resolutions of Support for industrial development Land Withdrawal Designations shall contain the following language: "The _____ Chapter hereby supports and recognizes this Land Withdrawal Designation for the sole purpose of industrial development. Industrial development shall be considered the economic activity concerned with the manufacture, and processing of materials or construction." To change the use, Chapter approval must be obtained.
- iv. Once the Chapter Resolution of Support is passed by the affected Chapter, return the signed Resolution of Support to the NLD.
- c. The NLD will acquire the necessary consent from all grazing permittees holding a valid grazing permit with an interest in the land as applicable and required under 16 N.N.C. sections 1402 *et seq.* Consent will include infrastructure that supports the development and no additional consents are necessary.
- d. In the event the grazing permittees will not consent, but the proposed project is in the best interest of the community and the Navajo Nation, the appropriate authorities may undertake eminent domain as allowed pursuant to 16 N.N.C. §§ 1401-1403.
- e. Approval from NLD.
 - i. If all requirements are met, the NLD will approve the Land Withdrawal Designation. NLD will subsequently record the Land Withdrawal Designation on the Navajo land title recording system.
 - ii. The NLD will not approve and record a Land Withdrawal Designation until all required documents are provided for review.
- f. If the Designation Holder is not the Navajo Nation Government, they must then begin the leasing process pursuant to The Navajo Leasing Act, Business Site Leasing Regulations, or General Leasing Regulations prior to any development, disturbance, use, or occupation of the land.

§ 8. Change in purpose.

- a. If the Designation Holder changes the purpose of the Land Withdrawal Designation, they must go back to the affected Chapter to obtain a new Resolution of Support.
- b. If a Chapter, as Designation Holder, wishes to permit an outside entity use of a portion of or the entire Land Withdrawal Designation, the Chapter must relinquish

the Land Withdrawal Designation and the outside entity must apply for their own Land Withdrawal Designation in their name for their specific purpose.

§ 9. Duration and Renewal.

- a. All Land Withdrawals shall be issued for a term of no more than five (5) years, with the possibility of extension of the term every five years thereafter, so long as the Designation Holder is not in violation of any provision set forth in these Regulations. The term shall be determined by NLD on a case-by-case basis.
- b. If the Designation Holder wishes to extend the Land Withdrawal Designation, the Designation Holder shall give written notice to NLD ninety (90) days prior to expiration of the original term. Renewal of the Land Withdrawal Designation will be at the sole discretion of NLD.
- c. A Land Withdrawal Designation will be terminated if any provision set forth in these Regulations is violated by a Designation Holder.
- d. A Land Withdrawal will be removed from the Navajo Nation land title recording system and open to other applicants for Land Withdrawal Designation or other land use at the expiration of the term or if the Land Withdrawal Designation is terminated for any reason. In the case of a Land Withdrawal Designation for a portion of a pre-existing Chapter land withdrawal, the area will revert back to the Chapter withdrawal status prior to the Land Withdrawal Designation application.

§ 10. Environmental Review Process.

- a. No environmental review is required for Land Withdrawal Designations issued to the non-Navajo Nation Government entities; however, when the entity obtains a lease, the General Leasing Regulations require environmental review.
- b. Since the Navajo Nation Government is not required to obtain a lease prior to development on the land, when the Navajo Nation Government obtains a Land Withdrawal Designation for Navajo Nation Governmental use, an environmental review must be completed.
- c. In the event that a Land Withdrawal Designation was done by the Navajo Nation Government, but the Navajo Nation Government relinquished the Land Withdrawal Designation for use by another non-Navajo Nation Governmental entity, the new Designation Holder must still undergo environmental review when a lease is obtained. Each program conducting an environmental review will determine if the use is

consistent with the former environmental review and will determine whether further analysis needs to be conducted.

§ 11. Oversight and Enforcement.

- a. Every department within the Navajo Nation Government that is responsible for such oversight shall work to ensure that all Land Withdrawal Designations are in compliance with these Regulations and other applicable Navajo Nation law.
- b. The Navajo Nation shall have the authority to enforce the provisions set forth in these Regulations in accordance with applicable Navajo Nation and federal law.

§ 12. Penalties.

- a. If a Designation Holder develops or otherwise disturbs the land without first having a valid lease, the Designation Holder is subject to trespass, and a penalty will be assessed by the NLD. 16 N.N.C. §§ 2251 and 2252.

§ 13. Transfer of Land Withdrawal Designations.

The NLD will approve transfers of Land Withdrawal Designations if the following conditions are met:

- a. Consent from the original Designation Holder has been acquired.
- b. The original Designation Holder or the transferee are not in violation of the Land Withdrawal Designation;
- c. No development or disturbance has taken place on the land in question;
- d. The purpose of the new Designation Holder is in accordance with the Resolution of Support, or a new Resolution of Support has been obtained;
- e. The transferee agrees to be bound by the terms of the Land Withdrawal Designation;
and
- f. The NLD finds no compelling reason to withhold approval.

§ 14. Review and Amendments.

The scope and administration of this delegation of authority to the Director of the Navajo Land Department and Administrative Regulations may be amended or rescinded by the Resources and Development Committee of the Navajo Nation Council.

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