



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Navajo Nation supports Congressional bills to prohibit Tohono O'odham Nation casino development in the City of Glendale

LEUPP, Ariz. – On Thursday, the Navajo Nation Council's Naabik'iyátí' Committee unanimously approved Legislation No. 0137-15, supporting two identical Congressional bills known as The Keep the Promise Act — Senate Bill S. 152 and House Bill H.R 308.

If approved by Congress, The Keep the Promise Act would prohibit the Tohono O'odham Nation's casino development on lands in the City of Glendale near Phoenix, nearly 150-miles from their homelands. The prohibition would last until 2027.

According to the legislation sponsored by Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichíí, Steamboat), the Tohono O'odham Nation's gaming facility is likely to have a negative impact on the revenue gained from the Navajo Nation's only Arizona gaming facility — Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort.

"We are protecting our Nation's investment in gaming and also protecting the image and reputation of Arizona gaming tribes as it relates to current compacts with the state," said Delegate Shepherd, in reference to approximately \$125 million invested by the Navajo Nation for the development of the Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort.

In 2002, Arizona voters approved Proposition 202, the Indian Gaming Preservation and Self-Reliance Act in which Arizona gaming tribes agreed to limit the number of casinos within the state and also within the Phoenix metropolitan area.

The Congressional bills state that the agreement made between the tribes and Arizona voters would be preserved with the passage of the two bills, until the expiration of the gaming compacts authorized by Prop 202.

"The Keep the Promise Act will help to protect Navajo's investment in the Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort and protect the integrity of Arizona's compact by limiting casino development in Pima and Maricopa Counties as was agreed to," said Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland).

Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort is the only gaming facility owned and operated by the Navajo Nation in the State of Arizona, located east of Flagstaff.

“We did not make this decision without considering what would be best for the future of Navajo gaming, what would the Tohono O’odham gaming facility in Glendale mean to the futures of gaming for rural gaming Tribes in Arizona, and would it encourage other commercial gaming or racino interests who would like to move into Arizona,” added Speaker Bates.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Naabik’iyátí’ Committee members voted 18-0 to approve Legislation No. 0137-15. The Naabik’iyátí’ Committee serves as the final authority for the bill.

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