



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Navajo Land Department delegated to approve land withdrawal designations

WINDOW ROCK – All land withdrawal designations on the Navajo Nation will now be administered and approved by the director of the Navajo Land Department, resulting from the passage of legislation on Tuesday by the Resources and Development Committee.

Under Title II of the Navajo Nation Code, the RDC is authorized to give final approval of all land withdrawals, however, through the legislation sponsored by RDC chair Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichíí, Steamboat), that authority is now delegated to the director of the Navajo Land Department.

RDC members previously met with several entities including the NLD to determine how the land withdrawal process could be expedited.

“The process for withdrawing land was being held up and we wanted to streamline that process,” stated Delegate Shepherd, who also noted that any land withdrawals that require any type of waiver will continue to be brought before the RDC for approval.

Prior to Tuesday’s approval by the RDC, all land withdrawals were required to come before the committee for consideration in the form of legislation, which often prolonged the process for chapters and entities seeking to designate land for development.

In accordance with the land withdrawal regulations that were also approved, the NLD director may delegate his or her authority to an employee under their supervision, but not to any other department or division without RDC’s approval. In addition, the RDC maintains its authority to amend or to rescind the delegation of authority.

The regulations also state that land withdrawals simply designate land and do not authorize development or disturbance on the land. In order to develop on the land, entities must still meet certain requirements and obtain certain documents such as a lease, if applicable.

NLD director Mike Halona, spoke in support of the legislation and said it would help chapters, particularly as it relates to the planning activities of Community Land-Use Planning committees.

The land withdrawal designation procedure is also outlined in the regulations and maintains certain requirements such as obtaining the necessary consent from all valid grazing permit holders, obtaining supporting resolutions from the impacted chapter, among other requirements.

Approved land withdrawal designations will remain in effect for no more than five years unless the land designation holder provides written notice to NLD that they wish to extend the term.

All forthcoming land withdrawal requests will be handled in compliance with the approved regulations. To view the land withdrawal designation regulations, please click [here](#).

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