



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253
Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174
Crystalyne Curley (928) 286-7918
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Law and Order Committee receives report on Alamo District Court and law enforcement activities

ALAMO, N.M. – Last Monday, the Law and Order Committee received a report from the Alamo Judicial Court staff, Navajo Nation Division on Public Safety, and Navajo Nation Chief of Police regarding the district court building and concerns regarding public safety of the community of Alamo, which is located 85-miles southwest of Albuquerque, N.M.

On Nov. 28, the LOC received a report from the Tohajiilee and Alamo courts indicating that the Alamo courthouse was closed in May due to roof, mold, and water problems and the need for police officers was also presented.

“The committee will aggressively address the issues and concerns of Tohajiilee and Alamo. The purpose of the report is to identify challenges and resolutions. We need to work together to make safety a priority for our Navajo people,” stated LOC chair Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau).

Navajo Nation Judicial Branch consultant Edward Martin reported that the Alamo courthouse has tested positive for mold and the closure of the building has created challenges for the court staff and the public. The Navajo Nation Risk Management Program has denied the request to fix the mold problems twice, added Martin.

LOC member Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) questioned why the Risk Management Department did not report to the committee regarding the courthouse and the denial of insurance coverage.

“Risk Management Department is not here again today. They are the main entity that should be here to report to the committee regarding the warranty and insurance of the building. Their denial letters to repair the Alamo courthouse is also questionable,” said Delegate Begay.

“How much will the courthouse repair cost?” asked LOC vice chair Council Delegate Raymond Smith, Jr. (Houck, Klagetoh, Nahata Dziil, Tsé Si áni, Wide Ruins).

According to Martin, the repair of the courthouse will cost in the estimate of \$55,000 to \$78,000.

Following the report regarding the Alamo courthouse, Chief of Police Phillip B. Francisco reported that the police department is doing the best to address the lack of police officers in Alamo and throughout the Nation.

Council Delegate Norman M. Begay (Alamo, Ramah, Tohajiilee), who represents Alamo chapter, reflected on the community's concerns regarding public safety.

"At every chapter meeting, community members plea for police officers and they question the public safety system. There is a huge problem with meth, alcohol and cattle rustling. Alamo and Tohajiilee need a full-time officer," stated Delegate Begay.

Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. recommended that the lack of a police officer in Tohajiilee and Alamo be reported to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The 638 Contract between the federal government and the Nation states that there shall be a police officer at each community and this agreement has to be resolved with BIA, added Delegate Begay.

The LOC approved all reports with a 2-0 vote and a directive for the Navajo Nation Risk Management Program to provide a report during the next committee meeting.

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