



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Naabik'íyáti' Committee supports amending the PROTECT Act for AMBER Alert funding and confirms NHA board member

WINDOW ROCK – During Thursday's Naabik'íyáti' Committee meeting, Council members voted in support of Legislation No. 0159-17 to support S. 772, a congressional bill that seeks to amend the PROTECT Act to make tribes eligible for grants to implement "America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response Alert" systems, also known as the AMBER Alert.

On May 10, legislation sponsor Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gadi'í'áhi/To'Koi, Red Valley, Tooh Haltsooi, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tsé ałnáoz't'í'í) provided testimony on Capitol Hill to the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs in support of the bill.

According to the congressional bill, the U.S. Attorney General would determine when a tribe does not have sufficient funds available to comply with the federal share requirement for the cost of activities funded by a grant for the purpose of implementing an AMBER Alert system, and may increase the federal share of costs.

"When the initial AMBER Alert funding was established years ago, Indian Country should have been a part of that discussion and should have been a part of that allocation for training and implementing the AMBER Alert system. However, I am optimistic that the permanent funding will open doors to several opportunities for the Navajo Nation," said Delegate Crotty to members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs in May.

Delegate Crotty also stated that there is a great need for the Navajo Nation to establish its own comprehensive AMBER Alert system to remain accountable and responsible for the protection of Navajo children, rather than relying on state entities.

According to her testimony, the primary goal is to streamline the AMBER Alert protocol process by initiating alerts directly from the Navajo Nation, rather than having to coordinate the alert with the states of Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico.

Naabik'íyáti' Committee voted 11-0 in support of Legislation No. 0159-17. The committee serves as the final authority for the legislation.

Committee members also confirmed the appointment of Frankie C. Lee to serve on the Navajo Housing Authority's board of commissioners on Thursday by a vote of 12-0.

Council Delegate Jonathan Perry (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish, Tse'ii'ahi, Whiterock) sponsored the confirmation bill, which fills the position on the five-member NHA board that requires the commissioner to be a registered architect or licensed professional engineer.

Lee, a member of the Navajo Nation, is a licensed professional engineer. His educational background includes a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Colorado and a master's in business administration from the University of Nebraska.

According to his letter of interest, Lee has worked in engineering and construction for the past 20 years for the Nebraska Department of Roads, the Massachusetts Highway Department, various engineering firms, and most recently as a self-employed engineering consultant.

Thursday's confirmation fills the fourth vacancy on the five-member NHA board. The Naabik'iyáti' Committee serves as the final authority for the confirmation.

The fifth and final board position is currently being advertised, which seeks a member who is an NHA tenant or homebuyer participating in programs administered by NHA.

All applicants must have post-high school education and employment experience in the area of business operations, architecture, construction management, finance, accounting, investing or in other specialized areas of construction or business that is related to the activities of the NHA and at least three years of management or leadership experience in business or a local unit of government. Candidates cannot be former employees of NHA within the past three years.

Individuals interested in the tenant/homebuyer NHA board position are asked to submit a letter of interest and resume to the Office of the President and Vice President, PO Box 7440, Window Rock, Arizona 86515.

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