



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Law and Order Committee continues to address the need for police sub-stations within rural communities

FARMINGTON, N.M. – On Monday, the Law and Order Committee received a report from Etta Arviso, who spoke on the behalf of the Nageezi and Huerfano communities, regarding the critical need for police officers and police sub-stations in rural communities on the Navajo Nation.

During her report, Arivso raised concerns regarding the high rate of traffic violations, sexual assaults, violence, and human trafficking along U.S. Route 550, a four-lane highway that connects Bernalillo, N.M. and Montrose, CO., and aligns with the Navajo communities of Nageezi, Huerfano, and Counselor. Additional police officers and a fully-operated police sub-station within the area could help deter these crimes, added Arviso.

LOC member Council Delegate Otto Tso (Tó Nanees Dizi) sympathized with Arviso's concerns and pleas, however, he stated that the concerns raised by the communities need to be considered and prioritized by the Office of the President and Vice President.

"The issues raised are strictly the functions and responsibilities of the Navajo Nation executive branch. I do not understand why the Office of the President and Vice President has not taken public safety seriously," said Delegate Tso.

According to Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety director Jesse Delmar, there is a police sub-station in the community, however, it is not in operation due to the severe shortage of police officers on the Nation. NNDPS will open and operate a police academy to address the need for officers at the Chinle Police District upon the approval and inspection of the Arizona Peace Officer Standards and Training Board, he added.

LOC member Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood), strongly urged the NNDPS to stand firm and continue advocating for adequate funding for public safety services during the intergovernmental contracts negotiations with the federal government.

"We have 110-communitites on the Nation and each community asks for public safety services. The pleas and reports from the communities should be factored into the intergovernmental agreements. We can stand firm on our public safety demands together," said Delegate Begay.

LOC chair Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) recommended that the NNDPS director look into options to reopen the Nageezi police sub-station and to complete a needs analysis of the seven police districts, and for the Bureau of Land Management to provide a report regarding crimes within oil lease areas within Nageezi and surrounding communities.

The Law and Order Committee approved the report with a vote of 4-0 with directives.

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