



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Resources and Development Committee addresses the need of windmill repairs in Smith Lake

SMITH LAKE, N.M. – On Wednesday, the Resources and Development Committee received a report from Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau), Smith Lake Chapter officials, and the Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources Technical Construction and Operations Branch regarding windmill repairs and maintenance within the community of Smith Lake, located approximately 47-miles northeast of Gallup, N.M.

Smith Lake Chapter president Anselm Morgan highlighted the shortage of rainfall and water resources in the community, which continues to suffer from water contamination and the lack of operational windmills to combat the drought conditions.

RDC member Council Delegate Leonard H. Pete (Chinle) said that many windmills throughout the Navajo Nation are in need of repairs and maintenance, and questioned if the Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources had addressed the issue.

“The drought conditions in the Nation are getting worse. However, we can prepare, which may include fixing the windmills. The Department of Water Resources needs to present an inventory of all windmills throughout the Nation and the status of their conditions,” said Delegate Pete.

In response, Department of Water Resources administrative service officer Christopher Mike said that each agency field office has a project list for livestock windmill repairs consisting of approximately 328 windmills, and windmills within the community of Smith Lake were not identified in the project listing. He added that the challenges to fix windmills include the lack of project funding and manpower.

RDC member Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi To ii) recommended that the Department of Water Resources continue to search and apply for drought funding program grants to improve water quality throughout the Nation.

“Additionally, the department needs to identify water wells in rural areas. Many of our Navajo elders still live in remote areas and they also need water resources,” said Delegate Phelps.

At the conclusion of the discussion, RDC member Council Delegate Jonathan Perry (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish, Tse'ii'ahi, Whiterock) recommended that the Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources meet with Smith Lake Chapter to discuss and possibly add the community's windmills to the project listing.

"I encourage all chapters to develop plans to address the drought conditions. Identify wells, windmills, and earthen dams and ponds that are in need of attention," said Delegate Perry.

The Resources and Development Committee approved the report with a 4-0 vote with one directive.

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