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Resources and Development Committee approves Hardrock Chapter's corrective action plan

LEUPP, Ariz. – On Wednesday, the Resources and Development Committee considered Legislation No. 0298-18, which seeks to accept the special review of Hardrock Chapter submitted by the Navajo Nation Office of the Auditor General and to approve the corrective action plan submitted by the chapter.

According to the legislation, the auditor general conducted a special review of Hardrock Chapter dated April 2018 to verify whether the chapter spent funds in accordance with the Navajo Nation and chapter policies and procedures. The report examined the chapter's financial records from Oct. 1, 2015 to March 31, 2017 and found eight findings that revealed that the chapter has not implemented appropriate controls.

Council Delegate Dwight Witherspoon (Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Hardrock, Pinon, Whippoorwill), who sponsored the legislation and represents Hardrock Chapter, stated that the chapter has addressed the eight findings in their corrective action plan.

"The chapter leadership and administration has taken the initiative to correct the eight audit findings. If approved, the chapter would have six months to implement the corrective action plan," said Delegate Witherspoon.

RDC chair Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichíí, Steamboat) recommended that the chapter implement the corrective action plan as soon as possible to avoid sanction.

"Many chapters are having difficulty with audits and implementing their corrective action plans. I highly encourage the chapter to fix all audit findings and put the chapter back in good standing," said Delegate Shepherd.

The special review found that Hardrock Chapter paid approximately \$47,000 to the chapter president, accounts maintenance specialist, and their relatives that were not authorized, purchase of food for non chapter events, awards of housing assistance to individuals whose eligibility were not verified, unauthorized payments of consulting services, and others.

In opposition, RDC member Council Delegate Leonard H. Pete (Chinle) stated that chapters that failed to implement their corrective action plans need to pay for the consequences and face convictions.

“I am uncertain of when mismanagement of funds will stop. The chapter administration and officials who commit white-collar crime get away with it by resigning or leaving the chapter before prosecution. It needs to stop,” said Delegate Pete.

The Resources and Development Committee approved Legislation No. 0298-18 with a vote of 3-1. The Budget and Finance Committee serves as the final authority for the bill.

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