



24th Navajo Nation Council

Office of the Speaker

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Committee Releases Highway Safety Monies, Amends Fund Plan for Twin Arrows Public Safety Building

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The 24th Navajo Nation Council Budget and Finance Committee met at a special meeting May 14, 2019 to consider five legislations and hear several reports.

Legislation 0078-19 requests consideration from the Law and Order, Budget and Finance, and Naabik'iyáti' Committees to formally accept a Bureau of Indian Affairs Indian Highway Safety Program Law Enforcement Grant in the amount of \$536,360.

The grant was already accepted by the Nation but needed a technical correction before grant monies could be expended.

“This grant is designed to reduce a high number of traffic crashes and the resulting fatality injuries and property damage within Indian Country,” said Law and Order Vice Chair Otto Tso (Tó Nanees Dizi). “The money helps promote safety such as DUI sobriety checkpoints and other safety measures. The Navajo Nation already has the money, we just need to get through the formalities to get our ducks in order.”

The grant supports Navajo Nation Police Dept. equipment purchases, such as police cruisers with speed radars and related traffic equipment; the salary with associated overtime and fringe benefits for several police officers and support staff; and training and travel for continuing education in the fields of conducting checkpoints, crash reconstruction and certifications in drug recognition.

According to data covering Oct. 1, 2015-2016, the Navajo Nation Police Dept. dealt with 77 traffic fatalities, 459 serious injuries in traffic crashes, and 39 crashes involving alcohol.

The committee voted 4-0 to approve the legislation.

The legislation, sponsored by Delegate Otto Tso, heads to the Naabik'iyáti' Committee for final consideration.

Legislation 0104-19 updates an existing fund management plan for Navajo Division of Public Safety's (NDPS) law enforcement presence at all four Navajo Nation gaming facilities.

The new amendment to the management plan grants NDPS use of the funds “to fully support and pay for the operation and maintenance expenses of the Twin Arrows Public Safety Building, not otherwise paid for from the Navajo Nation’s fixed cost budget.”

“This is a critical step to ensure the safety of our gaming facilities and the services the Twin Arrows Public Safety Building provides to the surrounding communities,” said Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau), the legislation’s sponsor.

Through the fund, the Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise pays for police officers and other public safety expenses at Northern Edge, Flowing Water, Fire Rock, and Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort casinos.

The legislation received consent, 3-1, from the committee as the final authority; it had previously passed the Law and Order Committee.

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