



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Law and Order Committee approves the Judicial and Public Safety facilities fund priority list

WINDOW ROCK – On Friday during a special Law and Order Committee meeting, the committee approved Legislation No. 0130-16, approving the Navajo Nation judicial and public safety facilities fund priority list for fiscal years 2017 and 2018. The committee also received a report from the Navajo Nation Judicial Branch, Navajo Nation Police Department, and Navajo Nation Department of Corrections regarding the changes to the priority listing.

LOC member Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood), who sponsored the legislation, stated that the priority listing serves as a guide for the planning and designing of the facilities.

“During our last meeting, we received a report from the Window Rock District Court that the facility was closed due to gas leaks and structural issues. Therefore, the facilities priority listing will reflect the facilities that need immediate attention. The Chief Justice and NNDPS have reviewed the facility needs and identified projects that may receive funding from the facilities fund,” stated Delegate Begay.

The Judicial/Public Safety Facilities Fund priority listing is as follows:

1. Window Rock public safety, judicial district, and NNDPS headquarters facility
2. Shiprock judicial, public safety, and correctional facilities
3. Kayenta judicial facility
4. Chinle public safety training facility
5. Dilkon public safety and correctional facilities
6. Pinon judicial, public safety, and correctional facilities
7. Window Rock supreme court facility
8. Ramah judicial facility
9. Aneth judicial, public safety, and correctional facilities
10. Alamo judicial, public safety, and correctional facilities
11. Pueblo Pintado public safety and correctional facilities
12. Tohajiilee public safety and correctional facilities
13. Kaibeto public safety substation
14. Cameron public safety substation
15. Leupp public safety substation

16. Tó Nanees Dizi fire department and emergency medical services facility

LOC chair Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) stated that the priority listing modification was based on the need for immediate attention to address employee safety and delivery of direct services.

“The previous listing listed Twin Arrows, Dilkon, Pinon, Kayenta, and Shiprock as the top five, but the list needed to be reevaluated. For example, Window Rock public safety facility was shut down due to dangerous gas leaks and structural corrosion. We need our Navajo employees to work in safe environments so they can deliver the best direct services to our people,” stated Delegate Yazzie.

NNDOC Lieutenant Ophelia Begay, stated that the Window Rock public safety facility was closed two weeks ago due to 32-gas leaks, which forced the department to transfer 38 inmates to other correctional facilities. The facility was built in the 1950’s and has plumbing problems and structural corrosion, added Begay.

Delegate Begay requested NNDPS, NNDOC, Window Rock District Court, and other programs that were housed in the facility to provide a plan regarding relocation, infrastructure and building/modular cost estimates. He also requested the Navajo Nation Office of Management and Budget to provide the balance of the public safety fund and other tax funds related to public safety that could potentially be utilized for the priority listing.

“The committee will continue to work adjacently with the Judicial Branch and NNDPS to address the need for safe and healthy facilities. The priority listing will guide us in the right direction,” stated Delegate Yazzie.

The Law and Order Committee approved the report with a 3-0 vote and approved Legislation No. 0130-16 with one amendment with a 4-0 vote. The committee serves as the final authority for the bill.

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