



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Law and Order Committee discusses the need for police officers in rural communities

WINDOW ROCK – During a special meeting on Monday, the Law and Order Committee received two reports from Alamo school board member Steven Apache and Etta Arviso, who represented Nageezi and Huerfano communities, regarding the need for additional police officers to serve rural areas of the Navajo Nation.

During his report, Apache stated that the community of Alamo is affected by high crime rates, drug and substance abuse, and vandalism. The community, which is located south of Albuquerque, does not have a full-time police officer, Apache added.

Arviso raised concerns over the high rate of sexual assaults and violence within the Nation and requested for more police officers to serve the community of Nageezi.

LOC member Council Delegate Otto Tso (Tó Nanees Dizi) sympathized with the request for police officers and substations within the rural communities of the Nation.

“I clearly understand that the Navajo Nation Police Department does not have enough police officers to provide public safety services for the Nation, but the shortage should not influence the safety concerns of the people. NNPD needs to strategically plan to spread the service coverage,” said Delegate Tso.

According to Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety director Jesse Delmar, there are approximately 230 police officers to cover 27,000-square-miles of land.

LOC member Council Delegate Herman Daniels, Jr. (Shonto, Naa'tsis'Áán, Oljato, Ts'ah Bii Kin) stressed the need for more cross-commissioning agreements with counties to increase law enforcement presence.

“Due to the extreme shortage of police officers on the Nation, rural communities, NNPD, and NNDPS need to work together to address the needs. Cross-commissioning agreements also allows access to additional officers, which is an option I highly suggest until we get more officers,” said Delegate Daniels.

Delmar added, “NNDPS highly encourages rural communities to begin recruiting individuals, who could potentially be police officers for their communities.”

LOC chair Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) recommended Delmar to correspond with Apache and Arviso regarding their community's public safety concerns and issues.

The Law and Order Committee approved both reports with a vote of 3-0 and scheduled a follow-up meeting for Nov. 27 at Nageezi Chapter.

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