



24th Navajo Nation Council

Office of the Speaker

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NAABI Moves Forward Legislation for Pilot Industrial Hemp Project with Strict Testing, Regulations

CORRECTION: A previously issued press release erroneously contained content contained in this press release. Both this and the previous release have now been clarified to contain solely their appropriate subject matter.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – In a special Naabik’iyáti’ Committee meeting on May 28, the committee considered legislation that authorizes the Navajo Agricultural Products Industry to conduct a hemp pilot research project with New Mexico State University under provisions in the 2014 U.S. farm bill.

Legislation 0125-19 also creates a singular exception to the prohibition of growing industrial hemp, as stipulated in Council resolutions CO-75-18 and CJY-54-00. It is sponsored by Delegate Rickie Nez (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, T’iis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland).

The bill allows NMSU researchers to grow industrial hemp on a small part of land they lease within NAPI property purely for research and development purposes. Strict rules would be in place for security and making sure the plants do not test over a 0.3 percent THC content, which would be considered marijuana.

Routine and rigorous tests would be conducted and overseen by NAPI, the Navajo Dept. of Agriculture, and a third-party company. Plants that fail the test would be burned, Dr. Kevin Lombard, superintendent of the Agricultural Science Center at NAPI, told committee members.

“There’s a real need put forth by the federal government and the USDA has been pushing this to tribes to look at mass quantities of production potentially for use in the U.S Dept. of Defense to produce combat fatigues,” said Delegate Mark Freeland (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish, Tse’ii’ahí, Whiterock), who co-sponsored the legislation. “They are looking for a producer to farm this quality of hemp and the tribes have the capacity to do this, and this could be a revenue generating situation.”

With approval from the Naabik’iyáti’ Committee the legislation moves to full Council consideration.

On June 5, the Council will conduct a Special Session. Legislation 125-19 is on the proposed agenda. The Council will convene at 2 p.m. at the Council Chamber.

The next Naabik'iyáti' Committee meeting is scheduled for 10 a.m. June 13 at the Council Chamber.

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