



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Navajo Nation Council requests assistance in addressing uranium contamination in the water supply near the community of Sanders**

**WINDOW ROCK** – On Tuesday during the second day of the 2017 Spring Council Session, the Navajo Nation Council unanimously approved Legislation No. 0345-16, requesting support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Navajo and Hopi Indian Relocation, Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency, state of Arizona, and Apache County in addressing uranium contamination in the water supply near the community of Sanders – located near the Navajo community of Nahata Dziil in the southwest portion of the Navajo Nation.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Raymond Smith, Jr. (Houck, Klagetoh, Nahata Dziil, Tsé Si áni, Wide Ruins), who represents several chapters near Sanders, has advocated for the small rural communities particularly for students within the Sanders Unified School District that have been affected by the contaminated water supply.

“This has been an ongoing problem for too long. We need all of these entities to come together and fix this problem for the health and wellness of our people,” stated Delegate Smith, who previously noted that the school district has had to provide bottled water to the students to avoid having them consume contaminated water, which is costing the school district.

“It is becoming a financial burden for the school district,” added Delegate Smith. “Our students should not have to worry about the safety of their water when they are at school.”

The legislation states that in August 2016, the Sanders Unified School District had their water tested and the results showed that the sample collected exceeded the maximum contaminate level for uranium. It further states that the community and the school are in need of new water lines to prevent additional contamination from the water delivery system.

The bill also cites a water assessment study entitled, “The Puerco-Little Colorado River Watershed Navajo Community-Based Uranium Water Quality Assessment Project,” which determined that water wells located in Sanders and the school district contain unsafe levels of uranium in September 2015.

The Nahata Dziil Commission Governance through a resolution passed in July 2015 also supports the legislation, which also requests each of the entities to provide short-term and long-term alternative water supplies for the school district, new water lines for the community and school district, provide monitoring and documentation among other requests.

The Navajo Nation Council voted 17-0 in support of Legislation No. 0345-16. The Navajo Nation Council serves as the final authority for the bill.

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