



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Resources and Development Committee considers recommendations to remove two division directors

LEUPP, Ariz. – On Tuesday, the Resources and Development Committee considered Legislation No. 0216-17 and Legislation No. 0250-17, which expresses “no confidence” and the recommendation to remove Navajo Nation Division of Community Development executive director Carl Smith and Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development executive director Crystal Deschinny.

RDC member Council Delegate Davis Filfred (Mexican Water, Aneth, Teecnospos, Tóíkan, Red Mesa), who sponsored Legislation No. 0250-17 to recommend the removal of Deschinny, said that the underperformance of Deschinny should be addressed.

“The director has failed to address the issues related to business development and improving the Navajo economy. There has been no job creation and no revenues were generated within the time she served as a director. I highly recommend that Navajo Nation President [Russell] Begaye remove Deschinny immediately,” stated Delegate Filfred.

RDC vice chair Council Delegate Benjamin L. Bennett (Crystal, Fort Defiance, Red Lake, Sawmill), who sponsored the legislation to remove Smith, stated that the removal of the NNDCD director is due to poor performance.

“[President Begaye] needs to immediately remove Smith from his position because he has shown severe disrespect for chapter officials and demonstrated poor leadership skills. He has a lack of cooperation and represents the President’s office in an unprofessional and arrogant manner. That type of management should not be allowed,” stated Delegate Bennett.

Smith was appointed by President Begaye and confirmed by Council In January 2016 and Deschinny was appointed by the president and confirmed by Council in April 2016.

In opposition of both legislations, RDC member Council Delegate Leonard H. Pete (Chinle) said

that the removal of the directors would result in slower progression of the divisions.

“The Nation’s government has been slowly going down and there has been slow progression. Also, fixing the problems at each division and department is not an easy job. If we remove them right now, the divisions will worsen because there will be no direction,” stated Delegate Pete.

RDC member Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi To ii) added, “NNDED is the lowest funded division within the government. Its not fair to attack the director when we give them pennies to perform miracles.”

At the end of both discussions, the Resources and Development Committee voted down Legislation No. 0216-17 with a 2-3 vote, and approved Legislation No. 0250-17 with a 3-2 vote to recommend the removal of Deschinny as director of the NNDED. The committee serves as the final authority for both bills.

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