



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 3, 2017

MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253
Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174
Crystalyne Curley (928) 286-7918
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Resources and Development Committee opposes proposed Nazlini bridge replacement due to lack of project readiness

TSE BONITO, N.M. – On Tuesday, the Resources and Development Committee considered Legislation No. 0221-17, which requests the Bureau of Indian Affairs Branch of Roads and the Navajo Nation Division of Transportation to add the replacement of the Navajo Route 26 Bridge in the community of Nazlini to the priority level listing.

RDC member Council Delegate Leonard H. Pete (Chinle), who co-sponsored the legislation, stated that the bridge replacement would address safety concerns and transportation accessibility.

“Navajo Route 26 is the main access road from the west side of Nazlini, and it is only accessible through a bridge. The existing one-lane bridge was built in 1976 and it was built carelessly. The community needs a bridge replacement to ensure safety,” said Delegate Pete.

According to a Nazlini Chapter resolution dated Feb. 8, the Navajo Route 26 Bridge had been in the Agency Bridge Replacement System for many years. NDOT principal engineer Darryl Bradley also indicated that the bridge’s inspection report dated Oct. 2016 recommends that the bridge be replaced due to several noted deficiencies.

RDC chair Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichíí, Steamboat) questioned the amount that NNDOT receives from federal highway funding to replace bridges throughout the Nation.

“How much is allocated in the bridge replacement fund and what is required to add a bridge replacement project to the priority listing?” asked Delegate Shepherd.

In response to Delegate Shepherd, Bradley stated that NNDOT receives nearly \$14 million for bridge replacements. Bridges with low proficiency ratings and construction-ready bridges are considered for the priority level listing.

Bradley added, “ The bridge is not project ready. Federal highway will not consider this project until all assessments, clearances, and compliances are completed.”

RDC member Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tside To ii) stated that the bridge should not be added to the priority listing according to Bradley’s report.

“Bradley’s report indicates that the bridge design needs to be redone. The assessments, right-of-ways, permits, and compliances also need to be completed. I have a problem putting a project on the priority listing when it is not project ready,” said Delegate Phelps.

RDC members did not approve Legislation No. 0221-17 with a vote of 1-4, and serves as the final authority on the bill.

#

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org or find us on Facebook and Twitter, keywords: Navajo Nation Council