



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Resources and Development Committee recertifies two neighboring chapter's Community-Based Land Use Plans

TACHEE/BLUE GAP, Ariz. – On Wednesday, the Resources and Development Committee considered Legislation No. 0320-18 and Legislation No. 0414-17, recertifying Tachee/Blue Gap Chapter and Tselani/Cottonwood Chapter's Community-Based Land Use Plan, which has been reevaluated and readjusted to meet the communities needs. Both community plans were approved by the RDC in 2009. Tachee/Blue Gap Chapter and Tselani/Cottonwood Chapter are adjacently located 23-miles west of Chinle, Ariz.

Pursuant to Navajo Nation Code Title 26 section 2004, chapter governments shall reevaluate and readjust their community land use plan every five years to meet the needs of their changing community.

Legislative sponsor, Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood), who represents the communities of Tachee/Blue Gap and Tselani/Cottonwood, stated that both chapters' administration and Community-Based Land Use Plan committees have worked diligently to reevaluate the community plans to reflect each community's goals, concerns, and developments.

"Recertifying the community plans would improve governance and development at the local level. Both chapters have exceptional community plans and recertification would help the chapters seek their own funding and create their own opportunities," said Delegate Begay.

During the discussion for Tselani/Cottonwood Chapter, RDC member Council Delegate Leonard H. Pete (Chinle), raised an issue regarding the chapter service boundaries outlined in the chapter's new plan and questioned how it could interfere with Chinle Chapter's community plan.

"The RDC approved Chinle Chapter's community plan in March 2017, which included maps of the service boundaries and district grazing boundaries. Today, the Tselani/Cottonwood Chapter is presenting proposed chapter boundaries that is not consistent with the Chinle Chapter's maps that were already approved by the RDC," said Delegate Pete.

In response, Delegate Begay said, "Earlier today, the committee approved Tachee/Blue Gap Chapter's community plan with no concerns regarding overlapping chapter service area boundaries with Tselani/Cottonwood Chapter. Chapters should be able to work together to provide the best services and opportunities for Navajo citizens."

RDC chair Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichíí, Steamboat) stated that the legislation and the community plan does not delineate or present chapter boundaries.

"The purpose of the legislation is to recertify the Community-Based Land Use Plan and it does not identify permanent chapter boundaries. The map in the community plan outlines the boundaries for service and planning and it does not give ownership of land to the chapter. Most importantly, Tselani/Cottonwood Chapter and Chinle Chapter need to decide if they want to work together or not," said Delegate Shepherd.

The legislation states that the certification of Community-Based Land Use Plan shall not delineate adjacent chapter boundaries and any chapter disputes rest solely within the Courts of the Navajo Nation.

The Resources and Development Committee approved Legislation No. 0320-18 and Legislation No. 0414-17 with a 3-0 vote and serves as the final authority for the bills.

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