



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Law and Order Committee receives report on Tohajiilee and Alamo Courts**

**TOHAJIILEE, N.M.** – On Monday, the Law and Order Committee received a report from the Tohajiilee and Alamo courts. The report highlighted three areas of priority – the first priority is the restoration of the Alamo court building, the second is a request for a full-time police officer to patrol both communities, and the third priority is filling the vacant prosecutor position.

“It is important to receive reports on all courts and police districts because it gives the committee a sense of where assistance and attention is needed,” stated LOC vice chair Council Delegate Raymond Smith, Jr. (Houck, Klagetoh, Nahata Dziil, Tsé Si áni, Wide Ruins).

Tohajiilee and Alamo court administrator Regina Begay Roanhorse, provided information regarding the Healing to Wellness Court, Teen Court, Veterans Justice Outreach program, funding challenges, travel funding concerns, closure and relocation of the Alamo courthouse, vacant prosecutor position, and the inadequate number of police officers in both communities.

According to Roanhorse, the Alamo courthouse was closed in May due to mold and roofing issues and relocated to the peacemaking Hogan, which lacks a waiting room and heating system. She noted that the court notified Navajo Nation Risk Management about the issues in a letter, however, the request for assistance was denied twice.

LOC member Council Delegate Herman Daniels, Jr. (Shonto, Naa'tsis'Áán, Oljato, Ts'ah Bii Kin) said that all district courts should be treated equally.

“There are many crucial issues pertaining to Alamo and Tohajiilee. A recommendation needs to be made to treat all district courts the same especially funding allocation. I think there are more problems and challenges in Alamo and Tohajiilee than any other district on the Nation,” stated Delegate Daniels.

Delegate Daniels recommended that Navajo Nation Risk Management, Navajo Nation Facilities Maintenance, and Tohajiilee and Alamo courts meet and discuss possible solutions to fix and reopen the Alamo courthouse.

District Court Judge William J.J. Platero also addressed the low number of court cases due to the lack of a prosecutor to serve the two communities. The court currently has 150 cases, 19 probation cases, and three peacemaking cases compared to 400-600 cases, 50 probation cases, and 20 peacemaking cases in previous years, added Judge Platero.

Navajo Nation Division of Social Services Tohajiilee principal social worker Veronica Concho, also emphasized the crucial need for full-time police officers.

“We need 24/7 police coverage because our children need the protection. For example, an incident of child sexual abuse occurred before Thanksgiving Day and I tried to wait for an officer to assist me to protect the child. Today, I am still waiting for the Navajo police while the alleged perpetrator is still within the home with the child. This should not happen at all,” stated Concho.

“This is outrageous. We need to protect our children and an officer should be on the scene to prevent any harm. We need to notify Navajo Division of Public Safety executive director Jesse Delmar and Navajo Nation Police Department chief of police Phillip B. Francisco about this problem,” stated LOC member Council Delegate Otto Tso (Tó Nanees Dizi).

The Law and Order Committee approved the reports with a 2-0 vote with a follow-up meeting with all involved entities in Alamo on Dec. 12.

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