



NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL VOTE TO REOPEN NAVAJO TRIBAL PARKS

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PHOTO: The Window Rock and Veterans Memorial Tribal Park are among the parks that would open with Legislation No. 0076-21.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Last week during subsequent special Naabik'iyati' and 24th Navajo Nation Council meetings, the Council approved the reopening of 8 tribal parks through Legislation No. 0076-21. The legislation passed unanimously following the Navajo Nation's change from "Orange" to "Yellow" safety status under COVID-19 safety protocols detailed by Public Health Order No. 2021-005.

"We want our people to remain self-sufficient and self-sustaining," said Legislation sponsor, Council Delegate Paul Begay (Coppermine, K'ai'biit'ó, LeChee, Tonalea/Red Lake, Bodaway/Gap). "This Legislation ensures our Navajo-owned businesses and vendors have that opportunity with all of the updated safety protocols."

Following final approval from the Office of the President and Vice President (OPVP), the following Navajo tribal parks, entities, and establishments will open:

- Lake Powell Navajo Tribal Park
- Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park
- Monument Valley Welcome Center
- Little Colorado River Navajo Tribal Park

- Four Corners Monument and Tséyi' Diné Heritage Area
- Navajo Nation Musuem
- Navajo Nation Veterans Memorial Park
- Navajo Nation Zoo

During the Special Naabik'iyati' session, Linda Jackson, a Navajo Guided Tours representative in Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park said her employees have been severely impacted by the pandemic.

"[Employees] have been calling in everyday to see if they can work since the beginning of the pandemic," said Jackson.

Council Delegate Otto Tso (To' Nanees Dizi) expressed his frustration with the delay in passing 0076-21 as he recalled the ways his family also relied on the tourism industry to make a living.

Ken's Tours company representative and 0076-21 agent, Michelle Monroe from LeChee, Arizona said her company has also already seen substantial revenue loss since the beginning of the Spring Tour season.

"We have prepared safety measures in place including COVID-19 pre-screenings, mask mandates and hand sanitizing stations," added Monroe. "Our plans are above recommendations and we feel that with our careful execution of operations, we would have a safe and enjoyable experience."

Despite hesitation from some Council members about a potential second wave of COVID-19 and differing mask mandates for surrounding states, the amendment passed with a vote of 21 in favor and zero opposed.

Before reopening, each park will have to submit an outlined safety measure plan to the Navajo Nation Health Commands Operation Center and Navajo Operational Safety and Health Administration, before being authorized to safely open.

In the end, Council Delegate Herman Daniels (Ts'ah Bii' Kin, Navajo Mountain, Shonto, Oljato) called for a cease debate and the Legislation passed with a vote of 21 in favor and zero opposed.

Legislation No. 0076-21 now awaits final approval from the Executive branch, who has until the 20th to make a decision.

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