

THE NAVAJO NATION
LEGISLATIVE BRANCH
INTERNET PUBLIC REVIEW PUBLICATION



LEGISLATION NO: _0122-21_

SPONSOR: Raymond Smith, Jr.

TITLE: An Action Relating to Naabik'iyáti' Committee; Requesting the President of the United States, Joseph Biden, to Appoint a Commissioner to Oversee the Office of Navajo and Hopi Indian Relocation

Date posted: July 21, 2021 at 8:57PM

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LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY SHEET

Tracking No. 0722-21

DATE: July 15, 2021

TITLE OF RESOLUTION: AN ACTION RELATING TO THE NAABIK'ÍYÁTI' COMMITTEE; REQUESTING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, JOSEPH BIDEN, TO APPOINT A COMMISSIONER TO OVERSEE THE OFFICE OF NAVAJO AND HOPI INDIAN RELOCATION

PURPOSE: This resolution, if approved, will formally request President Biden to appoint a Commissioner to oversee the Office of Navajo and Hopi Relocation.

This written summary does not address recommended amendments as may be provided by the standing committee. The Office of Legislative Counsel requests each committee member to review the proposed resolution in detail.

5-DAY BILL HOLD PERIOD: Johnson
Website Posting Time/Date: _____
Posting End Date: 07-26-21
Eligible for Action: 07-27-21

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PROPOSED STANDING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION
24th NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL – Third Year, 2021

INTRODUCED BY



(Prime Sponsor)



TRACKING NO. 0122-21

AN ACTION
RELATING TO THE NAABIK'ÍYÁTI' COMMITTEE; REQUESTING THE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, JOSEPH BIDEN, TO APPOINT A
COMMISSIONER TO OVERSEE THE OFFICE OF NAVAJO AND HOPI INDIAN
RELOCATION

WHEREAS:

1. The United States Congress enacted the Navajo and Hopi Indian Land Settlement Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-531, as amended by P.L. 112-166) (“1974 Act”) on December 22, 1974. The 1974 Act has had a devastating impact on the Navajo People as the law ultimately forced the relocation of residents from their ancestral lands.
2. In 1980, the Navajo Nation Council created the Navajo-Hopi Land Commission to oversee land selection and land exchange activities mandated by federal law.
3. Litigation between the Navajo and Hopi tribes resulted in development restrictions on 1.5 million acres of land under dispute. This acreage is known as the “Bennett Freeze Area.” In 2009, after forty-three (43) long years, the restriction on development was formally repealed, but the devastation remains.
4. The Office of Navajo and Hopi Indian Relocation (ONHIR) was established by federal law for the purpose of overseeing the relocation of approximately sixteen thousand (16,000) Navajos from their ancestral lands. Under the 1974 Act, which

1 established ONHIR, the federal government promised that the implementation of
2 relocation must “take into account the adverse social, economic, cultural, and other
3 impacts of relocation on persons involved in such relocation and be developed to
4 avoid or minimize, to the extent possible, such impacts,” and “assure that housing and
5 related community facilities and services, such as water, sewers, roads, schools, and
6 health facilities, for such households shall be available at their relocation sites.” P.L.
7 93-531, Sec. 13 (c) (2) and (c) (3).

8 5. Despite the promises made by Congress in the 1974 Act, the federal program of
9 relocation has and continues to have a devastatingly harsh impact on the families and
10 communities affected.

11 6. For the past twenty-seven (27) years, the federal government has failed to appoint an
12 ONHIR Commissioner as required under the 1974 Act. A Commissioner is necessary
13 for purposes of coordinating a multi-agency approach to address the continuing harsh
14 realities caused by the federal government’s program of relocating Navajo families.

15 7. As set forth in NHLCAP-03-2021, attached as **Exhibit A**, the Navajo-Hopi Land
16 Commission implores President Joe Biden to appoint a Commissioner to oversee the
17 Office of Navajo and Hopi Indian Relocation as a priority matter.

18
19 **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

20 The Navajo Nation supports the Navajo-Hopi Land Commission in its urgent request that
21 President Joseph Biden exercise his authority as President of the United States pursuant
22 to federal to appoint a Commissioner to oversee the Office of Navajo and Hopi Indian
23 Relocation.