



## Naabik'iyáti' Committee hosts work session to allocate \$5 million for former Navajo Forest Products Industry location

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**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — Today, Hon. Council Delegate Wilson C. Stewart, Jr. presented Legislation No. 0110-22 to the Naabik'iyáti' Committee to allocate \$5 million from the Sihasin Fund for the assessment and remediation of the former Navajo Forest Products Industry (NFPI) location in Navajo, N.M.

“The health and well-being of our Navajo people is in jeopardy,” said Delegate Stewart (Crystal, Fort Defiance, Red Lake, Sawmill). “The assessment is going to take time but we as a Council need to ensure the process moves forward without limitations.”

The \$5 million allocation will go towards the Hazardous Substances Fund for the Navajo Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Navajo EPA will utilize the funding to conduct an environmental assessment, and to begin the reversal of the extensive contamination and environmental damage the NFPI location has caused.

The proposed assessment to be conducted by the Navajo EPA will collect samples at the NFPI site in an effort to target areas that may be cleaned up immediately.

The NFPI was a tribal enterprise which harvested and processed ponderosa pine from the Defiance Plateau and the Chuska Mountains. The NFPI was in operation from 1939 to 1997.

“Since Navajo Forest Products Industry was a tribal enterprise, the Navajo Nation is responsible for the upkeep, but in order to proceed with this legislation, we need the Navajo Nation EPA to inform not only the issue at hand but the history behind it,” said Council Delegate Otto Tso (Tónaneesdizi).

On July 21, 2021, Red Lake Chapter #18 passed Resolution No. RLC-07-21-31 requesting the Navajo Nation to appropriate a minimum of \$1 million annually from the Sihasin Fund for the clean up of the NFPI location.

Furthermore, the U.S. EPA spent approximately \$6 million for the surface cleanup of asbestos contamination at the NFPI site in the summer of 2021.

“The NFPI site is a serious hazard to our farming and ranching activities near or along the Black Creek Wash,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh). “The cleanup will cost more than \$5 million but the Navajo Nation Council will work hard to find various sources of funding to protect our natural resources.”

During the presentation, discussions between council delegates and the presenters suggested investing the \$5 million into a trust fund. By doing so, additional funds could be added annually while serving as a model for all trust funds held by the Navajo Nation.