



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

MEDIA CONTACT:

nnlb.communications@gmail.com

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Law and Order Committee concludes Eastern Navajo Agency public forums regarding the confirmation of Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne



Law and Order Committee held a public forum for Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne in Tohajiilee, N.M.

ALAMO, N.M. — The 25th Navajo Nation Council’s Law and Order Committee (LOC) concluded recent public forums held in the Eastern Navajo Agency to deliberate the confirmation of Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne. These forums offer the public an opportunity to engage with the proceedings to ensure the integrity and accountability of the Navajo Nation Judicial Branch.

“The Law and Order Committee is dedicated to transparency, education, and public involvement throughout the confirmation process of Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne,” said LOC Chairwoman Eugenia Charles-Newton.

The confirmation process follows Navajo Nation Resolution LOCJY-08-13, which sets the guidelines for evaluating probationary judges, including the Chief Justice, Associate Justices, and District Judges. This process reflects the Navajo Nation’s commitment to self-governance and judicial independence while ensuring that the judiciary remains accountable to the Diné people.

The confirmation process began on March 5 in Crownpoint, N.M., continued March 6 in Tohajiilee, N.M., and concluded on March 7 in Alamo, N.M.

Each forum follows a structured format with presentations made by Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne and Associate Chief Justice Eleanor Shirley. Community members are then invited to provide public testimony, typically limited to five minutes per person.

The forums are open to the public and are announced through official channels, including the Navajo Nation Council's website, Navajo Courts website, Navajo Times, and KTNN Radio.

While public participation is encouraged, anonymous testimony is not accepted, and commentary on pending litigation is prohibited. Allegations of misconduct raised during the forums are referred to the Judicial Conduct Commission or other appropriate authorities, which may pause the evaluation process pending an investigation.

To ensure fairness, the LOC may waive certain procedural requirements, such as the need for written testimony, recognizing that not all community members have access to resources for submitting written comments. Audio or video recordings and livestreams of the forums are not permitted. Official records of the hearings are kept by the Office of Legislative Services, and transcripts can be requested.

"We are committed to making these proceedings accessible and informative for all our communities, upholding the principles of accountability and Diné sovereignty," said Vice Chair Nathan Notah.

At the conclusion of the public forums, the LOC will decide whether to recommend the Chief Justice for permanent appointment. Recommendation for permanent appointment will be forwarded to the Navajo Nation President for approval, with final confirmation by the Navajo Nation Council.

Additional hearings will take place throughout all Navajo Agencies in March, April, and May.

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