



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

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Resources and Development Committee reviews the proposed Navajo Energy Office plan of operation



Resources and Development Committee reviewed the proposed plan of operation for the future Navajo Energy Office.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — On Nov. 24, the Resources and Development Committee (RDC) reviewed the proposed plan of operation for the future Navajo Energy Office, advancing efforts to create a centralized entity to coordinate energy policy, oversight, and long-term development for the Navajo Nation.

The discussion included the Division of Natural Resources, Red Streak LLC, the Navajo Nation Department of Justice, the Minerals Department, the U.S. Department of Energy Fellowship, and representatives from Navajo energy enterprises.

RDC Chair Brenda Jesus underscored the importance of the initiative. “The Navajo Energy Office is not just an administrative structure. It is an investment in our Nation’s future. By advancing a clear and independent plan of operation, we position the Navajo people to guide our own energy development, protect our lands, and ensure that every project delivers real benefits to our communities,” she said.

Red Streak LLC, contracted through the Minerals Department, presented “Scenario Two,” a standalone model designed to ensure independence from political influence and establish a consistent chain of authority. The phased structure begins with the creation of the Energy Office and ultimately envisions transitioning into a full Navajo enterprise. The draft outlines

the Energy Director's responsibilities, including operational oversight, budgeting, policy development, risk management, community engagement, and managing federal and state regulatory processes.

RDC members emphasized the need for clarity across departments and enterprises. Vice Chair Casey Allen Johnson requested defined distinctions between the Minerals Department, the Division of Natural Resources, and the Energy Office. He noted that outside agencies struggle to identify a single Navajo Nation point of contact—an issue he said must be resolved to streamline project development and avoid conflicting directives.

Environmental protection was another central theme. Chair Jesus called for stronger reclamation and remediation requirements for all energy projects, including renewable developments. Members also highlighted the importance of clear community benefit agreements to ensure impacted chapters receive transparent and timely support.

The DOE Fellowship presented a three-phase refinement process to tighten the draft plan, identify gaps, and incorporate stakeholder input. Members reiterated that the Minerals Department's role is limited to facilitating the federal grant and hosting the Fellows, while structural decisions must come through collaboration with RDC, DOJ, and OLC.

Budget projections for initial implementation range from \$1.1 to \$1.5 million. While early revenue generation is not anticipated, delegates urged the team to incorporate long-term sustainability measures and ensure timely fund distribution to chapters.

RDC members expressed unified support for Scenario Two as the strongest starting framework and agreed to create an independent Energy Director selection panel drawn from all three branches of government and subject-matter experts to support merit-based hiring and strengthen independence.

Draft documents will be distributed to NTUA, Navajo Nation Oil and Gas, and NTEC by Nov. 24, with comments due Dec. 12. A revised draft will return to RDC on Jan. 5, 2026. Red Streak LLC's contract has been extended through Jan. 31, 2026, to assist with legislative language and final operational design.

The RDC reaffirmed its commitment to finalize the Plan of Operation promptly, noting the need for a coordinated Energy Office as federal regulations, transmission planning, and renewable development accelerate across the Southwest. Members emphasized that a strong, informed Energy Office is essential to protecting Navajo sovereignty, supporting chapter interests, and safeguarding the Nation's lands and communities.

The RDC will reconvene in early January to review the updated draft and determine the path to full approval.

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