



## 25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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### Resources and Development Committee holds public hearing on proposed amendments to Title 26



Resources and Development Chair Brenda Jesus said the Title 26 public hearings provide a forum for chapter officials to address the proposed amendments.

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – On Tuesday, the Resources and Development Committee held its second public hearing on proposed amendments to Title 26 of the Navajo Nation Code, the Local Governance Act (LGA), at the Red Rock Chapter in Red Rock, N.M.

The LGA defines the organizational structure of Navajo Nation Chapters and Chapter government, including certification, governance procedures, chapter authority, ordinance procedures, budgeting, and zoning.

During the hearing, Navajo Nation Department of Justice Assistant Attorney General, Chapter Unit, Rodgerick T. Begay presented an overview of the proposed amendments and how they could affect procurement, chapter-level supervision, and chapter authority.

“In addition to presenting the proposed amendments, the public hearings provide a forum for chapter officials to raise concerns,” said RDC Chair Brenda Jesus. “We want to clarify questions related to amending the LGA.”

Begay explained that the LGA was passed in 1998 and codified in Title 26 of the Navajo Nation Code, focusing on chapters. Since its adoption, the LGA has been amended seven times between 2005 and 2024.

He discussed separation of powers between chapter legislative and executive functions, the Five Management System for both certified and uncertified chapters, and the supervision of chapter staff. He also addressed inconsistencies in the code where legislative remedies could streamline processes.

Begay presented two proposed governance models. Model A would automatically certify the 65 chapters not currently certified under the Five Management System, granting them the same authority as governance-certified chapters. It would also allow Chapter officials to supervise chapter staff and permit staff involvement in management and operations.

Model B would retain the current certification framework and would not automatically certify the remaining 65 chapters. Instead, those chapters would receive limited authority, including contracting authority of \$10,000 or less. Model B would allow Chapter officials to supervise chapter staff based on certification status and permit chapter members to participate in management and operations only in governance-certified chapters.

Begay also explained the difference between ordinances and referendums. Ordinances would require readings in Navajo and English at two meetings, a 14-day public posting period, and adoption at a third meeting. Referendums would follow Navajo Nation Election Code procedures and require voter approval through a ballot.

The presentation further clarified the official duties of the Chapter President, Vice President, and Secretary-Treasurer, which are the same under both models.

Other proposed amendments would clarify chapter contracting, budgeting, and land use and zoning requirements by aligning chapter contracts with procurement laws and requiring zoning ordinances to be consistent with approved land use plans.

The proposal would also create new subsections formally recognizing Agency Councils. These provisions would define Agency Council roles, require quarterly meetings, and authorize the creation of executive councils, administrative offices, and subcommittees, subject to RDC approval.

"At the chapter level, employees experience the challenges of the current LGA structure," said Delegate Danny Simpson. "We are holding these public hearings to hear their views."

The first public hearing was held in the Fort Defiance Navajo Agency at the St. Michaels Chapter, and the second in the Eastern Navajo Agency at the Red Rock Chapter. The next public hearing will be held in the Central Navajo Agency at Many Farms Chapter on Mar. 3.

Chapter officials in attendance provided oral and written comments based on their experience in chapter government. Many recommended that Navajo Agencies move forward with a collective response through a chapter resolution.

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