



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Law and Order Committee receives update on 105(I) lease progress for Navajo Nation public safety facilities



LOC Vice Chair Nathan Notah said he will sponsor amendments allowing reimbursement for retroactive operation and maintenance costs.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — On Monday, the Law and Order Committee (LOC) received a report from the Navajo Nation Department of Justice and the Department of Corrections (DOC) regarding progress in securing facility coverage under the federal 105(I) lease program.

The report outlined ongoing efforts to advance Navajo Nation public safety facilities for federal lease reimbursement and address procedural delays that have slowed final approval.

LOC Chair Eugenia Charles-Newton emphasized the importance of investing in infrastructure to protect Navajo communities.

“Strengthening infrastructure for public safety across the Navajo Nation is essential to ensuring that our police, corrections, and justice personnel can operate in safe, functional facilities,” said Chair Charles-Newton. “The 105(I) lease process represents a critical opportunity to reinvest federal resources into maintaining and improving these facilities for our people.”

The 105(I) lease program, authorized under federal law, allows tribes to enter lease agreements with the federal government for facilities used in support of self-determination contracts. Under the program, the Bureau of Indian Affairs provides lease payments to tribes, creating a revenue stream that can be reinvested into public safety and justice systems.

For the Navajo Nation, eligible facilities include those supporting law enforcement, criminal investigations, detention operations, and courts.

According to the report, the Navajo Nation has submitted nine facility proposals, each supported by detailed documentation including floor plans, building valuations, and operation and maintenance costs.

DOC Director Dr. Delores Greyeyes and DOJ representatives explained that the primary delay involved technical amendments to previously approved legislation. The original language did not include retroactive lease periods required under federal guidelines.

LOC Vice Chair Nathan Notah sponsored amendments that would allow reimbursement for operation and maintenance costs dating back to when each facility proposal was first submitted, ensuring the Navajo Nation can recover eligible expenses.

Despite these challenges, Dr. Greyeyes reported that all required documentation had been completed and submitted, placing the Nation at the “tail end” of the approval process before negotiations could begin.

Many Navajo public safety facilities have been in operation for more than a decade and are beginning to experience structural and system-related issues, including roof damage, detention system wear, and fire alarm maintenance concerns. Without access to federal lease funding, departments have faced limitations in addressing these deficiencies.

The Law and Order Committee voted to approve the report with four in favor and none opposed. Once amendments are approved, the Navajo Nation is expected to enter formal negotiations with federal agencies to finalize lease agreements.

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