

THE NAVAJO NATION
LEGISLATIVE BRANCH
INTERNET PUBLIC REVIEW PUBLICATION



LEGISLATION NO: 0220-26

SPONSOR: Danny Simpson

TITLE: An Action Relating to Resources and Development and Naabik'íyáti' Committees; Amending the Navajo Nation Water Rights Commission Plan of Operation

Date posted: September 30, 2026 at 5:14 PM

Digital comments may be e-mailed to comments@navajo-nsn.gov

Written comments may be mailed to:

Executive Director
Office of Legislative Services
P.O. Box 3390
Window Rock, AZ 86515
(928) 871-7586

Comments may be made in the form of chapter resolutions, letters, position papers, etc. Please include your name, position title, address for written comments; a valid e-mail address is required. Anonymous comments will not be included in the Legislation packet.

Please note: This digital copy is being provided for the benefit of the Navajo Nation chapters and public use. Any political use is prohibited. All written comments received become the property of the Navajo Nation and will be forwarded to the assigned Navajo Nation Council standing committee(s) and/or the Navajo Nation Council for review. Any tampering with public records are punishable by Navajo Nation law pursuant to 17 N.N.C. §374 *et. seq.*

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY SHEET

Tracking No. 0220-26

DATE: September 21, 2026

TITLE OF RESOLUTION: AN ACTION RELATING TO RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT AND NAABIK'ÍYÁTI' COMMITTEES; AMENDING THE NAVAJO NATION WATER RIGHTS COMMISSION PLAN OF OPERATION

PURPOSE: This legislation, if approved, would amend the Plan of Operation for the Navajo Nation Water Rights Commission.

FINAL AUTHORITY: Naabik'íyáti' Committee

VOTE REQUIRED: Simple Majority

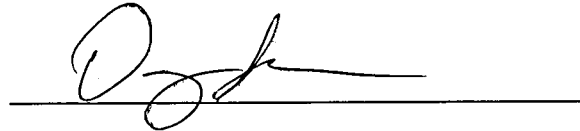
This written summary does not address recommended amendments as may be provided by the standing committees. The Office of Legislative Counsel requests each Council Delegate to review each proposed resolution in detail.

5-DAY BILL HOLD PERIOD:
Website Posting Time/Date:
Posting End Date: 10-05-26
Eligible for Action: 10-06-26

Resources & Development Committee
Thence
Naabik'íyáti' Committee

PROPOSED STANDING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION
25th NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL—Fourth Year, 2026

Introduced By:



Primary Sponsor

Tracking No. 0220-26

AN ACTION
RELATING TO RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT AND
NAABIK'ÍYÁTI' COMMITTEES; AMENDING THE NAVAJO NATION
WATER RIGHTS COMMISSION PLAN OF OPERATION

BE IT ENACTED:

SECTION ONE. AUTHORITY

- A. The Resources and Development Committee is a standing committee of the Navajo Nation Council and has legislative oversight over the Navajo Nation Water Rights Commission. 2 N.N.C. §§ 500(A) and 1554.
- B. The Naabik'íyáti' Committee is a standing committee of the Navajo Nation Council with the authority to approve Plan(s) of Operation for the Navajo Nation Water Rights Commission upon recommendation by the Resources and Development Committee. 2 N.N.C. §§ 700(A), 701(A)(5), and 1554.

SECTION TWO. FINDINGS

- A. The Navajo Nation Water Rights Commission (herein referred to as the "Commission") was established within the Executive Branch of the Navajo Nation government for the purpose of ensuring water rights of the Navajo Nation are vigorously pursued, effectively coordinated, and to enhance the communication

1 between all entities engaged in water rights on behalf of the Navajo Nation. 2
2 N.N.C. §§ 1551 and 1552.

3 B. The governing Plan of Operation for the Commission was last amended in April
4 2004 through Resolution GSCAP-07-04, attached hereto as **Exhibit A**, and has
5 remained substantially unchanged for more than twenty (20) years despite
6 significant developments in water rights litigation, negotiations, and administration
7 affecting the Navajo Nation.

8 C. Since 2004, the scope, complexity, and urgency of protecting the Navajo Nation's
9 water rights have increased, including expanded interstate negotiations, federal and
10 state adjudications, and the need for coordinated technical, legal, and policy
11 expertise, necessitating updates to the Commission's governance framework to
12 ensure effective performance of its duties.

13 D. On September 17, 2025, the Navajo Nation Water Rights Commission adopted
14 Resolution NNWRC-2025-006, entitled "APPROVING AND RECOMMENDING
15 TO THE RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE OF THE
16 NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL AND THE NAA'BIK'ÍYÁTI' COMMITTEE OF
17 THE NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL, OR THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE
18 OF THE NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL AS DETERMINED BY THE SPEAKER
19 OF THE NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL, THE NAVAJO NATION WATER
20 RIGHTS COMMISSION'S AMENDED PLAN OF OPERATION," thereby
21 formally recommending updates to its governing Plan of Operation, attached as
22 **Exhibit B**.

23 E. The recommended amendments, attached hereto as **Exhibit C**, reflect the
24 Commission's operational experience over the past two decades and are intended to
25 clarify definitions, improve governance procedures, and ensure continuity in
26 membership, decision-making, and administrative support necessary to carry out
27 the Commission's purpose.

28 F. The Navajo Nation Department of Justice completed an Executive Official Review
29 Doc No. 026612 and deemed the proposed amendments legally sufficient on April
30 22, 2026, attached as **Exhibit D**.

- 1 G. The amendments also respond to practical challenges encountered in maintaining
2 full Commission membership and timely appointments, including delays in filling
3 vacancies, and therefore provide mechanisms to ensure continuity of operations and
4 prevent disruptions to critical water rights work.
- 5 H. The amendments further recognize the need to modernize Commission procedures,
6 including participation in meetings through virtual, telephonic, or similar means, to
7 ensure consistent quorum, timely decision-making, and efficient use of resources,
8 particularly given the geographic scope of the Navajo Nation and the technical
9 nature of water rights work.
- 10 I. The amendments additionally update provisions related to reimbursement, stipends,
11 and administrative support to align with current operational practices and ensure
12 that Commission members are able to fully participate in Commission activities
13 without unnecessary barriers.
- 14 J. After more than two decades without substantial revision, it is necessary and
15 appropriate to amend the Plan of Operation to reflect current legal, administrative,
16 and operational realities, and to strengthen the Commission's ability to fulfill its
17 mandate to protect and advance the Navajo Nation's water rights. The
18 recommended amendments are in the best interest of the Navajo Nation because
19 they enhance governance clarity, promote continuity and accountability, and
20 support the effective and timely advancement of the Nation's water rights efforts.

21
22 **SECTION THREE. AMENDING THE PLAN OF OPERATION FOR THE**
23 **NAVAJO NATION WATER RIGHTS COMMISSION**

24 The Naa'bik'íyáti' Committee hereby approves the amendments, within **Exhibit C**, to the
25 Navajo Nation Water Rights Commission Plan of Operation.

26
27
28
29
30