



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

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Title II Reform Subcommittee selects Chairperson, Vice Chairperson during special meeting



PHOTO: The Title II Reform Subcommittee met Dec. 30 and covered legislative concerns with probationary periods for division directors before confirmation, amending and streamlining the 164 review process, and revisiting the line item veto authority that is often abused for political purposes.

WINDOW ROCK – Jan. 11, 2020 – The Title II Reform Subcommittee met at the Law and Order Committee conference room for a special meeting Dec. 30. The primary order of business was the selection of a chairperson and vice chairperson for the committee. The committee selected Chairman Vince James and Vice Chairman Pernell Halona by unanimous votes of 7-0.

Ron Haven, principal attorney for the Office of the Legislative Counsel, reported on the purpose of the committee and said the committee structure, processes, and 164 review were amended in 2015

by the Naabik'iyáti' Committee of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council. He said amendments included the “kill bill,” 164 review timelines, evaluation of the current government structure, and website requirements for the five-day comment period. “These are definitive objectives for the future,” Haven said.

Edward Dee, executive director of Navajo Government Development, said his office drafted two resolutions for the winter session. The first was for increasing the size of the Navajo Nation Council and the second bill was for formal

adoption of the three branch government, including Navajo Fundamental Law.

Dee said other legislation items include formation of a utilities corporation commission to regulate energy companies on the Navajo Nation, referendum for a Navajo constitution, and chapter reform. "The idea is to work hand-in-hand with the election office. These are areas our office is working on," he said.

During the 23rd Navajo Nation Council, there were two comprehensive attempts to amend the 164 process, but the efforts were vetoed by former president Russell Begaye. The proposed amendments included a four-year timeline restriction for 164 review, increasing the comment period, tabling legislation procedures, emergency resolutions at the committee level, emergency criteria, committee rules, and

removing procedures from the Navajo Nation Code.

Delegate Otto Tso (To' Nanees Dizi) said the line item veto authority needs to be revisited by Council because of misuse of authority by the president. "It's a struggle for power, the president versus Council. The president wants dilution of Council's authority," he said regarding how politics often interferes with the legislative process. Tso said in-house Council issues also need to be addressed, such as attendance at standing committee meetings and repercussions for absenteeism, staggering Council terms, and increasing terms to six years.

The committee approved receiving the report by a vote of 8-0. The next regular meeting is scheduled Feb. 3, 2020, beginning at 8 a.m.

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