



24th Navajo Nation Council

Office of the Speaker

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MEDIA CONTACT

Carl Slater, Director of Communications and Government Affairs
Bronson Peshlakai, Sr. Public Information Officer
(928) 871-6815
nlnb.communications@gmail.com

Members Selected for State Task Force Subcommittee at Naabi Meeting Held in Navajo Mountain



Naatsis'áán Community School students performed a traditional dance for Naabik'iyáti' Committee members at its meeting held in Navajo Mountain, Utah, on April 25, 2019.

NAATSI'S'ÁÁN, Utah — The 24th Navajo Nation Council Naabik'iyáti' Committee took its meeting to one of the most remote communities on the Nation and had an audience of more than 110 people and a rotating student audience of about 230 when the committee convened at Naatsis'áán Community School on April 25.

Students from the school's sixth-grade class started the meeting by leading the Pledge of Allegiance and singing the national anthem, both in Navajo.

On the agenda was previously tabled Legislation 0076-19, which is sponsored by Council Speaker Seth Damon (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí', Rock Springs, Tsayatoh) and names six members to the committee's State Task Force Subcommittee.

Speaker Damon appointed the following delegates to the subcommittee: from Arizona, Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Blue Gap/Tachee, Tselani/Cottonwood) and Paul Begay (Bodaway/Gap, Coppermine, K'ai'ibii'tó, LeChee, Tonalea); from New Mexico, Mark Freeland (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish, Tse'ii'ahí, Whiterock) and Pernell Halona (Coyote Canyon, Mexican Springs, Naschitti, Tohatchi, Bahastl'a'a'); and from Utah, Herman Daniels (Shonto, Naa'tsis'áán, Oljato, Ts'áh Bii Kin) and Charlene Tso (Mexican Water, Aneth, Teecnospos, Tólikan, Red Mesa).

Council Delegate Otto Tso (Tó Nanees Dizi) noted that he felt the subcommittee needed more members supporting the wide array of issues and funding sources with which the committee deals. He voiced that it was worth considering adding at-large members.

"We need to add two more people to represent Navajo interests in Colorado. We need more people out there advocating for Navajo," Delegate Tso said. "Years ago, when we had 88 members on the Council we had a councilman at every national committee, whether it was Coalition of Large Land-Based Tribes or Council of Energy Resource Tribes, Navajo had their presence in every committee across the U.S. in Indian country."

The committee is the final authority to this legislation and gave a unanimous vote for its approval.

The subcommittee's purpose is to advance the position and priorities of the Navajo Nation by conducting regular interaction with the Nation's lobbyists, state legislatures, and officials "to enhance the understanding between the Navajo Nation Council and the respective states of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah," the bill states.

In other committee activity, members heard a follow-up report from Miss Navajo Nation Autumn Montoya who gave detailed financial information on her current and future budget until the end of her reign—by that time she will have spent nearly \$40,000 of her own money for travel, promotional, parade entry fees and other expenses.

"My family and I are not seeking reimbursement; we love doing this," Montoya said. "I just hope the future Miss Navajo Nation will not have to be put in the situation that I'm in."

After dialogue about the lack of support and funding Miss Navajo Nation has received, Speaker Damon said legislation will be drafted so the Council can consider transferring the Office of Miss Navajo Nation to the Legislative Branch.

The committee also received reports from the following local chapter officials: Naatsis'áán Chapter President Hank Stevens, Oljato Chapter Vice President Albert Holiday, and Shonto Community Governance Chapter President Felix Fuller.

San Juan County (Utah) Commissioner Willie Grayeyes also gave the committee a report.

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