



24th Navajo Nation Council

Office of the Speaker

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Naabik'iyáti Committee Votes Down NGS, Mine Acquisition Support Legislation



Legislation 0044-19 sponsor Rickie Nez and representatives of Navajo Transitional Energy Company testify before the Naabik'iyáti' Committee Thursday. Left to right: Emy Zah, NTEC; Rickie Nez, council delegate; Steve Grey, NTEC; April Quinn, Navajo Dept. of Justice; Seth Damon, Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz — After nearly 8 hours of deliberation, legislation 0044-19 failed to pass the Navajo Nation Council Naabik'iyáti' Committee Thursday in a 9-11 vote. The measure would have reiterated the Navajo Nation's support for Navajo Transitional Energy Company acquiring the Navajo Generating Station and Peabody Kayenta Mine.

In addition, the legislation clarified that the transaction would be independent of the Nation and that the Nation would not provide any financial guarantees or waivers or release of claims against the owners pertaining to NTEC's acquisition of the properties.

Delegate Rickie Nez (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, T'iis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland) introduced the legislation and Delegate Herman Daniels (Shonto, Naa'tsis'áán, Oljato, Ts'áh Bii Kin) co-sponsored it.



A full house observes the committee's deliberations at the Diné Education Center Thursday. In order to accommodate the large number of projected attendees, the location was moved from the Council Chamber to the center.

Thursday's vote follows four town hall meetings and 12 work sessions with Navajo organizations and Navajo Nation executive branch agencies. In order to understand the implications of the potential transaction from all available information sources, the Office of the Speaker coordinated the work sessions and town halls with various stakeholders.

After the council's decision, NTEC issued a release stating they were ceasing their efforts to acquire the power plant and mine.

In response to the Naabik'íyáti' Committee's Thursday vote, Speaker Seth Damon (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí', Rock Springs, Tsayatoh) issued the following statement.

For close to 100 years, the Navajo Nation has been a strong traditional energy producer. In that time, government revenue from energy production has supported the Nation in becoming the strongest and most robust tribal government in the United States, propelling our people in endeavors our forbearers would have never imagined.

Much has changed in the energy markets and the political world, though, that is weakening the viability of Navajo Generating Station and Kayenta Mine to continue their full operations.

Last night, that Navajo Nation Council signaled that it is time for change. In order to develop a healthy and diverse economy that does not overly rely on any particular industry, the 24th Navajo Nation Council will advance new and innovative development initiatives that place our people's ability to live in our traditional homelands first. Expanding tourism, alternative energy development, carbon credits, and manufacturing are all ideas that this council is pursuing to ensure that a healthy government can continue to provide for its people.

As we have done through centuries of interaction with external actors, it is critical that our people band together and support one another. We are a proud nation that has existed on this land since time immemorial. The Navajo Nation Government may have been originally organized to approve energy leases. Though, as evidenced by the innumerable services the government

provides, it is not the sole purpose of the government today. Our people, our sovereignty, and our right to self-determination predate the first coal seam found on Navajo, and we will endure and thrive together.

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