



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253
Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174
Crystalyne Curley (928) 286-7918
nlnb.communications@gmail.com

Budget and Finance Committee supports Mexican Water power line project

WINDOW ROCK – Last Tuesday, the Budget and Finance Committee considered Legislation No. 0368-17, in which the Mexican Water Chapter seeks supplemental funding from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance in the amount of approximately \$1.6 million for the Mexican Water Power Line Extension Project.

According to the legislation sponsor, Council Delegate Davis Filfred (Mexican Water, Aneth, Teecnospos, Tólikan, Red Mesa), the power line project has completed preliminary and environmental assessments, archaeological clearances, and legal surveys for the right-of-way acquisitions. He emphasized that the project is construction-ready.

“Mexican Water Chapter has been trying to get this project funded for the last two years. They are asking for a phase three power line to help them with their economic development plan and to expand utilities to more residents in the area,” said Delegate Filfred.

He added that the power line is an incentive to attract additional businesses to the area, as well as to provide Mexican Water Chapter the means to continue expanding economic development projects. The 12-mile power line would run from the Red Mesa Substation to the Mexican Water Multipurpose Building.

The project summary states that the chapter, Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, and the state of Utah Navajo Trust Fund have committed to funding approximately \$230,000 toward the project costs. The chapter also provided nearly \$130,000 in matching funds.

BFC member Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) said he supported the chapter making strides to increase economic growth, but said the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority should be responsible for requesting a federal Rural Utilities Service loan to fund the project.

“I think there are a lot of power lines that need to be upgraded to a phase three. Maybe we need NTUA to come to the next Naabik’íyáti’ Committee meeting. They should be footing the cost for this upgrade because the line is already there, and this is to aid community growth and economic improvement,” said Delegate Tsosie.

Delegate Tsosie said Navajo communities near the Continental Divide developed a similar project that was a part of their economic development plan and the NTUA was able to fund the entire power line project, which allowed for the capacity to have economic and future development in the area.

BFC members voted 4-0 to approve Legislation No. 0368-17.

On Monday, the Naabik'iyáti' Committee approved the legislation with a vote of 12-1, and moves forward to the Navajo Nation Council, which serves as the final authority on the bill.

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