



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Navajo Nation opposes actions of the U.S. National Park Service

WINDOW ROCK – On the last day of the 2018 Fall Council Session, the Navajo Nation Council considered Legislation No. 0342-18, an emergency legislation, to oppose actions of the U.S. National Park Service within the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. The legislation states that the U.S. National Park Service allowed Commercial Use Authorization permit program within the leased lands of Antelope Point Marina and Resort and within the south shorelines of Lake Powell.

Pursuant to Title II section 164(A)(16) of the Navajo Nation Code matters constituting an emergency include matters, which directly threaten the sovereignty of the Navajo Nation.

Emergency legislation sponsor Council Delegate Tuchoney Slim, Jr. (Bodaway/Gap, Coppermine, K'ai'Bii'To, LeChee, Tonalea/Red Lake), who represents the communities surrounding Antelope Point Marina and Resort and Lake Powell, stated that the National Park Service recently issued a concession to a non-Navajo company to conduct river trips on the Colorado River without proper planning and agreement with the Navajo Nation and local Navajo communities.

“The U.S. National Park Service failed to consult with the Navajo Nation. In 1970, a quadrilateral agreement between the Navajo Nation, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Bureau of Reclamation insured that Navajo economic opportunities would be protected, but the National Park Service has failed to recognize Navajo authorized companies to conduct river trips on the Colorado River and within the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area,” said Delegate Slim.

He added, “Also, the National Park Service and the Federal Aviation Association are currently proposing the approval of an Air Management Plan without the proper recognition of the Navajo Nation.”

During the discussion, Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake), stated that the Navajo Nation needs to be firm with the objections of the park service’s rules, regulations, policies, or agreements that included no consultations with the Nation.

“Antelope Point is an area that attracts millions of dollars and visitors and we can not allow the park service to take advantage of us. It is unfortunate that the current Office of the President and

Vice President has not taken this issue seriously, therefore, it is up to Council to be firm,” said Delegate Tsosie.

The legislation includes Bodaway/Gap, Coppermine, LeChee, and Western Agency Council resolutions opposing the unauthorized actions of the National Park Service.

LeChee Chapter president Jerry L. Williams stated that the National Park Service ignores the surrounding community’s concerns and inputs regarding the park’s initiatives. The rights of the communities are not recognized, added Williams.

In support, Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi To ii) stated that there are consultation policies within the U.S. Department of Interior, which house the National Park Service, and those policies need to be respected and recognized.

“The Council and surrounding communities strongly supports the planning, management, and development issues within the shorelines of the Colorado River and Lake Powell to protect the sovereignty and economic development opportunities. The National Park Service can not continue to use Commercial Use Authorization permits without consultation,” said Delegate Phelps.

The Navajo Nation Council approved Legislation No. 0342-18 with a 13-0 vote with two amendments and serves as the final authority for the bill.

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