



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Council approves \$1.7 million for the Tsidi To ii Chapter powerline extension project



PHOTO: Tsidi To ii constituents gather with Council Delegate Otto Tso after Council's approval of the supplemental funding for the powerline extension during the special session on March 23, 2016.

WINDOW ROCK – During a special session held on Wednesday, the Navajo Nation Council unanimously approved supplemental funding from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance in the amount of \$1,746,362 for the Tsidi To ii Chapter Northwest Powerline Extension Project. According to the legislation, the powerline extension will provide electricity to 38 homes located on the north side of Navajo Route 15. All 38 homes are wired and ready to receive power in the small community located 20-miles north of Winslow, Arizona.

Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi To ii), who sponsored the legislation, expressed the need for the powerline extension especially for elderly people who live in Tsidi To ii – many of which were seated in the Council Chamber on Wednesday.

“This project took many years to address. It has completed the 164 review process and it is the number one priority on the chapter’s Capital Improvement Plan,” stated Delegate Phelps.

Delegate Phelps gave time to one of his constituents, know locally as Grandma Betty, to address the Council. She said the project has been prolonged for many years and felt like she was forgotten in the dark. The struggles of living without plumbing and electricity create many barriers and challenges in a rural community, she explained in the Navajo language.

Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) proposed an amendment to require Navajo Tribal Utility Authority to provide leverage funds for the project.

“This project cost over a million dollars. We should require leverage from NTUA. They have the capacity to fund this project and Council can’t continue to make NTUA’s job easier by picking up the total cost for utility projects,” stated Delegate Tsosie.

Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichíí, Steamboat) opposed the proposed amendment saying it would prolong the project because he believes that NTUA will not immediately release the leverage funds.

Council voted 19-0 to approve the supplemental funding for the Tsidi To ii Chapter powerline extension along with the amendment to require NTUA to provide leverage funds for the project.

Following the session, Tsidi To ii Chapter secretary/treasurer Verna Yazzie stated, “This is the first time Tsidi To ii Chapter’s infrastructure project has been presented on the Council floor. I am grateful that the Council approved the project and heard the pleas of the constituents. Out of the 38 homes, 15 veterans live within the project area. I hope President Russell Begaye will be inspired to approve the project because our elders, children, and veterans need electricity and it is a fundamental right.”

President Begaye will have ten calendar days to consider the powerline project funding once the Council resolution is sent to the Office of the President.

Council also approved Legislation No. 0419-15, amending the Navajo Preference in Employment Act, Legislation No. 0018-16, supplemental funding from the UUFB in the amount of \$500,000 for the Cameron Chapter demolition project along with an amendment to compensate Navajo Partition Land grazing officials to address reissuance of NPL grazing permits in the amount of \$25,366, Legislation No. 0019-16, supplemental funding from the UUFB in the amount of \$1 million for the Tolani Lake Senior Center project, and Legislation No. 0009-16, supplemental funding from the UUFB in the amount of \$300,000 for the St. Bonaventure Indian Mission School to purchase three buses.

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