Written by Staff Reports
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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On Nov. 13, the Law and Order Committee considered Legislation No. 0451-17, which seeks to approve and authorize a contract between the Navajo Nation and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on behalf of the Nation for a six-year term for emergency medical services, and an annual funding agreement and scope of work for the contract.

LOC vice chair Council Delegate Raymond Smith, Jr. (Houck, Klagetoh, Nahata Dziil, Tsé Si áni, Wide Ruins), who sponsored the legislation, asked for his committee's support to approve the intergovernmental agreement that would continue emergency medical services on the Nation.

"The annual funding agreement is a self-determination contract that provides vital emergency medical services to Navajo communities, businesses, and visitors. The agreement would continue the management and operation of emergency medical services," Smith said.

The Navajo Nation Emergency Medical Services consists of an administrative section, two field operation offices, a training and technical assistance office, a third-party billing office, a property office, accounting, and 14 EMS field offices.

LOC member Council Delegate Otto Tso (Tó Nanees Dizí) questioned if the agreement correlated with the funding needs of the program.

“What is the funding trend for the program, and how was the negotiations regarding funding completed within the agreement?” asked Tso.

According to NNEMS department manager Henry Wallace, the funding for the program has increased due to the expansion of services and personnel, and salary increases. The Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety director Jesse Delmar and Navajo Nation Department of Justice completed the agreement negotiation, he added.

At the end of the discussion, Tso recommended that the NNDPS continue to advocate for adequate funding for all programs that have intergovernmental contracts.

“All governmental agreements should reflect the financial needs of the program. The Nation needs the full amount of funding to provide public safety services,” Tso said.

The Law and Order Committee approved Legislation No. 0451-17 with a vote of 2-0. The Naabik’íyáti’ Committee serves as the final authority for the bill.