



25th Navajo Nation Council

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Naabik'iyáti' Committee receives a report from the Department of Emergency Management regarding severe rainstorm response efforts



The Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — The Naabik'iyáti' Committee received a report from the Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management (DEM) on Thursday, outlining the emergency response efforts related to recent severe rainstorms that had impacted multiple regions throughout the Navajo Nation.

DEM officials stated that the swift activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and extensive multi-agency collaboration were crucial in distributing essential supplies and addressing infrastructure challenges.

Council Delegate Eugenia Charles-Newton (Shiprock) reflected on challenges in the northern region of the Navajo Nation, where heavy rainfall led to flooding and washed out roadways.

"We often pray for rain, but we're not prepared for the resulting issues like road washouts and power outages," said Delegate Charles-Newton.

Similar sentiments were shared among other Council Delegates, emphasizing the need for improved preparedness.

In response to the severe rainstorms, the DEM activated its EOC at Level 3 on June 21, transitioned to Level 2 on June 22, and returned to Level 3 on June 26. This activation enabled coordinated efforts among multiple agencies to distribute essential supplies, restore power and water services, and conduct infrastructure repairs.

The discussion also focused on enhancing emergency preparedness and community communication to strengthen efforts for future emergency situations.

Council Delegate Herman Daniels, Jr. (Tсах Bii Kin, Navajo Mountain, Shonto, Oljato) stressed the importance of regular updates and meetings.

“We should have regular updates and meetings with emergency management to keep the chapters informed,” said Delegate Daniels.

DEM officials also reported that supplies such as drinking water, non-perishable food, medical supplies, blankets, first aid kits, and hygiene kits were distributed efficiently. Collaboration with multiple agencies, including the Utah Navajo Health Systems, Navajo Department of Health, Public Health Emergency Preparedness Programs, and various county offices, was instrumental in the response.

Power and water restoration efforts, conducted in collaboration with the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority and Rocky Mountain Power Company, ensured that most affected communities had power restored by June 23 and water by June 24.

Response efforts also involved the Navajo Division of Transportation and the McKinley County Road Department who conducted minor road repairs to ensure transportation routes remained accessible. These collaborative efforts were vital in delivering supplies and services to isolated communities.

Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Cove, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Red Valley Tse’alnaozt’i’i, Sheepsprings, Beclabito, Gadiiahi/To’Koi) emphasized the need for understanding the emergency management deployment process at the local level and stressed the importance of effective communication among all entities.

“We need to understand the process for deploying emergency management services during times of crisis,” added Delegate Crotty.

Effective communication strategies and the establishment of a dedicated emergency management agency were highlighted during the emergency response meetings.

The Naabik’iyáti’ Committee discussed the need for a comprehensive operational plan, clear communication channels, and recommendations to allow chapters to declare emergencies for their respective community. Efforts to improve public communication through social media and a potential information dashboard are ongoing.

The Naabik’iyáti’ Committee continues to advocate for additional funding and resources to address potential emergencies on the Navajo Nation.

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