



25th Navajo Nation Council

# 25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**October 9, 2024**

## **Resources and Development Committee requests further consultation before implementation of new Eastern Agency Grazing Permit Renewal Grazing Fees**



**The Resources and Development Committee called on the BIA Eastern Navajo Agency to conduct further consultation with pertinent land boards before negotiating new grazing permit renewal fees.**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – On Monday, after deliberating a report from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Eastern Navajo Agency, the Resources and Development Committee (RDC) requested further consultation with the Eastern Agency Land Board before implementing the upcoming 2025 Eastern Agency Grazing Permit Renewal Grazing Fees.

Based on an appraisal report regarding grazing fees, an analysis on comparable lease rates, and an assessment of fair market value, BIA Eastern Navajo Agency Natural Resources Manager Effie Delmar said the agency is proposing a renewal rate of six to eight dollars – an increase of four to six dollars per animal unit.

“This price increase has a big impact on grazing permittees,” said Council Delegate Danny Simpson who represents the chapters located in District 20. “I’d encourage that before we negotiate, we consult with the Eastern Agency Land Board on the new renewal rate.”

The increase in grazing permit renewal grazing fees would apply to Eastern Navajo Agency communities located in Districts 16, 19, and 20. According to Delmar, the BIA Eastern Navajo Agency has presented updates to the Eastern Agency Land Board and is trying to implement these fees by Nov. 15.

The impacts of increased fees are significant and far-reaching said Delegate Rickie Nez noting that there are approximately 555 grazing permits that have been issued within Districts 16, 19, and 20.

"I'm concerned because we are approaching serious deadlines and this is a very paramount topic and issue," Council Delegate Nez said. "There are 32 grazing communities in this area that cover a lot of land base."

Delegate Simpson asked how much input the land boards had provided before this recommendation was brought to the RDC.

"If the Eastern Joint Land Board hasn't been consulted, I don't want the RDC to make a decision without their consultation," Delegate Simpson said.

Agents from the BIA Eastern Navajo Agency both confirmed that updates were provided to grazing permittees without much response.

Delmar noted that the BIA Eastern Navajo Agency would conduct further government-to-government consultation before moving forward in setting the new grazing permit fees which includes consultation with the Eastern Agency Land Board, the RDC, the Navajo Department of Agriculture and the Navajo Nation Council.

RDC Chair Brenda Jesus said that any increase to fees regarding Animal Unit Months (AUM) should be inclusive of permittee input and proper consultation.

Chair Jesus referenced a letter that was included in the report documents that were provided to the RDC. The letter from BIA Eastern Navajo Agency Supervisor Lester Tsosie notified Navajo Nation President Dr. Buu Nygren of the proposed new fees and was dated Sept. 23.

"This is the first that we're seeing of this letter. It would have been nice to have gotten a copy before today," Chair Jesus said. "Every member of the RDC represents a different agency on the Navajo Nation and its inherent to our responsibilities that we do what is best for the Diné people."

In addition to having the BIA Eastern Navajo Agency provide formal consultation with the Eastern Navajo Agency Land Board, Chair Jesus recommended that the RDC have a leadership meeting on the proposed new grazing fees.

The Resources and Development Committee voted one in favor and four opposed in not accepting the report from the BIA Eastern Navajo Agency.

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