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APRIL 5 2016

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## OPVP TAKES STEPS TOWARD ADDRESSING A SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE NATION

WINDOW ROCK-Representatives from Zia Engineering & Environmental Consultants, LLC, met with President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez to discuss a Navajo Nation Solid Waste Management Plan.

A comprehensive solid waste management plan is needed for the Navajo Nation, said Vice President Nez, to transition from waste disposal to recycling.

The Zia Consultants outlined steps of implementation they wanted to address with the Office of the President and Vice President along with attending staff from Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Justice and the Division of Community Development.

First, they said, the Nation needs to promulgate flow control, issue permits, define services and formulate a request for proposals (RFP).

In promulgating flow control, the Nation would need to establish 'flow control' authority over all solid waste materials generated within Navajo boundary.

Once established, the Nation would then require all solid waste service providers operating within its borders to obtain a

permit and abide by the stipulations set forth.

Before formulating a Request for Proposals (RFP) for solid waste management services, the Nation would also need to prepare a comprehensive



Left to right: NNDOJ Staff Attorney Lorenzo Curley, Vice President Jonathan Nez, Director of NNEPA Dr. Donald Benn, President Russell Begaye and President and Founder of Zia Engineering and Environmental Consultants LLC, Edward Martinez discuss the development of a solid waste management plan for the Navajo Nation.

description of the solid waste management services it plans to make available, that are organized according to agencies, waste sheds, and administrative service centers.

With that established, the Nation could then develop an RFP for the desired solid waste management services to be issued to the private and public sectors.

The function of this whole process is for the Navajo Nation to be able to oversee their waste management program.

"The Navajo Nation must implement comprehensive solid waste management and reduce our dependence upon outside companies to transport and dispose of our waste," Vice President Nez said.

President Begaye said the Nation has previously undertaken a study on developing a landfill. He said the Nation pays huge sums of money to have its waste hauled off.

"I'd encourage everyone involved to pull that study as it identified sites for a proposed landfill and addresses questions over who owns the waste on the Nation," he said.

The president also addressed concerns over recycling sites.

"We need to provide some type

of recycling. What can we do with the recycling? There is no plant here that can process it for re-use," he said. "We need to be able to incentivize recycling for our people. Many of our community members are conscientious and haul their recycling all the way to Albuquerque. It would be nice to have a place here on the Nation where we can do that."

Before the end of the meeting, the Zia Consultants discussed how the Nation would move forward after issuing an RFP which includes assessing the proposals, selecting a provider and negotiating the franchise agreements.

The adoption of a plan is a major step in the process which could take two to three years once started. The intent of the plan is to address policy and structure that will take the Nation ten to fifteen years into the future in solid waste management.

"This waste management plan encompasses social and behavioral change with our people," said Vice President Nez. "Our people need to have a discussion about this, about reducing waste. We are a sovereign nation and we need to have a say on this matter."

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