

**Testimony to the New Mexico State Legislature  
Indian Affairs Committee  
“Building Regenerative Communities”  
October 4, 2022**

Ya’at’eeh to the Indian Affairs Committee of the New Mexico State Legislature. Ax’hé’he for allowing us to provide a presentation on building regenerative communities. We also want to acknowledge the ancestral lands of the Tewa peoples today.

I am Percy Byron Anderson, Manuelito Chapter Secretary/Treasurer. For my clanships, I am of the Tsi’naajinii Clan, born for the Tódich’ii’nii Clan. My mother’s other clans are Dibéizhini and Nałani (Comanche). My father’s other clans are Kinyaa’áanii and Nakai Diné. I am from Manuelito, Navajo Nation, New Mexico, also known as Kin Hozhoni (Beautiful Home).

I am Stephen Silversmith, Iyanbito Chapter Secretary/Treasurer. For my clanships, I am of the Kinyaa’áanii clan, born for the Honágháahnii clan. My maternal grandfather’s clan is Tó’aheedlínii and my paternal grandfather’s clan is Tł’ógi. I am from Iyanbito, Navajo Nation, New Mexico.

As Chapter local governments we operate under Title 26 of the Navajo Nation Code. Title 26 allows us to become certified under the Local Governance Act. Certification allows us to enter into agreements while adhering to Navajo Nation laws for the purpose of governance sustainability while being fiscally mindful and responsible. As local governance Chapters, we honor the government-to-government relationship. We also have local Community Land Use Planning Committees who assist in the development of local governance when it comes to land. They are of great importance to community development. There is a need for funding and technical assistance to assist Navajo Chapter communities with land use planning efforts.

We are also here to present to you the challenges, recommendations, and opportunities on projects and issues we are encountering at the Chapter community level, especially the various land status that are within the communities. We have a powerpoint slide to present on this after this testimony. With this presentation, we must be mindful of the pandemic we experienced and inflationary prices that are now impacting everything we purchase. Regenerative communities may be the key to sustainability and the local cottage home economy.

At this time, tribal and non-tribal offices are attending to right-of-way (ROW) issues and developing solutions for streamlining the processes and partnering with various entities to attend to the critical needs for infrastructure such as water and sewage, roads, bridges and crossings, electricity, telecommunication, and housing with bathroom additions.

There are some Chapter communities now looking beyond infrastructure recognizing that there is a need to create a community that is regenerative, acknowledging the landscape, its natural water resources, and protecting sacred sites. Indigenous concepts are being incorporated into the planning process while encouraging residents to have access to fixed wireless broadband

service and telecommunication for their cottage industry enterprises and access to community vending villages, education, health, agriculture, animal care, delivery and shipping services, and remote employment.

When it comes to land and acknowledging the importance for livestock such as sheep, goats, horses, cows, and other domesticated animals as a source of sustenance and income, we are also encouraging families and individuals to garden and farm in a regenerative manner whereby we are applying techniques that does not harm the soil but regenerates it without pesticides and other chemical based agents. We recognize the symbiosis between nature, animals, and humans. We also recognize that respect and gratitude is to be shown for the moisture from the air resulting in nourishment for all forms of organisms for a healthy soil and high nutrient dense food for the body.

With respect to land, there is a great concern for illegal trash dumping of waste and consumer goods littering arroyos and alongside thoroughfares. There is a need for regional solid waste and recycling transfer stations for rural communities. Such plans for regional transfer stations should be considered to attend to illegal trash dumping and cleanup of littered sites.

With housing there is a need for transitional housing for the homeless, new construction, renovation, and additions to existing homes where families are increasing in number. Rural homelessness is a concern that leads to migrations to towns and urban areas.

With the pandemic that we experienced, the importance of storing perishables properly and safely was recognized. We need large refrigeration and freezer units. The buildings that will store the units, such as warehouses, should have the option for renewable alternative energy connection as a backup source. There is a need to support local community food pantries who service many communities surrounding its hub of service.

There is a great need for community rural addressing projects. Funding is needed to address issues such as emergency 911 calls and jurisdictional issues with signages, rural address numbering on buildings, and mapping. The potential of rural addressing with telecommunication services can attend to many needs and safety health issues for community residents.

There is also a great need for animal care. The love for animals is great among us but when economics and sudden emergencies play a part in the proper raising of animals, we have situations such as an increase in feral animals and the spread of diseases and sickness. We need funding to create unique animal care community projects that attend to education, vaccination, spay and neutering, humane adoption, and mobile veterinarian care.

The community based projects described in this testimony such as land use planning, telecommunication needs, housing and community buildings, animal care, illegal trash disposal, and the respect for the soil with the production of food, leads to the need for community human resources. There is a need to create community service learning internship projects in partnership with non-government organizations as fiscal agents to provide stipend pay to individuals and

assist with managing projects on data collection, mapping, carpentry, masonry, animal care, erosion, drainage, and water catchments, community gardens, fencing, and right-of-way assistance to attend to consent signatures and other general requirements.

There is also a need for community planners and project managers at the local level. Community-based regional skill development sites also need to be considered while partnering with others on project development. We implore funding sources to not make application and processing so cumbersome and lengthy.

We appreciate the Infrastructure Capital Improvement Project (ICIP) process and the assistance that is provided by the Department of Indian Affairs and other governmental agencies with their offices for services to rural communities. We realize that the capital outlay funding process is on a cost reimbursement basis once the funding is approved by the State Legislature. We appreciate all State funding and the support that the Legislature and the Governor provides to its citizens and for those of us who live on ancestral lands.

We would like to acknowledge the Governor of New Mexico, Michelle Lujan Grisham, on the importance for healthy soil and food production and support for year long community greenhouses and community sustainable food production on a small scale for livestock feed. We would also like to acknowledge the concern by the Governor on mental and behavioral health issues, public safety and jurisdictional issues, education, and telecommunication services with construction.

Ending, we hope that community-based projects can affect mental and behavioral health issues for the better. We also encourage support for affordable healthcare for all citizens of New Mexico, especially for those who are struggling economically. Thank you for your time and attention.