



Former Bennett Freeze Area Chapters still awaiting Escrow Funds

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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Council Delegate Otto Tso, Chairman of the Navajo-Hopi Land Commission (NHLC) continues to advocate for Former Bennett Freeze Area (FBFA) Escrow Funds for five (5) non-certified chapters – Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Coppermine, Kaibeto, and Tolani Lake.

On November 3, 2006 a Navajo-Hopi Intergovernmental Compact was entered between the Navajo Nation and the Hopi Tribe. Both tribes agreed to equally divide funds held in escrow since 1970 due to on-going litigation.

“I am appreciative of the work done by the Navajo-Hopi Land Commissioners, the funds distributed will provide housing relief to community members in the Former Bennett Freeze Area,” said Chairman Tso.

On May 8, 2009 President Barack Obama lifted the forty-year Bennett Freeze which allowed the NHLC to approve resolution NHLCJY-27-13 which created the FBFA Escrow Funds Use Plan. Under this plan, families within the nine (9) FBFA Chapters are eligible to receive up to \$30,000.

“The Bennett Freeze has impacted Navajo families for generations and this funding opportunity will benefit our Navajo people who will finally have a home suitable for living,” added Tso.

On May 5, 2022, the NHLC convened to amend resolution NHLCJY-27-13 to approve the distribution of \$3,606,808 for FBFA housing directly to the nine (9) FBFA chapters based on Chapter land base. Out of the nine (9) chapters, four (4) certified chapters – Bodaway-Gap, Leupp, Tonalea, and Tuba City were able to deposit funds directly into their accounts.

The remaining five (5) non-certified chapters are still awaiting escrow funds to be distributed as two options are being considered to expedite the process. The NHLC Office, the Navajo Division of Community Development (DCD) and the Navajo Administrative Service Center (ASC) can transfer the funds to the chapter accounts or chapters can follow the same distribution process as the Agricultural Infrastructure Funds.

“I thank our past and current leaders on the Navajo-Hopi Land Commission for working diligently to bring homes to our Navajo people in the Bennett Freeze area,” said Speaker Damon. “As leaders we will continue working for our Navajo elders and children to ensure they have access to adequate living conditions.”

The NHLC Office, DCD, and the ASC will continue to oversee the process to ensure compliance is met by requiring quarterly expenditure reports from chapters.

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