



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 4, 2025

Navajo Hopi Land Commission receives update confirming 84 modular homes completed



Navajo Hopi Land Commission Chair Otto Tso (right) receives updates from Executive Director Sarah Slim (left) on modular home installations for Navajo Partitioned Lands.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — On Friday, Oct. 31, the Navajo Hopi Land Commission (NHLC) convened for a special meeting to receive a progress report on the Navajo Partitioned Land (NPL) Modular Housing Project, confirming construction of all 84 modular homes and ongoing weekly installations across NPL communities.

“The Navajo Hopi Land Commission has utilized its full budget and delivered results. Now we are moving into the next phase, demanding faster turnaround, clearer communication, and process improvements across the Navajo Nation,” said NHLC Chair Otto Tso.

Navajo Hopi Land Commission Office Executive Director Sarah Slim reported that all project homes have been manufactured and 59 have been fully installed. She explained that delivery teams continue preparing foundations, placing units, and completing skirting, steps, and coordination for utilities. Slim said ongoing weather, sandy terrain, and long stretches of unmaintained roads continue to complicate deliveries, but weekly installations continue with assistance from local chapters and county partners.

Slim indicated that the project currently holds a remaining balance of more than \$4.5 million and reported that more than 30 invoices are awaiting processing. Once approved, Slim stated that the remaining balance will decrease significantly. Payment delays continue to occur because invoices move between departments with different formatting requirements, which

slows final home turnover. She said that greater efficiency in payment systems is needed to ensure that completed homes can be transferred to families in a timely manner.

Commissioner Arbin Mitchell emphasized that progress on the project requires cooperation among chapters, county supervisors, and contractors. He acknowledged challenges with road access, equipment availability, and utility installation but noted that homes continue to reach families because communities are working together. He also highlighted the continuing need for electrical, water and septic access for several sites.

Commissioner Germaine Simonson stressed the need for consistent follow-up on payment delays, stating that families should not have to wait for keys because internal processing slows down. She requested that the Office of Management and Budget and Office of the Controller attend a future Commission meeting to address the delays directly and commit to faster turnaround.

Delegate Helena Nez Begay spoke about field staff using personal vehicles to access remote sites, and she urged the Commission to consider mileage reimbursement or improved vehicle access. She noted that staff are often working in difficult weather and terrain to keep installations on schedule and should receive support for that effort.

The Commission is exploring a 638 agreement to secure heavy-duty vehicles capable of reaching rural sites, as current fleet options have not met the needs of the field teams. Slim explained that staff also face administrative challenges in requesting fleet vehicles and completing required reporting every two weeks.

Coordination continues with Division of Community Development and Parsons on utility planning. A preliminary estimate places electric, water, and sewer hookups for project homes at approximately \$672,000, though that amount is expected to decrease as households with existing utilities are verified. Slim stated that the Commission is preparing for a supplemental funding request and will require support from oversight and the Navajo Nation Council.

Chair Tso concluded, "From the beginning, this project was about getting families into safe homes. Our job is to remove barriers, not create them. Every home delivered represents a family who no longer has to wait. So, we will continue moving, monitoring, and pushing until every home is installed and turned over."

The Navajo Hopi Land Commission received the report with a vote of five in favor and none opposed.

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