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## TOUR OF HPL/NPL HOMES EXEMPLIFIES NEED TO ADDRESS INFRASTRUCTURE AND LIVESTOCK CONCERNS



During the tour, President Begaye and Vice President Nez traveled to houses that lie along the border of NPL and HPL lands. Above President Begaye points out the bordered area to Trent Blanchard from Senator John McCain's office.

On Thursday, Nov. 11, the Navajo Hopi Land Commission Office (NHLCO) facilitated a tour of seven homes in located in the Blue Canyon and Hardrock area within the confines of the HPL/NPL impacted areas.

The purpose of the tour was to highlight infrastructure needs and concerns from residents. Both President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez participated in the tour as did local chapter representatives and Trent Blanchard, Constituent Advocate for Senator John McCain.

On NPL/HPL, President Begaye said there are many issues to be dealt with, such as infrastructure, grazing concerns and the confiscation of livestock by Hopi Rangers who enforce boundaries.

Many Navajo residents live close to the boundary and their livestock move onto the Hopi Reservation. When livestock is confiscated, the Navajo government or the individual owner has to pay a

fee to the Hopi Tribe to get their livestock back.

"We have Navajos who live on Hopi Partitioned Land (HPL), all throughout this area and we pay up to \$9 million dollars to the Hopi Tribe for Navajos who live there. When they confiscate our cattle we have to pay to get them back," he said. "We need to work with the Hopi Tribe to address these issues and to further reduce tension between residents."

Many residents who live on HPL but are located nearest to agency chapters, lean on the chapters for assistance in these instances. Some have even relinquished their livestock permits because it's gotten too difficult to maintain.

In addressing houses that were built with Office of Navajo Hopi Indian Relocation (ONHIR) funds, President Begaye told Blanchard that ONHIR funding needs to be used to bring dilapidated houses up to standard.

"We have homes out here that were built with ONHIR funds that are dilapidating. At the time, and still, there was no ONHIR commissioner in place. So no one oversaw the development of these housing projects. We need to utilize ONHIR funds to bring them up to standard, however ONHIR is saying we can not use these funds for these purposes," President Begaye said.

ONHIR gets approximately \$7.6 million dollars allocated from the federal government on a yearly basis, which President Begaye said could be used in addressing this issue.

"It could be an in-house policy change and if so, I think it could be addressed quickly. We need an amendment to make this possible," the president told Blanchard.

When Senator John McCain visited the Navajo Nation in September, President Begaye told the Senator that ONHIR needs to finish addressing the pending cases that are still open before ONHIR is

phased out.

"ONHIR is saying that infrastructure was supposed to be developed in the HPL/NPL but none of this has taken place. The infrastructure is really lacking here," President Begaye said. "Along the way many residents have given up hope that they'll get water, electricity or road repair. Some moved to larger communities and border towns."

The tour visited the homes of seven residents that exemplified the dire needs of the area. The Hardrock Relocateses Organization provided lunch during a presentation they voiced their concerns.

"We need to be open to use chapter and tribal resources to help the families out here and we need to finish up the pending cases that are still open," President Begaye said.

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