



The Navajo Nation Council — Office of the Speaker

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Government Services Committee hears public testimony regarding Navajo Housing Authority

DILKON, Ariz. – The Government Services Committee of the 21st Navajo Nation Council conducted its last public hearing this morning at the Dilkon Community School regarding numerous issues involving public rental and homeownership policies set forth by the Navajo Housing Authority.

Council Delegate Ervin M. Keeswood (Tse Daa Kaan), chairman of the Government Services Committee (GSC), as well as other committee members collected data and heard testimony from the public to address their issues.

Keeswood said the hearing provided a chance for the public to speak to the GSC directly and said, "You can tell us anything and everything you want."

Although the issues were serious at hand, the atmosphere remained civil and open with many from Dilkon and the surrounding areas voicing their concerns.

Susie Wauneka, chapter president at T'iistoh, was thankful for the houses provided by Navajo Housing Authority (NHA) and said, "Just 10 years after I purchased my home, I am having problems with the foundation, floor and insulation. Mr. Keeswood said I could request anything, I would like to request that my house to be paid off."

Jean Cody and Eugene Cody of Leupp, Ariz., also expressed their concerns, "Within the first year of purchasing our home we experienced very serious problems: faulty wiring, foundation instability, insulation and vent problems, loose floor tiles, squeaky floor boards and lots of beer cans and bottles within the walls and the roof. The people who build our homes need to be better supervised."

Louise Walker also of Leupp said, "I am a home owner. My home was one of the first to be built. I am a single parent, putting my children through school. My budget does not include home repairs. I would like to second the comment earlier about the beer cans and beer bottles within our structures."

Rueben Nells from T'iistoh, Ariz., expressed gratitude to being a homeowner of NHA's scattered homes project.

"I am proud of my home," Nells said. "It is one of the first scattered houses. T'iitsoh took the lead and I am thankful for my home. I left the reservation after high school, but it was my home that brought me back. I returned home in 2001 to help my community."

"Although it took four to five years just to apply and go through the entire bureaucratic process, I was patient. For nine years I have been paying, taking care of poor material and poor craftsmanship out of my own pocket," Nells explained. "So, I would like to suggest that the GSC revise and review the warranty department. They have been to my home several times taking notes and pictures and when the repair men showed up, none of that information was available to them."

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Another point of concern was the increase in vandalism and intimidation by possible gangs throughout the entire Navajo Nation.

Tommy Lewis Jr. of Dilkon, president of Dilkon Community School, expressed his theory on cluttered housing.

"The youth are restricted by suburban housing. Gangs, drugs and alcohol are plaguing our youth, but more than that, they have nothing to do," Lewis said. "They are becoming too dependent on the government. More education and training is what is needed."

Police Lt. Clifton Smith of Tuba City, who is assigned to the Toyey Police District, gave some insight into public safety issues in the area.

"I believe it is a combination of many factors that have contributed to the increase in graffiti, burglaries and other criminal activities such as the influence of alcohol, drugs and boredom intensifies in such clustered communities," explained Smith.

The Dilkon hearing completed the year long process of public testimony regarding NHA policies. Previous hearings were held in Fort Defiance, Ariz., and in Crownpoint, N.M.

The information gathered from these hearings will be compiled, recorded and filtered through the GSC, and will be later presented to the Navajo Housing Authority. The intention of the hearings is to make significant changes for the Navajo people to help increase their standard and quality of living.

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