Navajo President Shelly Says Overregulation Hurts Housing Development

ST. MICHAELS, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly said the Navajo Nation is overregulated by the federal government and that creates problems for housing development on the Navajo Nation.


President Shelly added he is advocating for more Navajo autonomy in his meetings with federal officials.

The GAO was tasked by Congress to investigate barriers in Indian Country to housing development. A three-person panel was on hand visiting the Navajo Nation Monday with plans to visit other communities throughout the week.

President Shelly said land status was an issue and Land Department Manager Mike Halona said that federal laws apply to all federal lands, regardless if there are people living on federal land.

“I think that is where a big change and an easy change would need to be made, when all of these federal environmental lands were enacted, they just put federal lands across the board, not thinking there is actually people living on it. That’s the big problem,” Halona said.

President Shelly said the Navajo government is making changes to help speed up development, like the expedited 164 process that puts deadlines to documents needing signatures from key Navajo government officials.

“We are making progress, but we need new solutions that consider all options,” President Shelly said.