



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 10, 2016

MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253
Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174
nmlb.communications@gmail.com

Delegate Begay urges BIE to aid the Navajo Nation to renovate and construct teacher and staff housing



Photo (above): Condemned and unoccupied teacher and staff housing on the Many Farms school campus (2/28/2016).

MANY FARMS, Ariz. – On a tour of the Many Farm’s irrigation systems on Feb. 28, Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) also provided a tour of the dilapidated teacher and staff housing near Many Farms High School, along with chapter officials and Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreón, Whitehorse Lake), who chairs the Síhasin Fund Subcommittee.

In Nov. 2015, Delegate Begay sent a letter to Bureau of Indian Education director Dr. Charles M. Roessel, requesting for guidance and technical assistance on how to best address the need for teacher and staff housing at BIE funded schools.

“Each of these schools have significant issues that are impacting their educational services, ranging from outdated facilities, outdated classrooms, outdated cafeterias, outdated maintenance facilities, and rundown housing facilities that are over 50 years old and in desperate need of replacement,” stated Delegate Begay in the letter.

Delegate Begay said he is currently in the process of requesting assistance and support from local school boards and administrators by providing evaluation reports of their school facilities. He added that he has reached out to the Bureau of Indian Affairs Gallup and Albuquerque facility maintenance staff to aid with renovating the housing facilities, but found no success.

According to the letter, five schools that are in need of renovation or building replacement are: Nazlini Community School, Cottonwood Day School, Jeedeez’a Academy (Low Mountain), Many Farms Community School, and Many Farms High School.

Delegate Begay also extended an invitation to the BIE to visit the schools to carry out a comprehensive evaluation, provide direction to obtain federal funding, and to provide recommendations on how to address issues with teacher and staff housing.

“When I drive through my communities, it is disheartening to see dilapidated or condemned staff housing. They are just sitting there and no one is living in them because they are unsafe, and we need the BIA and federal government to begin addressing the staff housing issues on the Navajo Nation,” said Delegate Begay.

Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels), who chairs the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee, met with Dr. Roessel in Washington, D.C. on Feb. 23 to advocate for funding at the federal level for school buildings and staff housing, among other education related issues.

“The buildings are an essential part of providing the best education possible for our Navajo children and allows teachers to provide them with a solid education in a high-quality learning environment,” said Delegate Hale.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org or find us on Facebook and Twitter, keywords: Navajo Nation Council