

Navajo-Hopi Land Commission

The Navajo-Hopi Land Commission (NHLC) was established within the Legislative Branch of the Navajo Nation Government. The NHLC is authorized to collect, update, and maintain information on the Navajo-Hopi Land Dispute matters, and to advise the President on such matters. The NHLC consists of voting members of the Navajo Nation Council representing areas affected by the Navajo-Hopi Land Dispute. The NHLC Commissioners of the 25th Navajo Nation Council are:

Lomardo Aseret (Klagetoh, Wide Ruines, Houck, Lupton, Nahata Dziil),
lomardo.aseret@navajo-nsn.gov.

Helena Nez Begay (Coppermine, K'aibii'to, LeChee, Tonalea/Red Lake, Bodaway/Gap),
helena.begay@navajo-nsn.gov.

Crystalnye Curley (Tachee/Blue Gap, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tselani/Cottonwood, Low Mountain),
crystalnye.curley@navajo-nsn.gov.

Herman M. Daniels, Jr. (Tсах Bii Kin, Navajo Mountain, Shonto, Oljato),
hdaniels@navajo-nsn.gov.

Vince R. James (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kinlichee, Steamboat),
vincejames@navajo-nsn.gov.

Vice-Chair Casey Allen Johnson (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Birdsprings, Leupp, Tolani Lake),
casey.johnson@navajo-nsn.gov.

Germaine Simonson (Hard Rock, Forest Lake, Pinon, Black Mesa, Whippoorwill),
germaine.simonson@navajo-nsn.gov.

Chair Otto Tso (To'Nanees'Dizi),
otso@navajo-nsn.gov.

Cherilyn Yazzie (Dilcon, Indian Wells, Teesto, Whitecone, Greasewood Springs),
cherilyn.yazzie@navajo-nsn.gov.

Navajo-Hopi Land Commission Office

The Navajo-Hopi Land Commission Office (NHLCO) is under the direction of the President of the Navajo Nation. The NHLCO assists the NHLC in carrying out and performing its functions. The Executive Director of the NHLCO is appointed by the President. The Executive Director of the NHLCO is Sarah Slim,
sarah.slim@navajo-nsn.gov.

Navajo Nation Washington Office

The Navajo Nation Washington Office (NNWO) is an extension of the Navajo Nation government in Washington, D.C., representing the Navajo Nation government's concerns to the United States Congress and Federal agencies. The NNWO plays an integral role in pursuing the goals set forth by the Executive and Legislative branches regarding the Relocation Act and Bennett Freeze. The Director of the NNWO is appointed by the President of the Navajo Nation and confirmed by the Navajo Nation Council. The Director of the NNWO is Justin Ahasteen,
jahasteen@nnwo.org.

Navajo Hopi Land Commission Office
Post Office Box 2549
Window Rock, Arizona 86515

Phone: 928-871-6441
Fax: 928-871-7297
E-mail: sarah.slim@navajo-nsn.gov

Navajo Hopi Land Commission Office



The Navajo Nation **DR. BUU NYGREN** PRESIDENT
Yideeskáqdi Nitsáhákees **RICHELLE MONTOYA** VICE PRESIDENT

NAVAJO NATION
Navajo Hopi Land Commission Office
Tel: 928 871 6441

The Navajo Nation government is committed to holding the United States responsible and accountable for the impacts of the forced relocation of Navajo families and decades of development freezes imposed on Navajo communities.

Historical Background

In 1882, United States President Chester Arthur issued an Executive Order creating conflicting land interests between the Navajo Nation and Hopi Tribe. This land dispute led to the 1974 Navajo Hopi Settlement Act (Relocation Act), which partitioned the disputed area into the Navajo Partitioned Lands (NPL) and Hopi Partitioned Lands (HPL) and legislated for the forced relocation of Navajo citizens from their ancestral homes on the HPL. While Congress initially believed that 1,000 Navajos would need to be relocated, the actual number has been over 16,000.

To facilitate the relocation and administer benefits to relocatees, Congress created the Office of Navajo and Hopi Indian Relocation (ONHIR). ONHIR is directed by a Commissioner appointed by the U.S. President. This role has been vacant since 1994.

Impacted Communities

To date, the relocation of Navajos remains incomplete, and many Navajos have not received the full benefits or humane treatment promised to them under the Relocation Act.

The Relocation Act benefits were to be provided to the heads of households that were relocated. These relocatees were promised, among other things, decent, safe, sanitary, and adequate homes, and humane treatment, but often received much less. To this day, surviving relocatees are still fighting to receive their benefits and fair treatment.

Many of these fights are the result of ONHIR not having a Commissioner since 1994. Without a Commissioner, ONHIR has shirked away from its obligation of working with the Nation and its citizens and instead focused on shutting down the Relocation.

The impact of the relocation has extended far beyond the heads of relocated households. The descendants of the heads of households have suffered significantly due to the trauma, poor planning, and poor execution of the relocation by the Federal government, including the Federal government's lack of foresight to provide Relocation Act benefits to descendants.

Further, the NPL also suffered from a development freeze and it—as well as other communities that received relocatees—were not provided with the resources necessary to take in and support the influx of citizens. As a result, those “host” communities have faced unique and challenging difficulties.

In 1934, Congress passed legislation clarifying the western boundary of the Navajo Nation. This legislation created a separate land dispute between the Navajo Nation and the Hopi Tribe. This land dispute led to the institution of the Bennett Freeze by the Federal Government in 1966, which was a devastating devel-

opment freeze on over 1.5 million acres, and which lasted until 2009.

Since lifting the Bennett Freeze in 2009, Congress has not provided any direct funding to facilitate the rehabilitation of the Former Bennett Freeze area or repair damages that the Freeze inflicted upon the families, infrastructure, and land. As a result, communities within the Former Bennett Freeze have suffered from decades of maltreatment as a result of the actions of the Federal government.

Efforts by the Navajo Nation

The Navajo Nation government has always opposed the Relocation Act. Both the Executive and Legislative branches are hard at work to hold the Federal government responsible and accountable for its actions and the harm that it has caused the Navajo people.

Currently, the Navajo Nation government is advocating Congress to enact Technical Amendments to the Relocation Act that are designed to take the first step towards addressing and resolving the atrocities created by the forced relocation and development freezes. The Navajo Nation government is also encouraging President Biden to appoint a Commissioner to ONHIR so that the position will once again be held by someone who is directed to work with the Navajo Nation and can be held accountable. Further, the Nation has asked that the Commissioner be tasked with evaluating all of the negative impacts of the forced relocation and construction freezes and, working closely with the Navajo Nation and impacted communities, propose a plan of remediation.