



Navajo Technical University reports dormitory construction project awaits Navajo Housing Authority review of flood plain study

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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — The Permanent Trust Fund (PTF) 5 Year Expenditure Plan and *Sihásin* Fund Projects *ad hoc* task force received a report from the Navajo Technical University (NTU) on the status of the Crownpoint student housing construction project supported through the Navajo Nation *Sihásin* Fund on Mar. 17.

Funding for the dormitory facility was approved in the amount of \$14.3 million through Navajo Nation Council Resolution No. CAP-39-18. Under the provisions of the *Sihásin* Fund's enabling resolution, the NTU leveraged the funding with its own contribution of \$4 million to the project and a \$9.3 million contribution from the Navajo Housing Authority (NHA).

NTU President Dr. Elmer Guy said the NHA has asked the administration for additional studies on the flood plain in and around the proposed site. Guy said the US Army Corps of Engineers determined, through a 2016 study, a 100-year flood event affecting the proposed construction site is likely. To address the potential flood, the NTU has built new structures that are raised to three feet, which would offset the potential two foot six inch flood, Guy said.

The NTU submitted a hydrology study completed by a contractor to the NHA but has not received a response since start of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. Guy noted the requirement by NHA is a new condition established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Once the NHA gives its authorization, the NTU can begin bidding the project for construction. Council Delegate Otto Tso (Tónaneesdizi) asked Guy about contingencies if the NHA pulled support after reviewing the study. Guy said they will work with NHA on a mitigation plan or move the proposed building to a higher level to avoid the flood plain entirely.

Tso also asked how long the process would take if the building was relocated. "Dealing with HUD dollars from NHA—if NHA says that their dollar is not safe in that flood zone, they're going to pull their dollars back. They're looking at it from a conservative value," said Tso. He recommended the NTU establish alternative plans if the funding is not available through the NHA.

The estimated 95,388 square foot facility will add an additional 145 rooms and 270 new beds to the NTU campus in Crownpoint, New Mexico. Once completed, the NTU estimates an additional 5,160 student will be served over the following ten years.

The *Sihásin* Fund is comprised of portions of a \$554 million settlement between the Navajo Nation and US Government in *Navajo Nation v. United States, No. 06-945L* and is codified in Title 12 of the Navajo Nation Code.

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