

NAHB Chairman Discusses Housing at WGA Annual Meeting

NAHB Chairman Bill Owens joined the governors of seven western states in Deer Valley, Utah, from June 29 to July 1 for the Western Governors' Association (WGA) Annual Meeting. The conference marked the conclusion of the Energy Superabundance initiative and launched Hawai'i Gov. Josh Green's **Health Beyond Healthcare program**, which features stable housing as a key aspect of living a healthy life and will include conversations about key residential construction topics, including aging-in-place and multigenerational housing.

Owens discussed workforce development and Job Corps with Wyoming Gov. Mark Gordon and sat down with the premier of Ontario to discuss American and Canadian strategies for increasing housing supply. HBA of Utah member Chris Gamvroulas, president of Ivory Development, shared strategies employed in the state to increase supply and emphasized the impact of NIMBYism. The Ontario team shared the success of the Building Faster Fund, created in 2023, which provides direct infrastructure funding to municipalities that meet or beat housing goals set by the province. They also discussed the importance of permitting reform and eliminating duplication throughout the approvals process.

Over the next year, NAHB will participate in WGA's Health Beyond Healthcare initiative, highlighting the importance of housing in achieving the American dream and improving health outcomes for all individuals. In 2025, immediate past NAHB Chairman Buddy Hughes and NAHB staff worked closely with WGA on New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham's chair initiative, **Building Resilient and Affordable New Developments in the West** and examining housing availability and affordability strategies throughout the West.



NAHB Chairman Bill Owens, pictured on stage with Nebraska Lt. Governor Joe Kelly, addressed members of the National Lieutenant Governors Association during their annual meeting in July. He highlighted the impact that remodeling can have on communities and families.

Local Leaders Share Lessons on Breaking Through the Housing Debate

City and county officials say collaboration and community engagement are key to building consensus across different perspectives to advance pro-housing policies.

Elected officials often face competing interests when trying to create local housing solutions. This challenge was the topic of two webinars co-hosted by NAHB this summer: "Leading Through Differences: Engaging NIMBY Voices in Your City" with the National League of Cities (NLC) and "Collaborative Leadership Leads to Housing for All" with the National Association of Counties.

In July, "Leading Through Differences: Engaging NIMBY Voices in Your City" focused on building consensus among various constituents. Wichita, Kan., Mayor Lily Wu and Providence, R.I., Mayor Brett Smiley shared their insights on practical strategies for navigating different viewpoints to achieve pro-housing policy solutions.

In Wichita, the local economy is fueled by industries such as aerospace and higher education, which are attracting new residents and in turn increasing the demand for housing. Mayor Wu said city leaders are focused on implementing housing policies to support a variety of housing types to address the influx of residents. For example, the city is enticing developers to construct housing units in downtown areas where infrastructure is already in place.

Mayor Smiley faces similar supply challenges in Rhode Island. Providence has a significant population made up of hybrid and fully remote workers who are driving demand for rental and homeownership opportunities. To address the housing affordability challenge, city leaders have implemented zoning reforms, reduced parking minimums and supported tax-related changes to encourage housing production. Mayor Smiley has also stopped counterproductive housing policies, like rent control, from being enacted. [View the webinar.](#)

In June, "Collaborative Leadership Leads to Housing for All" detailed approaches to advancing attainable housing solutions in communities across the country. It explored how local leaders are building consensus, fostering collaboration and advancing practical housing strategies that meet the needs of residents.

The webinar featured Laura Capps, chair of the Board of Supervisors of Santa Barbara County, Calif., and Bill Truex, chair of Charlotte County (Fla.) Commission. The two leaders highlighted how they are working toward shared solutions to address housing challenges in their communities and shared interesting stories of why they became involved in politics and how to lead in overwhelming times. [View the webinar.](#)