Talking Points on Key Housing Issues

September 2026

The following talking points help tell the residential construction industry story to the media, policymakers, NAHB members, local/civic organizations and consumers.

Key NAHB Housing Issues

1. **NAHB Helps Secure Congressional Passage of Historic Housing Bill.** The 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act will help expand the nation's housing supply by reducing regulatory barriers and encouraging local governments to reform zoning and land-use policies that have limited home building. Many provisions could take months – or even years to implement. Learn more at nahb.org/road.

2. **U.S.-Canada Trade Actions Add Uncertainty to Housing Market.** The escalating U.S.-Canada trade dispute could create more uncertainty for home builders over building material supply chains and pricing.

3. **Economic Momentum Slows.** Macroeconomic conditions are weakening amid heightened policy uncertainty, a new round of tariffs and higher energy prices driven by the ongoing Iran war

4. **Blueprint to 100.** The Industry Pulse Check was the first step of Blueprint to 100, designed to gather insights from members, EOs and industry professionals. With the Industry Pulse Check results now available, we are sharing the feedback as we prepare for the next steps. Overall, participants affirmed that NAHB has a strong foundation and should focus on modernizing rather than reinventing itself.

5. **Key Wins in First Half of 2026.** Beyond the landmark housing legislation, NAHB delivered other major wins for members this year, including HUD and USDA's May 1 decision to rescind a mandate requiring the 2021 IECC and 2019 ASHRAE 90.1 as minimum energy-efficiency standards for certain single-family and multifamily housing programs.

6. **Housing Market Snapshot**: Single-family starts, multifamily production, new home sales and existing home sales all registered declines in July. Builder confidence in August inched up one point to 35 from a reading of 34 in July.

NAHB
National Association of Home Builders

NAHB Helps Secure Landmark Housing Legislation

- In a major win for NAHB and the housing industry, Congress passed landmark legislation to increase housing supply, expand homeownership and rental options, and help lower housing costs.

- The 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act includes more than 50 provisions addressing housing supply, financing, disaster recovery and other key priorities.

- The law addresses long-standing structural challenges in the housing market and is designed to lower costs over time, though many provisions may take months—or even years—to take effect.

- NAHB helped secure key provisions to increase single-family and multifamily production and support more remodeling activity.

Key Single-Family Provisions

- **Land use and zoning.** The law encourages state and local governments to reform restrictive zoning and land-use rules that limit housing construction. Communities that adopt reforms to increase density and give developers more flexibility are eligible to use more HUD funds to build more housing.

  This creates a strong opportunity for members to work with local officials on zoning changes that remove barriers to home construction and help lower housing costs. Examples include reducing minimum lot sizes, allowing more accessory dwelling units and encouraging missing middle housing, such as townhomes and duplexes.

  The law also changes the formula for allocating block grants to reward high-cost cities that initiate changes that add to the housing supply, like allowing denser housing and faster permitting.

- **Appraisal reform.** This provision requires the Federal Housing Administration, the Federal Housing Finance Agency, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Veterans Administration to establish and maintain clear review and resolution procedures for consumer-initiated reconsiderations of value (ROV), or subsequent appraisals, for federally backed mortgage loans.

  As a result, appraisers will be required to have a clear, documented approach when responding to ROV requests. The change will give members clearer expectations when challenging a low appraisal through the ROV process.

Key Multifamily Provisions

- The law also helps multifamily developers to increase the supply of apartments.

- The 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act raises FHA-insured multifamily loan limits – which have not changed for more than 20 years -- and indexes them to inflation. This better aligns financing with construction costs and supports new apartment development.

- The law also reforms the HOME Investment Partnerships Program to make it easier to build more affordable rental housing.

Environmental reviews

- Streamlining the National Environmental Policy Act review process for small and infill housing projects will help them move to construction faster and at lower cost.

Community banks

- Small builders construct the majority of homes built in the U.S. and many rely on community banks for financing. By strengthening these lenders, the law expands builders' access to housing credit.

Remodeling

- The law recognizes that remodeling will play a major role in the housing sector over the next decade and provides incentives to modernize the nation's aging housing stock.

- There is a provision that authorizes a pilot program to provide grants and loans for home repairs and health-hazard mitigation in older homes.

- Roughly 90% of the nation's housing stock – 130 million homes – were built before 2010. Improving the structure and infrastructure of older homes built before national model codes will improve energy efficiency and resiliency in older homes.

NAHB Helps Keep Build-to-Rent Mandate Out of Final Bill

- The law is also significant for what it excludes. NAHB worked with lawmakers to remove a burdensome build-to-rent (BTR) sales mandate from the final package.

- The mandate would have required institutional investors to sell BTR single-family homes within seven years.

- NAHB and Urban Institute estimates found the mandate could have reduced single-family rental investment and cut production by 40,000 to 72,000 homes annually.

- BTR housing represents 10% to 12% of single-family construction starts and meets an important need for renters.

Moving Forward

- While the new housing law is an important step toward making homes easier to build and buy, it is not a cure-all for the nation's estimated 1.2 million-home shortage. Housing solutions often take years before communities feel their full benefits.

- NAHB will continue advocating for housing reforms that reduce regulatory barriers, address the construction labor shortage and remove obstacles that keep builders from producing the attainable, affordable housing the nation urgently needs.

- Visit nahb.org/road for more details on the new housing law, including talking points, an executive summary of the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act, a podcast overview of the bill and additional resources.

U.S.-Canada Trade Actions Add Uncertainty to Housing Market

- The escalating U.S.-Canada trade dispute could create more uncertainty for home builders over building material supply chains and pricing.
- On Aug. 21, President Trump imposed a 50% tariff on a broad range of Canadian goods, including cement, plywood and furniture. The action would not affect other existing tariffs on key building materials, including softwood lumber, steel, aluminum and copper.
- In response, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney announced his nation would retaliate with "dollar-for-dollar" tariffs beginning Sept. 8. Trump then threatened to double tariffs on Canadian cars and auto parts to 50% starting on Jan. 1.
- Building material tariffs heighten market uncertainty, strain supply chains and increase construction costs.
- As the president continues to advance his tariff agenda, NAHB is urging the administration to exempt building materials in light of the ongoing housing affordability crisis.

Economic Momentum Slows

- Macroeconomic conditions are weakening amid heightened policy uncertainty, a new round of tariffs and higher energy prices driven by the ongoing Iran war
- Mortgage interest rates are likely to remain above 6% for the rest of the year, with inflation expectations elevated due to higher oil and commodity prices tied to the Iran war and the lingering impacts associated with tariffs.
- Meanwhile, NAHB's latest Housing Market Index survey continues to show signs of weakness in the home building market. August marked the 16th straight month that at least 30% of builders reported cutting prices to support demand, as well as the 16th consecutive month with the HMI below 40. (Any number below 50 indicates that more builders view sales conditions as poor than good.)

- Custom home builders continue to report stronger market conditions than spec builders, reflecting better conditions at the higher end of the market. Smaller, less dense markets are also outperforming larger metropolitan areas, and smaller builders report relatively stronger conditions than larger builders.

- According to a new NAHB study, government regulation, taxes, fees and other costs add more than 26% to the price of an average single-family home. Easing permitting bottlenecks, density limits and inefficient zoning rules would help reduce costs and support the housing growth the nation needs.

Insights from NAHB's Industry Pulse Check

- NAHB's Blueprint to 100 is a bold, forward-looking initiative to meet association and members' needs as NAHB approaches its 100th anniversary.

- The Industry Pulse Check was the first step of Blueprint 100, designed to gather insights from members, EOs and industry professionals.

- Thousands of industry professionals participated in the Industry Pulse Check, offering valuable insight into the challenges, opportunities and priorities shaping today's housing industry.

- With the Industry Pulse Check results now available, we are sharing the feedback as we prepare for the next steps.

- Overall, participants affirmed that NAHB has a strong foundation and should focus on modernizing rather than reinventing itself.

- Here are some clear takeaways:

    - The Federation needs to work as one across the local, state and national levels, including technology integration.

    - Remodelers are a core segment of the residential construction industry and need to feel like one through remodeling-focused tools, education and advocacy.

    - Non-members need to see the value of membership through local engagement and clear member benefits that are relevant to their business.

    - The industry is feeling the pressure of interest rates, material costs and labor across all segments, and NAHB needs to lead the charge on regulatory relief.

Key Wins in First Half of the Year

- NAHB posted important victories in the first half of 2026.

  - HUD and USDA on May 1 announced they are rescinding a requirement that imposed the 2021 IECC and the 2019 ASHRAE 90.1 as the minimum energy-efficiency standards for certain single-family and multifamily housing programs. This is a major victory for NAHB and housing affordability.

    Since the rule was initially finalized under the Biden administration in April 2024, NAHB has worked tirelessly on the legal, regulatory and legislative fronts to ensure HUD and USDA's 2021 IECC mandate was never implemented.

    This includes a legal victory in a case brought by NAHB and 15 states, in which a ruling by the U.S. federal court in Texas prevented HUD and USDA from implementing this mandate.

    Studies show that adoption of these energy efficiency standards will add between $9,600 and $21,400 to the price of a new home depending on the climate zone.

  - President Trump on March 13 issued two executive orders on housing to remove regulatory barriers and provide better access to mortgage credit that will help ease the nation's housing affordability crisis. NAHB looks forward to working with the administration to implement these important directives.

  - At NAHB's urging, the National Labor Relations Board has restored the 2020 joint employer standard. The revision rescinds a 2023 regulation that established a broad new test significantly lowering the standard for joint employer status under the National Labor Relations Act.

  - Congressional appropriators agreed to fully fund Job Corps at $1.76 billion in fiscal year 2026 after House appropriators last year proposed to slash funding by 50% to $880 million. Job Corps is a vital source of skilled labor for the housing industry.

  - The House on Feb. 25 approved the Homeowner Energy Freedom Act, legislation championed by NAHB. The bill would repeal burdensome provisions from the Inflation Reduction Act, including a provision that provides states $1 billion to incentivize the adoption of the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code.

Housing Market Snapshot

Latest Data: July 2026 (as of 08/26/26)

Housing Starts	Current Value	Monthly Change	Yearly Change
Single-family:	808,000 AR	-9.9%	-15.7%
Multifamily:	431,000 AR	-16.8%	-8.9%
Median SF Home Price			
New:	$388,200	-5.3%	-0.9%
Existing:	$422,900	0.0%	1.9%
SF Home Sales			
New:	607,000 AR	-10.5%	-6.3%
Existing:	3.69 million AR	-1.9%	0.8%

All data is seasonally-adjusted, AR = Annual Rate, SF = Single-Family

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, National Association of Realtors, tabulated by NAHB

NAHB/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index – The index, which measures builder confidence in the market for newly built single-family homes, was 34 in July, down two points from an upwardly revised reading of 36 in June. Any number below 50 indicates that more builders view sales conditions as poor than good.

NAHB Chief Economist Robert Dietz's analysis: "The single-family home building market is headed for a second straight annual decline in 2026 as builders contend with elevated construction costs, affordability constraints and persistent economic uncertainty. Elevated mortgage rates continue to keep many prospective buyers on the sidelines, while higher material, gas and diesel prices are increasing construction costs and making it harder to deliver homes at attainable price points. The bond market is also showing some signs of distress over long-run elements of the economy. Although the newly enacted housing bill includes measures to help builders expand supply — including streamlined regulations and incentives for local zoning reforms — these provisions will take time to produce results."