



25th Navajo Nation Council

## 25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Navajo Nation, Hopi Tribe, and Southern San Juan Paiute leaders advocate for Arizona water rights with Congressional members**



**Left to right: San Juan Southern Paiute Vice President Johnny Lehi, Jr., San Juan Southern Paiute President Robbin Preston, Jr., Navajo Nation President Dr. Buu Nygren, Navajo Nation Speaker Crystalyne Curley, Hopi Chairman Timothy L. Nuvangyaoma, and former Vice Chairman LeRoy Shingoitewa.**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren and 25th Navajo Nation Council Speaker Crystalyne Curley were joined by leaders of the Hopi Tribe and Southern San Juan Paiute Tribe this week, as they led a unified call for federal support of the Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement Agreement during meetings with Congressional members and the Department of the Interior in Washington, D.C. The proposed settlement was unanimously supported by each of the three tribes and awaits consideration by Congress.

Council Delegates Shawna Ann Claw, Germain Simonson, and Cheryl Yazzie were also in attendance to offer input and support for the proposed settlement.

For the Navajo Nation, the key terms of the settlement include 44,700-acre feet per year (AFY) of the Arizona allocation of Upper Basin Colorado – representing 90-percent of Arizona's Upper Basin allocation, 3,600 AFY of fourth priority Lower Basin Colorado River Water, all the Little

Colorado River water that reaches the Navajo Nation, all the Navajo aquifer that underlies the Navajo Nation, and all Coconino Aquifer that underlies the Navajo Nation.

In discussions with key congressional members, the tribal leaders emphasized the critical importance of securing their water resources to ensure the health, economic vitality, and cultural preservation of their communities.

The tribal leaders also outlined the significant challenges faced by their communities due to water scarcity, compounded by climate change and increased demand. They called on Congress to support legislation that would guarantee their access to clean and reliable water sources, as well as funding for infrastructure improvements necessary to deliver and manage the resources.

President Buu Nygren of the Navajo Nation highlighted the urgent need for federal support, stating, "Water is life. It is essential for the survival of our people, our livestock, and our crops. Without it, we cannot sustain our way of life. We urge Congress to recognize our rights and help us protect this vital resource for future generations."

Speaker Curley echoed these sentiments, emphasizing the cultural and spiritual significance of water to all Indigenous people. "For our people, water is sacred. It is intertwined with our ceremonies, traditions, and everyday lives. Ensuring our water rights is not just a legal issue, it is a matter of preserving our identity and way of life."

The meetings represent a critical step toward advancing the tribes' water rights agenda. Several congressional leaders expressed their commitment to working with the tribes to advance legislation once it is introduced.

As the discussions progress, the Navajo Nation, Hopi Tribe, and Southern San Juan Paiute Tribe remain hopeful that their unified efforts will lead to passage in the House, Senate, and White House to secure a sustainable future for their communities.

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