



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Navajo Nation Council requests support for the Utah Navajo Water Rights Settlement

WINDOW ROCK – Members of the Navajo Nation Council are pleased to be informed that Senator Orrin G. Hatch (R-UT) has introduced a congressional bill that seeks the approval of the Utah Navajo Water Rights Settlement to benefit the Navajo Nation and the state of Utah.

The Council issued its support for the settlement in January 2015 when Council Delegate Davis Filfred (Mexican Water, Aneth, Teecnospos, Tóíikan, Red Mesa), who represents five Navajo chapters in Utah, sponsored legislation supporting the proposed settlement, which would also provide funding for water infrastructure development for the chapters in Utah.

“Water infrastructure is a necessary part of building our economy and our communities and that’s what this bill would provide for our people,” said Delegate Filfred. “I thank Senator Hatch for his support and we ask for the support of Congress and the Trump administration to move this settlement forward.”

The Council listed the settlement of water rights in Utah and the Little Colorado River as a top priority when members took office in January 2015. In November, the Council’s Naabik’iyátí’ Committee created a subcommittee to negotiate the LCR settlement with the Hopi Tribe and non-Indian water users in the state of Arizona.

The proposed agreement with Utah developed after years of negotiations resulting from a Memorandum of Agreement between the Navajo Nation and the state of Utah in 2003 that allowed the two sides to formally enter into discussions to determine the water rights of the Nation.

In December of 2015, representatives from the Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources and Department of Justice, along with the Navajo Nation Water Rights Commission, and the State of Utah reached an agreement as to the quantification and settlement of water rights claims.

“We greatly appreciate Senator Hatch for introducing the Navajo Nation/State of Utah Water Rights Settlement Act. The approval of the settlement would be another great step forward in bringing safe, clean drinking water to the many Navajo people residing in the Utah Navajo Communities,” said Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland).

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