



## The Navajo Nation Council — Office of the Speaker

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Navajo Nation officials oppose supplying any type of water source to Snowbowl for snowmaking, City Council decision postponed**

**FLAGSTAFF, Ariz.**— Officials from the Navajo Nation and many other American Indian Nations gathered Monday evening at the Flagstaff City Council's special meeting to oppose amendments that will allow artificial snow to be made on Dook'o'oslííd, the San Francisco Peaks.

The Navajo Nation strongly opposed the making of artificial snow, whether it was made with potable water or with recovered reclaimed water.

Despite the special meeting's purpose to decide which water source to use to make artificial snow, Council delegates Thomas Walker, Jr. (Birdsprings/Leupp/Tolani Lake), Rex Lee Jim (Rock Point), Leonard Chee (Birdsprings/Leupp/Tolani Lake), and Navajo Nation Vice President Ben Shelly all opposed any and all snow making strategies.

Vice President Shelly spoke of the importance of water to the people on the Navajo Nation and that Dook'o'oslííd is precious to Navajos and many other tribes. He furthered mentioned that utilizing essential water for snowmaking is not eco-friendly, and that it is not a safe choice for anyone, even those who support snowmaking on the Arizona Snowbowl.

"Our community members, elders, spiritual leaders, deem this sacred mountain very holy and sacred," said Council Delegate Walker. "It is the corner stone of the Navajo universe. We will do all necessary for the world, public, and the community members of Flagstaff to know this. We stand here with the tribal leaders who have already spoken, we stand united and our position has been consistent."

Council Delegate Leonard Chee addressed the Flagstaff City Council next, saying, "I'm here as a member of the Navajo Nation Council. The Navajo Nation is gravely concerned about our water supply. Simply put, I still cannot get my mind wrapped around how this question is even being considered today."

In December 2009, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Thomas Vilsack designated all Arizona counties, except La Paz and Yuma counties, as primary natural disaster areas due to losses caused by drought and that the state is preparing for imminent long term drought. It was further noted that the request by Arizona Snowbowl to use drinkable water for non-essential recreational purposes is quite honestly unacceptable.

Many Indian Nation leaders gathered to protect Dook'o'oslííd. Present at the Council meeting were leaders and representatives from the Hopi tribe, Havasupai Tribe, Pueblo of Zuni, Yavapai-Apache Nation and the Hualapai Tribe. In addition, community members from the Navajo Nation also expressed their disapproval of utilizing potable and recovered reclaimed water for artificial snow.

"Always save a little for tomorrow," added Council Delegate Chee. "Just because we have some water now does not mean we should waste it. That is our stand on the water source."

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The special meeting began at 5:30 p.m. and was still in session at 11:45 p.m.

The Flagstaff City Council concluded that a decision will not be made until Thursday, 10 a.m. at the City Hall after agreeing deliberation and decision making would be unduly compromised in the early hours of the following day.

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