



The Navajo Nation Council — Office of the Speaker

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Navajo Nation officials will continue opposing any amendments to the Snowbowl contract, including use of reclaimed water for snowmaking

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Despite the Flagstaff City Council's 5-2 vote of keeping its original contract of supplying reclaimed water to the Arizona Snowbowl for snowmaking purposes, the City Council announced on Sept. 3 that the contract is still up for discussion for a meeting scheduled on Sept. 7.

The Sept. 7 City Council meeting means that amendments are still possible. The City Council is expected to discuss Councilman Al White's motion, which he made at the Sept. 3 meeting. Councilman White motioned to use potable water for the first five years of the contract and then reclaimed water the next fifteen years for artificial snowmaking. If the contract is amended, it will allow Snowbowl to begin construction immediately.

Fellow Councilmember Art Babbot has supported using reclaimed water instead of potable water and drinking water for snowmaking purposes.

"My goal is to make the best decision for the community," Babbot said. "We do not have a secure water source here. The water will be coming from local sources. I have a great fear this will open the doors for other entities to attempt using potable water for something else."

"Obviously the Navajo Nation, other tribes, and some council members are worried about using drinkable water for recreational use, when water is scarce," Babbot added. "Some people want the entire Snowbowl to shut down but others want Snowbowl to stay in business because it will increase the economy."

The contract to use reclaimed water for snowmaking purposes has been in federal court after several tribal nations filed suit due to public health concerns. Ultimately, the federal courts will determine whether the use of reclaimed water is safe for artificial snowmaking or not. An injunction filed by tribal nations, including the Navajo Nation, is expected, which could possibly delay the Snowbowl project for another four to six years.

The Navajo Nation does not support any type of water contribution to Snowbowl, including the use of reclaimed water for snowmaking purposes, which the Navajo Nation continues to view as a major public and environmental health concern.

Council Delegate Thomas Walker, Jr., (Birdsprings/Leupp/Tolani Lake), a vocal opponent of any artificial snowmaking development at Snowbowl, said he was concerned of the City Council's decision.

"I'm offended by the Council's choice," Walker said. "The City Councils' interest is in question. The communities surrounding the peaks are one community so we need to all communicate to keep the environment and the relationship well. The partnership here regarding good neighbor policy is at stake."

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