



Contact: Erny Zah
Director of Communications
Office: (928) 871-7884
Cell: (928) 380-0771

navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov

For Immediate Release
Feb 10, 2012

The Shelly-Jim Administration Issues Statement About Court's Opinion on San Francisco Peaks

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and Vice President Rex Lee Jim jointly issued the following statement regarding the opinion issued by the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in the Save The Peaks Coalition v. United States Forest Service case.

“We are disheartened by the opinion issued by the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. The San Francisco Peaks are within our traditional boundaries and within our realm of dwelling. We make offerings to the Peaks, we have prayers and songs that incorporate not only the San Francisco Peaks, but all of elements of life. This court decision to potentially allow the use of reclaimed water to generate snow negates our inherited traditional foundations.

However, the strength of our cultural teachings will persevere, just as they have in historical times when our traditional beliefs were attacked and violated by the larger society.

It is unfortunate that the courts and federal government have failed to broaden their scope of the cultural understanding regarding the San Francisco Peaks, as we aren't the only Indian tribal nation to behold these peaks as part of the essence of life. The Peaks provide harmony and balance in our lives.

We will continue to consolidate our efforts to educate America about the holy value of the San Francisco Peaks and sacred sites. This effort will include neighboring Indian Nations who hold sacred sites in the same significant value.

###