



**Contact: Erny Zah**  
**Director of Communications**

**Cell: (928) 380-0771**

**[navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov)**

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## **Navajo President Shelly Calls Informative LCR Meeting a Success**

**TSE BONITO, N.M.** – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly said the informative meeting about the Little Colorado River Water Rights Settlement was successful though only three delegates were represented in the one day meeting held on Saturday at the Navajo Division of Transportation Complex.

“I want to thank Council Delegates Dwight Witherspoon and Elmer Begay for attending this important meeting. I want to thank Council Delegate Danny Simpson for sending a representative. I’m thankful they took time to learn about the settlement. It’s a complicated document and I wish more delegates would’ve taken the time to learn about the settlement,” President Shelly said.

Nearly 20 people attended the meeting, including members from the Navajo Water Rights Commission, water rights attorneys Stanley Pollack and Kate Hoover, and community members, among others.

The meeting lasted throughout the day Saturday as Pollack and Hoover led the discussion. The pair explained each section of the water settlement section by section.

The Little Colorado River Water Settlement would finalize the Navajo Nation’s claim to 160,000 acre feet of surface water annually, which is about four times as much water as the Navajo Nation’s estimated use.

In addition, the settlement would place protections on upstream portions of the river, including not allowing upstream users to not claim any more water than they would be given in the settlement.

“We don’t want upstream users inflating their water rights,” said Pollack during the 10-hour meeting.

Also, the settlement would make way for two water infrastructure projects in Navajo communities. Two different water pipelines would be built, one from Luepp to Dilkon, and the other from Steamboat to Ganado to Wide Ruins.

Under the settlement, the water pipelines would have capacity of bringing the communities about 5,000 acre feet of water per year. The communities use less than 500 acre feet per year of water.

“For communities like Dilkon, access to more water means they could build their proposed new hospital. And for every community that gains access to the waterline, they could make plans for new schools and buildings wouldn’t be held back by limited water supplies. We would better the quality of life for our Navajo people because the construction of the pipeline and potential new businesses, schools and health care facilities mean new jobs,” President Shelly said.

President Shelly set up a meeting to provide delegates an opportunity to thoroughly examine the Little Colorado River settlement

President Shelly sent a memorandum to Speaker Johnny Naize last Thursday notifying the council about the meeting and staff notified the delegates with an email.

“Every topic about the LCR settlement was discussed today. I hope that if the delegates have any questions about the settlement, they take time to ask them. This is a great opportunity for the Navajo people and the Navajo Nation. We need to get our people water,” President Shelly said.

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