



June 9, 2012

Diné Citizens:

As we are all aware, the Navajo-Hopi Little Colorado River Water Rights Settlement has been an issue that has been and is still being passionately debated by parties who either support or oppose the settlement and the accompanying congressional bills.

From the outset of this dialogue I have maintained to the public and to council that all discussions on the water rights settlement would be done so with transparency and fairness. I have also assured all concerned Diné citizens that in order for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Navajo Nation Council to decide on the water rights settlement it will occur through the legislative process as mandated by Navajo Nation Code Title II.

Since the water rights settlement first entered public dialogue, the conversation has taken on many forms that have been both positive and negative. As a leader of the Navajo Nation, I consider the dialogue to have been a healthy one but I believe that we are now in a position in which the conversation should move to the next step.

The first step in beginning this new conversation is for legislation 0230-12 to be introduced so that supporting and opposing individuals and parties can be brought to the table for healthy dialogue. As the Speaker of the Navajo Nation, I feel that it is my responsibility to introduce this legislation so that the Nation can decide on the water rights settlement.

Some individuals and leaders may be inclined to ask the question, why should legislation supporting the water rights settlement even be given the opportunity for consideration?

My leadership as the Speaker of the Navajo Nation has always been one of self-control, patience, and inclusion so as to welcome our friends, family, and colleagues back to our home to ensure that meaningful communication is carried forward. I believe that honest dialogue on the water rights settlement requires open lines of communication and I also believe that the path to better governance for our people will be determined by how we dialogue on controversial issues such as this water settlement.

If legislation 0230-12 is never introduced then we deprive our nation of the ability to dialogue on a controversial issue and we deprive ourselves of the ability to reach a responsible conclusion. My role as your Speaker is to ensure that the people who oppose and the people who support the water rights settlement have this important conversation.

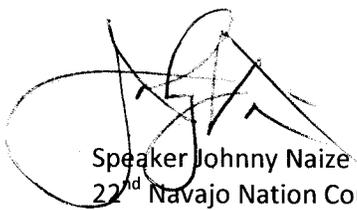
There is no single individual who can determine where this conversation will lead us. There is no single individual who can determine whether the 22<sup>nd</sup> Navajo Nation Council will approve or disapprove the water rights settlement. And, there is no single individual who will make this decision for the people.

What I do know for certain is that the Nation's legislative process allows for fairness and public participation. Legislation 0230-12 will be subject to the five-day bill hold period, during which committees cannot act on the legislation. The five-day bill hold period provides sufficient time for the public to be made aware that legislation important to them is up for consideration.

Also embedded in the legislative process is the ability for Diné citizens to submit comments by email during the entire time the legislation is active. Comments can be submitted until the final moment the legislation is either approved or disapproved.

I encourage all interested citizens who oppose or support the water rights settlement to submit their comment. I encourage you to assist family, friends, elders, and youth to submit their comments.

It is imperative that we move past this issue as a united Diné people, whether the legislation is accepted or not. As your Speaker, I feel that I have the responsibility to bring this highly contested issue to a civil conclusion.



Speaker Johnny Naize  
22<sup>nd</sup> Navajo Nation Council