



## Navajo Nation Council – Office of the Speaker

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### **Statement from Speaker Naize on lobbyist hired for water rights settlement**

As the Speaker of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Navajo Nation Council, I felt the need to address the most recent concern raised by the public and in the media regarding the Navajo Nation's retention of a professional lobbying firm for issues related to the Navajo-Hopi Little Colorado Water Rights Settlement (S. 2109).

Firstly, the Navajo Nation is comprised of three branches, which are the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial. Each branch is equipped with its own authorities and scope of work. I assure the Navajo people that council delegates and I did not contact nor contract a lobbying firm for the Navajo Nation.

I submitted a memo to Harrison Tsosie, Navajo Nation Attorney General, requesting a complete listing of all professional lobbying firms retained by the Department of Justice or retained with the approval of the Department of Justice. I attached the memo to this statement in order to assure the public that Council will continue to work with full transparency on matters related to the water rights settlement.

Secondly, in order for the Navajo Nation Council to take an official position on the water rights settlement it will have to occur through the legislative process as mandated by Title II. Broadly, the process requires a council delegate to sponsor the legislation; the legislation is then assigned to the appropriate committees; the legislation is posted to the Navajo Nation Council website for a period of five days, during which comments can be submitted electronically; after the five-day bill hold period the legislation will be considered by each committee it was assigned to; the legislation will eventually make its way to the Navajo Nation Council where final authority rests.

As I have previously stated, this is the regular legislative process by law and this is the procedure we will follow. I can assure the people that this process will not be circumvented and all committee and council meetings will continue to be open to the public.

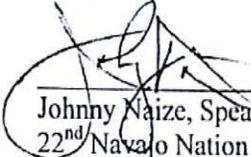
Lastly, per a March 23 directive of Council, I am establishing a task force to work in coordination with the Navajo Nation Water Rights Commission in its effort to hold public hearings on the water settlement and to report back to the Council in a timely manner. Legislation 0134-12 is set to be considered by the Naa'bi'iyati' Committee and, if approved, it will assign Council Delegates Lorenzo Curley, Walter Phelps, Alton Shepherd, and Dwight Witherspoon to the task force.

I appreciate your concerns and I want the Navajo people to know that the legislative branch has and will continue to make this process transparent.



**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Harrison Tsosie, Attorney General  
Navajo Nation

**FROM:**   
Johnny Naize, Speaker  
22<sup>nd</sup> Navajo Nation Council

**DATE:** April 13, 2012

**SUBJECT:** Professional Lobbying Firms Retained by the Navajo Nation Department of Justice

Recent events surrounding the controversial Water Rights Settlement negotiations have revealed that the Department of Justice retained a professional lobbying firm in Washington, D.C. to develop legislation not yet officially endorsed by the Navajo Nation.

It is the responsibility of the Naabik'iyáti' Committee of the Navajo Nation Council to oversee all official positions of the Navajo Nation *vis a vis* other sovereign governments and legislatures.

The Naabik'iyáti' Committee is hereby established to:

"...coordinate with all committees the appearance and testimony before non-Navajo government federal, state or other entities..." and to "...assist and coordinate all requests for information, appearances and testimony relating to proposed county, state and federal legislation impacting the Navajo Nation." 2 N.N.C. § 700 (A), § 701 (A) (6) respectively.

In order that the statutory obligations of the Committee be respected and the best interest of the Navajo People be served, I respectfully request that you or your staff provide me with a complete listing of all professional lobbying firms retained by the Department of Justice or retained with the approval of the Department of Justice. Please indicate the issues these firms are representing on behalf of the Navajo Nation and the position so represented.

**cc:** 22<sup>nd</sup> Navajo Nation Council