



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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Navajo Nation celebrates historic moment as the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act is signed into law

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer are pleased to announce the historic approval of the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act, which was signed into law by U.S. President Donald J. Trump that was included in an omnibus appropriations package totaling \$2.3 trillion. The omnibus bill includes \$1.4 trillion for federal spending and \$900 billion for COVID-19 relief, which was approved by the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate on Dec. 21 along with the water rights settlement.

The final approval of the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act will:

- Settle all current and future claims by the Navajo Nation for water rights within Utah;
- Ratify the proposed water rights settlement between the Navajo Nation and the State of Utah, confirming the Navajo Nation's right to deplete 81,500 acre-feet of water per year from Utah's Colorado River Basin apportionment; and
- Authorize approximately \$220 million for water infrastructure to provide water infrastructure, which will provide clean drinking water, to Navajo communities in Utah.

“For many years, our Navajo people from the grassroots level all the way to the highest levels of our government have fought hard to negotiate our water rights and bring clean water to our communities in the state of Utah. We are overjoyed that the combined efforts of many have finally paid off with today's historic signing of the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act. This is a victory for all of the Navajo families and leaders from the state of Utah and for the entire Navajo Nation,” said President Nez. “I am very thankful to all members of Congress who supported our water settlement as well as our federal partners, Navajo Nation Council, local chapter officials, the state of Utah, Governor Gary Herbert, Lt. Gov. Spencer Cox, the Navajo Nation Washington Office, the law firm of Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, and many others. We accomplished this together!”

In June 2019, President Nez testified before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife and called upon lawmakers to pass the settlement legislation. Since taking office,

President Nez and Vice President Lizer have led the efforts, along with members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council, to advocate for support among congressional members. The water rights settlement was also approved by the 23rd Navajo Nation Council in January 2016 through legislation sponsored by former Council Delegate Davis Filfred.

More than 40-percent of Navajo households in Utah lack running water or adequate sanitation. In some cases, such as in the community of Oljato on the Arizona-Utah border, a single spigot on a desolate road, miles from any residence, serves 900 people.

“This is a very proud moment for the entire Navajo Nation. This is a remarkable accomplishment and memorable moment for our Navajo people. I am elated and excited for our brothers and sisters in the state of Utah and for everyone who laid a hand to this great work over the years. We are very grateful of the support from Congress and President Trump, which will allow us to move forward with providing clean water for our Navajo people for many years to come. We also thank Representative Rob Bishop and Senator Mitt Romney for sponsoring the settlement bills, and we express our appreciation to the House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Raúl Grijalva, Representative Ben McAdams, Congresswoman Deb Haaland, Senator Tom Udall, former Senator Martha McSally, and all of the House and Senate leadership,” Vice President Lizer stated.

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