



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

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**Navajo Nation commends the U.S. Senate's
approval of the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act**



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez testifying in support of the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife in Washington D.C. on June 26, 2019.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer commend the U.S. Senate's approval of S. 886, the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act through unanimous consent on Thursday, a bill that the two leaders have advocated strongly for to secure funding and water resources for Navajo families in the state of Utah. The Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act also requires the approval of the House of Representative through H.R. 644 sponsored by U.S. Rep. Rob Bishop (R-UT).

“Providing clean water for the Navajo people is a challenging task and we have worked with our friends in Congress and across the country to move this important measure forward. As the Navajo Nation continues to struggle to address COVID-19, we welcome the passage by the United States Senate of the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act, which would provide desperately needed funding for clean drinking water to our members,” stated President Nez.

He added, “On behalf of the Navajo Nation, I would like to thank Senator Romney for his leadership in advancing the bill through the Senate. I would also like to thank Senators McSally and Udall for their crucial work with the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs in expediting the bill’s passage as well as Senator Sinema for her strong support of the legislation. Because of the drinking water crisis on the Navajo Reservation, which COVID-19 has compounded, we ask our friends in the House to pass the legislation without delay.”

In June 2019, President Nez called on lawmakers to enact into law the bipartisan H.R. 644, during testimony before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife. In September, President Nez met with Senator Romney and other Senators to request their continued support.

More than 40-percent of Navajo households in Utah lack running water or adequate sanitation in their homes. 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 bill would solidify water rights in this landmark settlement between the Navajo Nation, the United States, and the state of Utah. The U.S. Senate has demonstrated true leadership through the passage of this bill, which also advances the commitments contained in the Treaty of 1868, where Navajo leaders pledged their honor to keep peace with the United States and, in return, the United States pledged to the Navajo People a permanent homeland. We commend the Senate for their support and we respectfully request the support of the House members,” Vice President Lizer stated.

The Nez-Lizer Administration also requests the support of the Navajo people for Legislation No. 0116-20, which addresses the CARES Act funding that provides \$600 million to the Navajo Nation. President Nez and Vice President Lizer stated that the funds could provide water infrastructure to benefit many Navajo people. Please submit written supporting comments for Legislation No. 0116-20 to comments@navajo-nsn.gov, 24thNNC@navajo-nsn.gov, and navajonationpubliccomments@gmail.com.

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