



**For Release
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Navajo Nation Water Rights Commission

Honoring the Life and Legacy of Former President and Commission Chair, Albert Hale

Window Rock, AZ— February 5, 2021 — The Navajo Nation Water Rights Commission expresses its condolences to the family of the late Albert Hale, leader, visionary and advocate for the Navajo Nation’s sovereignty as he worked to secure and protect the Nation’s water rights.

It is with a heavy heart that the Commission acknowledges the passing of former President Albert Hale. “As the first Chair of the Navajo Nation Water Rights Commission, Albert Hale lead the Navajo Nation’s efforts to secure its water rights to ensure our permanent homeland,” said Western Agency Commissioner Joelynn Ashley, Chair of the Commission. Newly appointed to the Commission by Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne, and confirmed by the Resources and Development Committee of the Navajo Nation Council, Chair Ashley continued “it is a great honor to follow in Albert Hale’s footsteps and to continue his legacy.”

The recent congressional approval of the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act, recognizing the Nation’s water rights in Utah, as well as the historic San Juan River Basin Settlement in New Mexico approved by Congress in 2009, are part of that legacy. “I look forward to leading the Commission in its on-going efforts to resolve the Nation’s outstanding water rights claims in Arizona and in smaller basins in New Mexico,” said Commissioner Ashley.

“Albert Hale, trained as an attorney, and an experienced statesman, had a unique ability to translate the complex terms used in the litigation and settlement of water rights into Diné Bizaad, so that they could be understood by the people,” said Stanley Pollack, former Assistant

Attorney General for the Water Rights Unit in the Nation's Department of Justice. "Even after he left the Commission, Mr. Hale remained a staunch supporter of the Commission's efforts to secure the Nation's water rights. The Navajo Nation has lost a great leader."

Established in 2004, Commission will continue to pursue its mission, working diligently and with transparency through regular communication with Navajo leadership and Navajo communities, to secure water rights on behalf of the Navajo Nation and its citizens.

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