



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **St. Mary's Food Bank to donate water to affected contaminated areas**

**WINDOW ROCK** – On Aug. 14, St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance will donate approximately 200,000 bottles of water to residents affected by the water contamination caused by the Gold King Mine in Silverton, CO, which spilled over 3 million gallons of contamination into the Animas River.

The contaminated water has now reached the San Juan River, which runs through a portion of the Navajo Nation in the northwestern region of the state of New Mexico. The U.S. Environmental Agency has taken responsibility for the contamination spill and have begun testing the water to determine the level of contamination.

St. Mary's Food Bank coordinated with Arizona Senator Carlyle Begay (Dist. 7 – D), the Navajo Nation Office of the Speaker, and the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, to deliver 22 pallets of drinking water to communities affected by the Animas River Spill.

"I would like to extend my most sincere gratitude to St. Mary's Food Bank, its volunteers, and all those who donated and will deliver the bottled water to the Navajo Nation. The release of toxic materials has seriously threatened the supply of potable water on Navajo land, and clean water is of utmost importance," said Senator Begay.

He added that St. Mary's Food Bank understood the magnitude of the disaster and commended them for their generosity and effort in aiding the Navajo Nation and its people.

Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland) stressed that the donation of the drinking water would not only help the communities in the affected area, but helps alleviate some stress in finding potable water for residents.

"This donation is greatly appreciated and accepted. This helps us get drinking water to the Navajo people who need it, but we remain mindful of water needs for livestock and farms as well," said Speaker Bates.

On Thursday, Speaker Bates met with the head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Gina McCarthy, and said the EPA has a responsibility to keep the Navajo public as well as the Navajo Nation Council informed of all aspects of ongoing testing of contaminated water and to ensure the information is transparent.

AZ Gov. Doug Ducey provided a statement saying he is very proud of the Phoenix-area food bank for their efforts in helping the Navajo Nation.

“It’s great to see decent and generous Arizonans stepping up and lending a hand to the Navajo Nation,” said Governor Doug Ducey. “The Navajo Nation and other neighboring communities have been through a tremendously uncertain and challenging time as they evaluate the potential impacts of this spill – I am glad to see that finding clean drinking water won’t be one of those challenges. I thank the good people at St. Mary’s Food Bank for their generosity and willingness to help the Navajo people.”

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