



Low Water Supply Prompts NTUA to Cut Off Water Allocations to Several Chapters

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 12, 2021

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — In late June, it was reported that Navajo Nation Chapters within District 7 (Teesto, Dilkon, Indian Wells, Greasewood Springs, White Cone, Low Mountain, Jeddito) and surrounding communities faced severe water shortages due to the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority (NTUA) shutting down domestic water allocation to several chapters, which caused low water supply for watering points and facility usage.

Council Delegate Elmer Begay (Dilkon, Indian Wells, Teesto, Whitecone, Greasewood Springs) of the 24th Navajo Nation Council informed the public that the water points at Dilkon Chapter and Teesto Chapter reached low levels that caused NTUA to shut down the water allocation in order to replenish the system.

“This drought is not a new emergence, it has plagued the southwestern part of the reservation for the last 14-15 years,” said Delegate Begay. “I believe that the designation of ARPA funds to the Navajo Nation will provide new opportunities to solve the drought problem that were previously limited by the availability of the funds.”

Both chapters are the last to be served on the Greasewood Water Line and are one of the most growing communities in terms of population. Further straining the water availability in the region.

These water points require to be physically monitored rather than automatically measured by a remote system, which unless community members issue a complaint about the low water levels, then NTUA may or may not have the latest update.

Delegate Begay inquired to the Navajo Nation Water Department about the commercial water leases the department issued to various construction companies and if they would be temporarily suspended in order to preserve the remaining alluvial water supply.

These commercial water leases, which are calculated depending on the monthly rainfall average and drought conditions, are specific to a water well in Dilkon and with contractors in the region extracting large amounts of water for their uses, it impacted the livestock well that was reported to only have 1-2 feet of available water per day.

Leaving many community members, ranchers, and Navajo residents to be without access to water for themselves as well. Eventually, the leases affected the domestic water supply for chapters within District 7, except for Greasewood Chapter, when the water was shut off.

Affecting the chapters’ daily operations, meetings, and their services as they could not allow people to utilize the restroom and delivery of water services to families who depend on them.

Despite the water outages in Dilkon, Teesto, White Cone, Indian Wells, Jeddito Chapters and Birdsprings Chapter, Greasewood Chapter opened their watering point to those in the region if they had a NTUA card.

Alternative watering points were located in Winslow, AZ and other border towns in the area but to better alleviate the situation, ranch owners voluntarily downsized their livestock numbers from March to May.

While the water point in Dilkon will need to go under drought restrictions that involve limiting hours of usage and restricting the gallons per load to avoid completely draining the core system before it has time to replenish.

“I believe that through traditional methodology, in conjunction with the establishment of new infrastructure, we can begin finding answers to the drought,” said Delegate Begay.

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