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NAVAJO NATION OFFICE OF THE
PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

NAVAJO NATION
OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 22, 2023

MEDIA CONTACTS:
Donovan.Quintero@navajo-nsn.gov
Mihio.Manus@navajo-nsn.gov

NAVAJO NATION STATEMENT ON THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES' OPINION OF ARIZONA, ET AL. V. NAVAJO NATION

WINDOW ROCK — Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren and Speaker of the 25th Navajo Nation Council Crystalyne Curley expressed their disappointment in today's Arizona ET AL v. Navajo Nation ET AL 5-4 decision.

"Today's ruling is disappointing and I am encouraged that the ruling was 5-4. It is reassuring that four justices understood our case and our arguments. As our lawyers continue to analyze the opinion and determine what it means for this particular lawsuit, I remain undeterred in obtaining quantified water rights for the Navajo Nation in Arizona. The Navajo Nation established a water rights negotiation team earlier this year and we are working very hard to settle our water rights in Arizona. My job as the President of the Navajo Nation is to represent and protect the Navajo people, our land, and our future," said President Nygren. "The only way to do that is with secure, quantified water rights to the Lower Basin of the Colorado River. I am confident that we will be able to achieve a settlement promptly and ensure the health and safety of my people. And in addition, the health and productivity of the entire Colorado River Basin, which serves up to thirty tribes and tens of millions of people who have come to rely on the Colorado River."

Speaker Curley also expressed her disappointment and said the Navajo Nation has always fought to protect the rights of the Navajo people. "Our leaders long ago fought for our right to our precious homeland between our Sacred Mountains and that included the water right, the right to life. Through the sacrifices and prayers of our ancestors, we secured the right to have access to water based on our treaties. Our leaders negotiated the terms of our treaties in good faith with the federal government. Today's ruling will not deter the Navajo Nation from securing the water that our ancestors sacrificed and fought for — our right to life and the livelihood of future generations," said Speaker Curley.

The Supreme Court's ruling in Arizona v. Navajo Nation highlights the broader challenges faced by Indigenous communities across the country in securing their rights to vital natural resources. As climate change and increasing resource demands put additional stress on water supplies, the Navajo Nation's battle for water rights serves as a critical reminder of the importance of protecting access to this essential resource for all communities.

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