



25th Navajo Nation Council

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Tribal leaders present unified voice in support of Arizona water rights



Southern San Juan Paiute, Hopi, and Navajo Nation leadership met with U.S. Rep. Juan Ciscomani as they called for federal support for the Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – 25th Navajo Nation Council Speaker Crystalyne Curley, Council Delegate Carl Slater, and Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren were joined by leaders of the Hopi Tribe and Southern San Juan Paiute Tribe in Washington, D.C. this week, as they led a unified call for federal support of the Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement Agreement in meetings with Congressional members and the U.S. Department of the Interior.

U.S. Rep. Juan Ciscomani (R-AZ) introduced the settlement through H.R. 8940, which was heard on Tuesday by the House on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife, and Fisheries on Capitol Hill. U.S. Sen. Mark Kelly (D-AZ) is sponsoring the bill on the Senate side.

President Nygren provided testimony during the House hearing in support of the bill, along with Hopi Tribal Vice Chairman Craig Andrews. San Juan Southern Paiute President Robbin Preston, Jr. was also in attendance to offer their support.

“Water is sacred and water is life. The Navajo Nation, Hopi Tribe, and San Juan Southern Paiute are unified and we are speaking with one voice in support of the Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement Agreement. Many of my colleagues of the 25th Navajo Nation Council

devoted tremendous time and resources to help negotiate this settlement and we are eager to continue moving it forward with support from our congressional delegation,” said Speaker Curley.

For the Navajo Nation, the key terms of the settlement include 44,700-acre feet per year (AFY) of the Arizona allocation of Upper Basin Colorado – representing 90-percent of Arizona’s Upper Basin allocation, 3,600 AFY of fourth priority Lower Basin Colorado River Water, all the Little Colorado River water that reaches the Navajo Nation, all the Navajo aquifer that underlies the Navajo Nation, and all Coconino Aquifer that underlies the Navajo Nation.

In discussions with key congressional members, the tribal leaders emphasized the critical importance of securing their water resources to ensure the health, economic vitality, and cultural preservation of their communities.

The tribal leaders also outlined the significant challenges faced by their communities due to water scarcity, compounded by climate change and increased demand. They called on Congress to support H.R. 8940, which will guarantee access to clean and reliable water sources, as well as funding for infrastructure improvements necessary to deliver and manage the resources.

“Our Native and state parties’ leadership demonstrates how we can work together to improve our peoples’ lives. I’m confident that with ‘one Arizona voice’ our congressional delegation will help move our settlement past the finish line,” said Delegate Slater.

The tribal leaders were also joined by several representatives and parties to the settlement including Salt River Project (SRP), Central Arizona Project (CAP), Arizona Department of Water Resources Director Tom Buschatzke, and a representative of 25 cities, towns, ranchers, and irrigation districts along the Little Colorado River — each of whom spoke in support of the proposed settlement.

As the bills progress, the Navajo Nation, Hopi Tribe, and Southern San Juan Paiute Tribe remain optimistic that their unified efforts will lead to passage in the House, Senate, and White House to secure a sustainable future for their communities.

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