



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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25th Navajo Nation Council celebrates the Utah-Navajo Nation Water Rights Settlement Interlocutory Decree



Left to right: Executive Director of Utah Department of Natural Resources Joel Ferry, Utah Lt. Governor Deidre Henderson, Council Delegate Shaandiin Parrish, and Navajo Nation Chief Legislative Counsel Michelle Espino.

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah – Today, members of the 25th Navajo Nation Council joined Utah Lieutenant Governor Deidre Henderson, state legislators, and representatives from the Utah Division of Water Rights at the state capitol to commemorate the signing of an Interlocutory Decree. This decree grants the Navajo Nation in Utah a water allocation of 81,500 acre-feet per year.

The adjudication is a key component of the Utah-Navajo Nation Water Rights Settlement, which secures the Nation's rights to both surface and groundwater from the Colorado River within Utah. The settlement also includes significant funding provisions for water infrastructure development, the Navajo Water Development Trust Fund, and the Navajo Operation, Maintenance, and Replacement Trust Fund.

Lt. Governor Henderson called the signing of the Interlocutory Decree a historic milestone, made possible by the collaboration of state and tribal leaders, both past and present.

"In Utah, the Beehive State, the beehive symbolizes communities coming together to achieve greater things than the sum of all parts," Lt. Governor Henderson said. "This demonstrates that we can overcome challenges and work together to bring life and hope to all communities in Utah."

Budget and Finance Committee Chair Shaandiin Parrish (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) attended the event, emphasizing that years of advocacy for the settlement will now provide hope for future generations. Chair Parrish also noted the Nation's continued commitment to advocating for issues that benefit Navajo residents in Utah.

"This event is a step in the right direction," she said. "We came together as partners, and this decree represents that partnership. It will provide our communities with essential needs like indoor plumbing and running water, which nearly half of the homes in Navajo-Utah still lack."

Navajo Nation Chief Legislative Counsel Michelle Espino highlighted that the Interlocutory Decree will bring running water to many tribal homes in Utah.

"There are approximately 6,000 Navajo residents on the Utah side of the Nation, and half of these residents live without running water," Espino said. "We need to be able to move this water like the states do, and this settlement is a critical step forward in fulfilling our vision of providing water infrastructure."

The Utah-Navajo Nation Water Rights Settlement Interlocutory Decree represents more than a legal formality; it is a commitment to improving the quality of life for Navajo residents who lack access to basic water necessities in their homes.

Council Delegate Rickie Nez and acting Attorney General Heather Clah attended the day's event. Council Delegate Parrish and members of the Navajo Water Rights team were recognized on the floor of the House of Representative by Rep. Logan Monson.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council extends its gratitude to the Office of Utah's Governor and Lieutenant Governor, all state legislators, Utah Division of Water Rights, Navajo Nation Water Rights Unit, and the 23rd Navajo Nation Council for their hard work and partnership in finalizing the Interlocutory Decree.

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