



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Naabik'iyáti' Committee approves Navajo Nation comments on post-2026 Colorado River operations



Council Delegate Brenda Jesus sponsored Legislation No. 0044-26 authorizing the Navajo Nation's formal comments to the Bureau of Reclamation during the federal public review period.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On Thursday, the Naabik'iyáti' Committee approved Legislation No. 0044-26, supporting and authorizing the submission of the Navajo Nation's formal comments to the Bureau of Reclamation regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Powell and Lake Mead.

Legislation 0044-26, sponsored by Council Delegate Brenda Jesus and co-sponsored by Council Delegate Dr. Andy Nez, affirms the Navajo Nation's position that active and meaningful Tribal engagement is necessary in the development, selection, and implementation of future Colorado River operational guidelines. The legislation supports the Nation's detailed written comments submitted during the federal public review period.

"This legislation ensures that the Navajo Nation's voice is clearly on record as the federal government considers post-2026 operational guidelines. Water is life for our people. We must be actively involved in decisions that affect our water security, hydropower resources, cultural landscapes, and economic future. By formally supporting these comments, we are asserting our sovereign responsibility to protect the interests of the Navajo Nation," said Delegate Brenda Jesus.

The purpose of the legislation is to support and approve the Navajo Nation's comments in response to the Bureau of Reclamation's public notice to solicit comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Post-2026 operations. The comments address hydrologic conditions, reservoir operations, water rights considerations, hydropower generation, cultural and tribal resources, and the need for a formalized government-to-government consultation structure moving forward.

The Nation's comments emphasize that Colorado River reservoir operations directly affect Navajo communities through water supply, energy production, agriculture, economic development, and cultural practices. They call for adequate accounting of impacts to the Navajo Nation and recognition of unquantified water rights, including the importance of advancing the Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement Agreement to provide long-term certainty.

The legislation authorizes the Navajo Nation President, Vice President, and the Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council, and their designees, to advocate for the Navajo Nation's position consistent with the approved comments.

The Naabik'íyáti' Committee serves as the final authority on Legislation No. 0044-26 and approved the legislation with a vote of 16 in favor and none opposed.

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