



**THE NAVAJO NATION**  
*Office of the President and Vice President*

SJ-17

**PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE**

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**NAVAJO NATION PUSHES TO DEFEAT HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 43**

*"Joint Memorial requesting the State Engineer and the Interstate Stream Commission to include Non-Native Stakeholders in the potential settlement of water rights of the Navajo Nation"*

**Window Rock**—Navajo Nation leaders and Gallup Mayor Bob Rosebrough are standing side by side in opposition to House Joint Memorial 43 (HJM 43) sponsored by New Mexico Representative Richard P. Cheney (R-San Juan-2). The Navajo Nation (Nation) is scheduled to testify before the Energy and Natural Resources Committee on Wednesday in Santa Fe, regarding the San Juan River Basin in New Mexico and the proposed Navajo Nation Water Rights Settlement (WSA) documents.

"I am requesting that the Committee defeat this Memorial," restated Dayish. "Again, concerns noted in the Memorial are being addressed by representatives from both the State of New Mexico and the Nation. This is not the end of the comment process for the WSA. The Nation vehemently opposes both Memorials SJM 25 and HJM 43."

The Nation's priority is to move towards the authorization and appropriation of the infrastructure to be constructed as a result of negotiations by the State and the Nation. The Nation is currently working with the New Mexico Congressional delegation to retain federal funding.

Arvin Trujillo, Executive Director of Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources said, "From discussion with staff members in Washington, D.C. a settlement within New Mexico will need to be included with the Gila River Water Settlement (Arizona) and CALFED Bay-Delta Program (California) which are other project negotiations that are currently on the move."

In the event legislation from these projects are brought before U.S. Congress, the San Juan River Settlement needs to be prepared for funding consideration.

The Nation and the State Engineer's office (SE) are targeting March 2004 to present documents to the N.M. Congressional delegation for review, which will later be introduced before Congress in October 2006. Secondly, the quantification of the water rights in the San Juan River Basin will follow the court adjudication process with a completion date of December 2010. This date will be a milestone for passage of legislation to authorize and appropriate federal funding.

Regarding the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project, Gallup Mayor Bob Rosebrough strongly supports the proposed Navajo Nation Water Rights Settlement with the State of New Mexico.

“If the proposed Settlement is delayed, we will lose a finite window of opportunity to leverage the power of the State’s senate delegation in connection with water policy and appropriations,” said Rosebrough. “Both Senators Domenici and Bingaman hold leadership positions and it will be a tragedy to let this unique opportunity pass, because it is not likely to be repeated. The Settlement will avoid years, if not decades, of litigation and uncertainty that will impede economic development and prosperity throughout the region.”

Gallup City Manager Eric Honeyfield also stated, “The Navajo-Gallup Water Supply project which will be authorized by the proposed Settlement is Gallup’s only potential source of renewable water. To delay the settlement is to threaten the future of our City. The water table in our well field is currently dropping 20 feet per year and we are projected to be experiencing shortages by 2012.”

Dayish concluded, “On February 3, we met with the Senate Indian and Cultural Affairs Committee to address SJM 25. There I requested that the Joint Memorial be defeated by the Committee. However, we did compromise with the Committee to table the Memorial and allow representatives from the Interstate Stream Commission, SE, the Nation, and the sponsor of SJM 25 to develop a Memorial that would address the concerns, but not delay the process currently on-going.”

Extending the review period to November 30, 2004 only delays the Nation’s ability to work with Congressional leadership in developing a final package that will not only address the quantification of the San Juan River Basin, but will provide needed conveyance infrastructure in the northwestern portion of the State, namely the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project.

The Navajo Nation has been working with the State since 1997 both parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 1997 and 2001.

The Navajo Nation Resources Committee is currently sponsoring the appropriate legislation and plan on a Special Session of the Navajo Nation Council on February 26-27, 2004 to finalize the proposed Settlement in preparation for a presentation to the N.M. Congressional delegation.

**WHAT: Energy and Natural Resources Committee**

**WHEN: Wednesday, February 11, 2004**

**TIME: 8:30 am**

**LOCATION: State Capitol Building, Room #315, Santa Fe, New Mexico**

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