

SJ-17  
Navajo Settlement



State of New Mexico  
Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson  
Governor

Patricia Madrid  
Attorney General

December 14, 2006

The Honorable Joe Shirley, Jr.  
President, Navajo Nation  
P.O. Box 9000  
Window Rock, Arizona 86515

Dear President Shirley:

The State of New Mexico and the Navajo Nation remain committed to implementing the historic San Juan River Basin in New Mexico Navajo Nation Water Rights Settlement Agreement. Section 5.2 of the Settlement Agreement provides that Congress must enact federal legislation necessary to implement certain provisions by December 31, 2006. Although Senator Bingaman and Representative Udall introduced legislation on December 7, 2006 (S 4108 and HR 6436), Congress has since recessed, making it impossible to meet this deadline.

Since we signed the Settlement Agreement in April 2005, our staffs have been working diligently with our congressional delegation to revise the federal legislation. We look forward to continued involvement in the legislative process next year. Because the legislation must be re-introduced next year, it is appropriate to extend the December 31, 2006, enactment deadline to allow Congress sufficient time to consider and act upon the legislation.

It is also appropriate to extend the other milestones described in the Settlement Agreement accordingly. Section 401(f)(1)(a) of the federal legislation contains deadlines that extend by two years the benchmarks provided for in the Settlement Agreement. A two-year extension will allow us to work with our congressional delegation to develop the political support necessary to enact legislation. At an appropriate time, we can formally amend the Settlement Agreement, subject to the approval of the parties, to reflect any changes made in the authorizing legislation, including changes in these Settlement Agreement milestones.

Thank you for your continued work on this important Agreement.

Sincerely,

Bill Richardson  
Governor of New Mexico

Patricia Madrid  
New Mexico Attorney General