

SJ-17
Navajo Se

John Whipple

From: Candise Castillo
Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2005 3:20 PM
To: All employees
Subject: FW: Governor Richardson signs Navajo Nation Water Rights Settlement

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-----Original Message-----

From: Gilbert Gallegos
Sent: Tuesday, April 19, 2005 3:19 PM
Subject: Governor Richardson signs Navajo Nation Water Rights Settlement

<<...OLE_Obj...>>
State of New Mexico
Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

For immediate release
Gilbert Gallegos
April 19 2005
505-476-2217

Contact:

(Santa Fe)

Governor Bill Richardson, Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Attorney General Patricia Madrid Sign Water Rights Settlement Agreement

SANTA FE - New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson today joined Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley and New Mexico Attorney General Patricia Madrid in signing the historic settlement agreement that resolves the claims of the Navajo Nation for the use of waters of the San Juan River Basin in northwestern New Mexico.

"This settlement between the State of New Mexico and the Navajo Nation is historic in that it brings to a peaceful conclusion a major unsettled question between the two sovereign governments: Our Water," Governor Bill Richardson said. "This agreement also sets the stage for future economic development of the Four Corners region - which has been jeopardized in the past because of the uncertainty of available water rights."

The settlement is intended to adjudicate water rights and provide associated water development projects for the benefit of the Navajo Nation in exchange for a release of claims to water that could have potentially displaced existing non-Navajo water users in the basin. The Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project would be the cornerstone of proposed development projects.

In addition to the obvious benefits to Navajo and non-Navajo water users in the San Juan Basin, the settlement agreement is good for the State of New Mexico because it settles longstanding claims without resorting to expensive lawsuits.

"This agreement settles the Navajo Nation's water rights claims, while at

the same time benefiting non-Navajo water right owners by protecting existing uses of water while allowing for future growth," said State Engineer John D'Antonio. "And it does so within the amount of water apportioned to New Mexico by the Colorado River Compacts."

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