



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 15, 2016
For more information contact: Kim Secakuku, PR Officer
(928) 734-3107 Office (928) 221-6167 Cell

Hopi Tribe Continues Discussions on Water Uses

Meetings Continue Between Hopi and Navajo Tribes

Kykotsmovi, AZ. Hopi Tribal officials met with Navajo Nation officials to continue discussions using guiding principles developed jointly regarding water management issues relating to water use on both reservations. The two day meeting held June 14 and 15 provided the tribes an opportunity to address common issues and identify areas that would need further clarification to reach commonality. Meetings will continue between the tribes to meet the joint objective of "Two Nations, One Voice."

The Hopi Tribe's team includes Tribal Council Chairman Herman Honanie, Vice Chairman Alfred Lomahquahu, Jr. and members of the Hopi Tribal Council's Water and Energy Task Team. These include Task Team Chairman Norman Honanie, Council members Malinda Andrews, Bruce Fredericks, Rosa Honani, Lamar Kevama and Wallace Youvella, and Water Resource Program Director Lionel Puhuyesva.

Both tribes have water rights claims to the Little Colorado River (LCR) that are the subject of the long-running Little Colorado River Water Rights Adjudication. The case was filed in Apache County Superior Court in 1978 and involves nearly 2,000 claimants, including the United States, the Hopi Tribe, the Navajo Nation, the cities of Flagstaff, Winslow and Holbrook, and farmers and ranchers throughout the Little Colorado River Basin. The Hopi Tribe, along with the Navajo Nation, is located in the Little Colorado River basin.

Joint discussions began at the invitation of Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye in a letter to Hopi Chairman Herman Honanie in November 2015, suggesting a joint tribal position on LCR negotiations. Previous to the Navajo invitation, Senator John McCain in a letter to the Hopi Tribe on June 22, 2015, likewise, suggested resumption of settlement negotiations on the Little Colorado River.

After Council consideration of the requests the Hopi Tribal Council decided to initiate bilateral discussions where guiding principles were developed to provide parameters for discussions on common water issues related to the Little Colorado River and water supplies on both Hopi and Navajo lands.

The Hopi Tribal Council properly authorized the Water/Energy Team to represent the Tribe in the discussions with the Navajo Nation. Recent information presented by Ben Nuvamsa is misinforming the public about the Council's lack of authority. There are no prior Hopi Tribal resolutions that limit the Council's authority.

Hopi Resolution H-072-2012, voted on June 15, 2012, had formally objected and rejected Senate Bill 2109 and prohibited the Hopi Water and Energy teams from further negotiations on SB2109. It further stated that Council provide consultations with the Hopi villages on future negotiations, and if there is a proposed settlement that it be voted upon by a referendum vote.

Hopi Resolution H-073-2012, enacted by Council on June 21, 2012, endorsed the proposed settlement of its claims to the Little Colorado River provided in the March 8 [2012] settlement agreement, subject to Council review and approval of all related exhibits, and that the endorsement shall not extend to any modifications to the settlement to Senate Bill 2109 or any other enactment by the U.S. Congress.

The Hopi Tribal Council later repealed H-072-2012 and H-073-2012 relating to the proposed settlement of the Tribe's Little Colorado River claims with Resolution H-005-2013 that was enacted on December 18, 2012.

Simultaneously, the Little Colorado River Water Rights Adjudication case filed in Apache County Superior Court in 1978 is still on going. The Hopi Tribe and the United States filed their initial claims for the Hopi Reservation in 1985. The last court hearing was held March 29, 2016, regarding a Special Master's Report in reference to Little Colorado River General Stream adjudication. A Status Conference is scheduled for July 12, 2016.

###