



Joint Press Release

Navajo Nation Office of the Speaker and The Hopi Tribe



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Jared Touchin 928-221-9253

Carlene Tenakhongva 928-734-3102

Tribal leaders call on Salt River Project to keep Navajo Generating Station in operation

FLAGSTAFF – Speaker LoRenzo Bates and Hopi Tribal Chairman Herman G. Honanie, are calling on Salt River Project and other owners to keep Navajo Generating Station in full operation for the benefit of the Navajo Nation, Hopi Tribe, and the entire state of Arizona.

Both tribes have been contacted by Salt River Project representatives regarding the possible closure of NGS due in large part to the low cost of natural gas as opposed to coal. On Wednesday, leaders from the Hopi Tribe and the Navajo Nation Council met in Flagstaff to share their concerns over the possible closure and the greater economic impact for the entire state.

“We have made it clear to SRP that we want the owners of NGS to be upfront, open, and honest in regards to their intentions,” said Speaker Bates. “Decisions need to be made and SRP needs to take into full consideration the impact that a possible closure would have on the economy, jobs, and communities that rely on NGS.”

NGS and Kayenta Mine, which provides coal to the power plant, provide significant revenues and many jobs for both tribes. In fact, combined revenues from both operations provide more than 80-percent of the Hopi Tribe’s general fund budget.

“The Hopi people are dissatisfied with the lack of transparency from SRP in its recent threats to discontinue NGS,” stated Chairman Honanie.

On Feb. 2, Arizona Corporation Commissioner Andy Tobin, issued a letter to the president of the SRP Agricultural Improvement and Power District, stating that SRP and other critical stakeholders, including commissioners, must suspend plans to close NGS and called for an “emergency NGS Power Summit as soon as practicable to discuss ways to protect NGS.”

“The closure of NGS will have a profoundly negative impact across all peoples and sectors of our state. SRP must look beyond its spreadsheets and see that this decision must not and should not be made unilaterally,” wrote Tobin in the letter.

Leaders from both tribes thanked Tobin for his support and urged other state and federal leaders to urge SRP and other owners to negotiate a sustainable pathway for the continuation of Navajo Generating Station.

“This is a very complex issue and it is important that we move along carefully while we remain mindful of our people, their jobs, and their livelihood,” added Speaker Bates.

The Navajo Nation has developed a task force, which includes the chairs of each of the Navajo Nation Council's Standing Committees, which continues to meet on a regular basis with SRP officials to discuss possible solutions.

Leadership from both tribes agreed that they would continue to meet and work together to ensure that NGS will continue operations to 2019 and beyond and both tribes remain open to continued discussions with SRP.

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