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**FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE
June 5, 2017**

Hopi Water and Energy Committee meets with the Udall Institute and Navajo Nation to discuss LCR Water Negotiations.

Kykotsmovi, Ariz.- On May 31st the Hopi Tribal Council Water and Energy Committee met with the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution – Udall Foundation (Udall Institute) and representatives of the Navajo Nation to discuss the prospects for agreement concerning water rights. The Udall Institute hosted the meeting at Senator John McCain’s request, to explore how the Institute might try to help the Tribe and the Nation reach an agreement.

Beginning in March 2016, representatives of the Tribe and the Nation met on several occasions, seeking to develop shared principles for water rights settlement discussions. The initiative was referred to as “Two Nations, One Voice.” Those discussions have reached an impasse. Senator McCain suggested the meeting based on the Udall Institute’s history of successfully mediating complex conflicts.

At the meeting, the Tribe and the Nation each had an opportunity to state their respective positions, perspectives, and concerns. The Udall Institute will assess the information provided, and report back to the Tribe and the Nation. Chairman Honanie expressed his appreciation to the Udall Institute for hosting the meeting and to Senator McCain for recommending it. He expressed hope the Institute will help the Tribe and the Nation bridge their differences in water matters. Chairman Honanie acknowledged, however, that reaching an agreement will be difficult and will require all parties to work together: “The Hopi Tribe and the Navajo Nation are entitled to water resources that provide both of them a permanent homeland with meaningful economic development for their peoples. But, as a result of actions and positions of the United States and the Navajo Nation, the water resources readily available to the Hopi Tribe are limited and insufficient for Hopi’s future needs. Under present circumstances, the only viable settlement framework is one that assures Hopi rights to off-reservation water resources that will be delivered to Hopi lands with adequate waterworks infrastructure sufficient to ensure the Hopi Reservation’s future as an economically viable and prosperous homeland for the Hopi people.”

Protection, confirmation and preservation of the Hopi Tribe’s water rights and resources are of the highest priority to the Hopi Tribe. Chairman Honanie stated: “We’re doing this for future generations. Hopi’s future is dependent on access to water resources that are rightfully ours. Large portions of ‘Hopitutskwa,’ Hopi’s aboriginal homeland, were taken from us. Hopi has a right to share in the water resources of all of Hopitutskwa to meet our future needs.”

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