

John Whipple

From: Karin Stangl
Sent: Friday, February 06, 2004 10:49 AM
To: Robert Genualdi; Phil Mutz; John Whipple
Subject: news article of interest

FYI--
Karin Stangl

WINDOW ROCK
Press release 2/4/2004
http://nativetimes.com/index.asp?action=displayarticle&article_id=3741

On January 26 the State of New Mexico introduced SJM 25, a memorial that may impede the Navajo Nation Proposed Water Rights Settlement. Navajo Nation

leaders have expressed their opposition to the legislature, saying the memorial is disadvantageous to their earlier negotiations with the State

of New Mexico.

New Mexico Senate Majority Floor Leader Manny Aragon (D-Albuquerque) introduced the memorial during the first day of the New Mexico State Legislation in Santa Fe.

According to a New Mexico State Legislative Update, Aragon requested that the State Engineer (SE) and Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) to include non-native stakeholders in Navajo Nation water rights settlement discussions: SE to investigate, analyze and take public testimony on how

proposed settlement will affect all stakeholders in the San Juan Basin; SE and ISC to develop a comprehensive management plan to ensure equitable distribution of water, and to report status and progress to the interim Water and Natural Resources Committee by 11/30/04.

Navajo Nation Officers immediately expressed apprehension over the legislation. Vice President Frank Dayish, Jr. stated, "The Navajo Nation

does not support the memorial. Our intent is to develop ways and means to provide water from the San Juan River, not only for our reservation but other areas such as the City of Gallup and the Jicarilla Indian reservation.

We have been actively working toward a delicate balance for providing water for home use, agriculture, commerce and industry for both Indians and non-Indians alike, now and for future generations."

Dayish wasn't the only official to counter the legislation.

Navajo Nation Council Resources Committee Chairperson George Arthur

stated
that the memorial was "misleading" and "detrimental" to earlier
negotiations
between the Navajo Nation and the State of New Mexico.

The Navajo Nation Water Settlement Agreement reads, in part: The
proposed
settlement agreement is intended to provide water rights and associated
development projects, including the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project,
for
the benefit of the Navajo Nation in exchange for a release of claims to
water that potentially might otherwise displace existing non-Navajo
water
users in the Basin in New Mexico.

Navajo Nation Joe Shirley, Jr. stated, "The settlement is favorable to
the
Navajo Nation....I stand in support of the settlement and legislation."

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