



## Navajo Nation Council applauds enactment of Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act, CARES Act extension

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** December 27, 2020 (Updated: December 28, 2020)

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — President Trump signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 into law Sunday night after Congressional approval of the bill on December 21. The Act includes the federal government's annual budget in addition to a new coronavirus (Covid-19) relief package and the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act.

“The Navajo Nation Council is deeply appreciative of all those who put forth a strong effort to get the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 approved. Not only will this allow for a more thorough effort in managing the Coronavirus Relief Funds received by the Navajo Nation, but it will give the Navajo people of Utah a long-awaited foundation for building out clean, piped water infrastructure. We thank our Congressional leadership, including Sen. Romney, Sen. Udall, Sen. McSally, Sen. Sinema and all the cosponsors on the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act legislation. We also express a deep appreciation to Rep. Bishop, Rep. Lujan, Rep. Stewart, Rep. Curtis, Rep. McAdams and Rep. O'Halleran for providing House leadership on this effort, in addition to House Natural Resources Committee Chair Grijalva. Moving into the new Congress and new Administration, the Navajo Nation looks forward to continuing our policy advocacy with each of our partners in Washington,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh).

The Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act language was initially approved by the Navajo Nation Council through Resolution No. CJA-7-16, sponsored by former Navajo Nation Council Delegate Davis Filfred. The Navajo Nation and the State of Utah came to a negotiated agreement in 2015 after the Navajo Nation Water Rights Commission, Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources and the Navajo Department of Justice arrived at a settlement of claims that establish quantified water rights and provided for more than \$210 million in federal funding for Navajo Utah water projects. Additionally, the State of Utah will contribute \$8 million to the Navajo Utah Settlement Trust Fund established through the act, portions of which the state has already set aside pending federal approval.

Council Delegate Herman M. Daniels, Jr. (Ts'ah Bii' Kin, Navajo Mountain, Shonto, Oljato), cosponsor of Resolution No. CJA-7-16, shared his comments on Monday: “We deeply appreciate the work of the 23rd and 24th Navajo Nation Councils in leading the way forward on the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act. Along with the Office of the President and Vice President, the Navajo Utah Commission, our Navajo Utah chapter leaders and community members and all those who partnered with the Navajo Nation to push this to this point. The settlement has been signed into law in Washington after decades of effort by our grassroots community members and our local leadership, including Hon. Davis Filfred. This settlement ends disputes and gives Navajo Utah communities resources that were fought for by the Navajo Nation Council and partners from the local, state and federal levels. We thank Mr. Stanley Pollack and our Navajo Nation Department of Justice water rights attorneys for all their hard work in carrying this settlement through this process on behalf of our Navajo People, ahéhee!”

Council Delegate Charlainé Tso (Mexican Water, Tóńikan, Teec Nos Pos, Aneth, Red Mesa) stated: “I am very thankful for this momentous step forward. We have so many Navajo Utah constituents who are in dire need of water and for this decision to be made during a pandemic, we see that Washington

officials have a great amount of care and respect for our Utah Navajos. Thank you, to all of our Navajo leadership for their continued advocacy. Our voices have been heard,” said Council Delegate Charlaine Tso (Mexican Water, Tółikan, Teec Nos Pos, Aneth, Red Mesa).

The federal funding package signed into law on Sunday also included a year extension to the Coronavirus Relief Funds received previously by the Navajo Nation through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) Act.

Council legislation is currently undergoing the legislative process for proposed Covid-19 response projects and extended support, in addition to overseeing the automatic reallocation measures put into place due to the previous December 30 CARES Act deadline.

**Note:** This press release has been updated to include Hon. Herman M. Daniels, Jr.’s statement.

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