Tribal Water Rights

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Basic water infrastructure is something some Indigenous communities still lack. The Mountain West News Bureau's Yvette Fernandez has this report on a possible settlement that could bring water to some communities for the first time.

The Navajo Nation says a third of its people on the reservation don’t have access to water. Hauling bottled water is common.

So the Navajo Nation, along with the Hopi and San Juan Southern Paiute tribes want the government to authorize the country’s largest Indian water rights settlement. It would provide water infrastructure to hundreds of thousands of indigenous people.

Navajo Spokesperson Justin Ahasteen says settling this decades-long dispute will be a positive step forward for Native and non-native communities.

CUT: Ahasteen

“It provides that certainty as we continue to look at ways to conserve the existing water usage and it helps promote the Navajo Nation to be more self reliant.” :09

The Water Rights Settlement must be approved by Congress. If passed, the $5 billion in federal funding would allow the infrastructure effort to begin, with a projected completion date of 2040. It also solidifies the Navajo Nation’s water rights to the Colorado River's Upper and Lower Basins.

For the MWNB, I'm YF.

Water Rights-CC

The Navajo, Hopi and San Juan Southern Paiute nations is calling on the federal government to authorize the country’s largest Indian water rights settlement, which could provide water infrastructure to hundreds of thousands of indigenous people from the three tribes.

Navajo Spokesperson Justin Ahasteen says at least a third of their residents don't have access to running water and the pandemic disproportionately affected them.

CUT: Ahasteen

“the lack of water really exacerbated the COVID pandemic for our people. And at one point the Navajo Nation had the highest rate of death on a per capita basis, because we simply could not wash our hands.”

If passed, the $5 billion in federal funding would allow the water infrastructure effort to begin, with a projected completion date of 2040.

Links:

[Native News Online](https://nativenewsonline.net/sovereignty/navajo-water-rights-settlement-legislation-introduced-in-congress?fbclid=IwY2xjawFz95BleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHTTPNfJiv5QzIZzRC9qjAh6k30U0HHzYksIqOyERlivLg10efQO6iCcgeA_aem_SLvfTL9MJRCHD26sJfDs1g)
[Associated Press](https://apnews.com/article/colorado-river-tribes-water-settlement-navajo-hopi-d8aaa65e7c5d04ef965763ea4bde5078)

[Arizona Governor](https://azgovernor.gov/office-arizona-governor/news/2024/07/governor-hobbs-applauds-landmark-tribal-water-rights-settlement)

Notes:

President Buu Nygren of the Navajo Nation testified before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs (late Sept)