

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 22, 2026

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chair, Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Hualapai Tribe Water Settlement Act of 2022 (Public Law No: 117-349)

Chair Murkowski and Ranking Member Merkley:

As you draft the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Senate Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies (Interior) Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you support the highest funding possible for the Hualapai Tribe Water Rights Settlement Agreement to deliver on the promises made in Public Law 117-349.

As a successor to the Bill Williams River Water Rights Settlement Act of 2014 (PL 113-223), the Hualapai Tribe Water Settlement Act of 2022 (PL 117-349) authorized a total of \$312 million to support 2,300 tribal members access clean water on the Reservation. Because of its location directly on the Grand Canyon, the Hualapai Tribe has a tourism-based economy centered on Grand Canyon West, a world-class tourist development on the western rim of the Canyon that attracts more than 700,000 visitors to the seventh natural wonder of the world annually.¹ Located in northwestern Arizona, the Tribe's 108-mile northern boundary is defined by the Colorado River. Although there are some ground water resources on the Reservation separate from the river, these resources are unable to provide a reliable and sustainable long-term water supply to support the Reservation and fail to foster a viable and economically self-sufficient tribal community. The water and delivery infrastructure provided by this settlement would empower the Tribe to unlock the potential for growth at Grand Canyon West and facilitate a breakthrough enhancement to the regional economy and to the State of Arizona as a whole.

The House FY 2025 Interior appropriations bill (H.R. 8998) provided \$30 million to the Tribe, and the Senate companion provided \$45 million, but a conference bill was ultimately not passed, and the Tribe was left without another year of progress. Similarly, the House FY 2026 Interior appropriations bill (H.R. 4754) provided \$58,897,000 for the Tribe, as well as payments and necessary administrative expenses for implementation of Indian land and water claim settlements pursuant to Public Laws 99-264, 101-618. However, the enacted minibus appropriations bill (PL 119-74) only appropriated \$976,000 among three settlements as requested by the Senate FY 2026 Interior appropriations bill (S. 2431), essentially leaving Hualapai once again with no funding.

Without sufficient levels of funding, the Tribe cannot produce the environmental study and design work required by the National Environmental Policy Act to start construction of the infrastructure project. As the President and the 119th Congress work diligently to trim the federal fat and make commonsense investments in clean water infrastructure, it is critical to avoid double work in the Capitol. If the funding for the Hualapai Tribe Water Rights Settlement is not sufficiently appropriated before its authorization expires in FY 2029, Congress must reauthorize the settlement once again.

¹ U.S. National Park Service. "Visitation Numbers." Retrieved March 25, 2026.

To avoid lapses in tribal trust responsibility, Congress should prioritize funds for water settlements that have already been authorized. Allowing the Hualapai Tribe Water Settlement Act's authorization to expire sets a precedent for lackluster representation and empty promises to the tribal communities we serve. We know neither of those traits are priorities on your Subcommittee. Therefore, we request your partnership to assist the Hualapai Tribe through the FY 2027 Senate Interior appropriations bill.

Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to expanding access to clean water in tribal communities.

Sincerely,



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Elijah Crane
Member of Congress



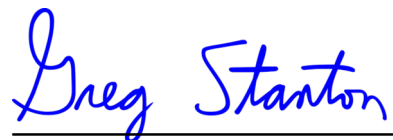
Andy Biggs
Member of Congress



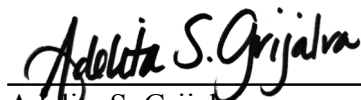
Juan Ciscomani
Member of Congress



Yassamin Ansari
Member of Congress



Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



Adelita S. Grijalva
Member of Congress

CC:

The Honorable Mike Simpson, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Chellie Pingree, Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies