



Mayor Louis Bonaguidi
Councilor Linda Garcia, District 1
Councilor Michael Schaaf, District 2
Councilor Sarah Piano, District 3
Councilor Ron Molina, District 4

JM DeYoung, Interim City Manager
David Eason, City Attorney

July 15, 2024

The Hon. Bruce Westerman, Chair
House Natural Resources Committee

The Hon. Raul Grijalva, Ranking Member
House Natural Resources Committee

The Hon. Harriet Hageman, Chair
Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs

The Hon. Teresa Leger Fernandez
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs

The Hon. Cliff Bentz, Chair
Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries

The Hon. Jared Huffman, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries

1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Distinguished Members of the House Natural Resources Committee Leadership:

We write to express our enthusiastic support for the prompt passage of H.R. 3977, the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project Amendments Act of 2023. The Act is of immense and historic consequence to the Navajo Nation and Navajo people, to the City of Gallup, New Mexico, and to McKinley County, New Mexico. Its passage will mark a turning point in the lives of hundreds of thousands, ensuring the stability and vitality of their homes and communities, and their futures.

The Act honors and effectuates the United States' trust responsibilities to the Navajo people inhering in the 2005 San Juan River Basin Water Rights Settlement between the Navajo Nation, the United States, and the State of New Mexico. Its importance and benefits are difficult to overstate. Purely by way of example:

1. Currently, the eastern Navajo Reservation, the City of Gallup and McKinley County rely on dwindling groundwater resources that are increasingly expensive and difficult to develop. Water from the San Juan River constitutes the only available and economically viable long term supply. Completion of the Project is therefore essential to -- and guarantees -- the futures of the Reservation, the City and the County.
2. Approximately 40% of the Reservation's residents have no water service and must haul water to their homes and businesses. Passage of the Act, assuring the Project's completion, will set the stage for the piped delivery of water to communities lacking water service, assuring and enhancing their health and their social, cultural and economic vitality.
3. The City of Gallup and McKinley County have lost a substantial portion of their industrial and commercial base, leading to employment loss, stagnation and associated ills. The City and County (over half of whose residents are Navajo) are poised to attract and foster new industrial and other business development due to the availability of land and Gallup's location as a rail and road transportation hub. Delivery of Project Water will turn those possibilities to realities. In economic terms, the Project is a "game changer" for the City and County.
4. The Navajo Nation, Gallup and the County were severely impacted by the Covid pandemic (Gallup was literally closed and quarantined at the pandemic's height) due in substantial part to longstanding limitations in the availability of health care services. Recently, the Nation and

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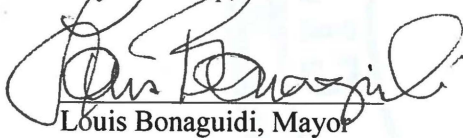
Indian Health Services (IHS) determined to establish a new hospital on land owned by the Nation near Gallup's northern boundary and adjacent to land the City is in the process of annexing. The new hospital will substantially expand and improve the delivery of health care services to members of the Nation, and will foster economic development in the City, the County and on the Reservation. The availability of Project water is key to the new hospital's success and sustainability.

These and other critical Project benefits are mirrored by their opposites should the Act fail to pass. The Project, fifteen years into its planning and construction at a cost of about \$1.5 billion, is largely complete. The Act's failure will not only strand those massive investments, it will undermine trust in the Project and its founding Settlement by forcing the Reservation and the City and County to continue their reliance on increasingly scarce groundwater. Communities will continue to stagnate, economic opportunities will lapse and go elsewhere, and the health of those on the Reservation and in the City and County will suffer. Passage of the Act quite literally means the difference between a trust honored through an assured future and one diminished by doubt and contingency.


Each of you has our thanks and full-fledged support in advancing the Act, and we are confident you will each do your best to assure its passage.

Sincerely,


City of Gallup, New Mexico



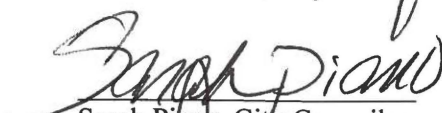
Louis Bonaguidi, Mayor




Linda Garcia, City Councilor



Michael Schaaf, City Councilor




Sarah Piano, City Councilor



Ron Molina, City Councilor

McKinley County, New Mexico



Robert Baca, Chairperson



Danielle Notah, County Commissioner



Walt Eddy, County Commissioner