

**House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife, and Fisheries**  
**Hearing – September 16, 2026**

**Testimony of Governor Christopher Moquino**  
**Pueblo de San Ildefonso**

**In Support of H.R. 6869**

**To amend the Aamodt Litigation Settlement Act to extend certain dates for  
completion of the Pojoaque Basin Regional Water System**

Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife, and Fisheries, I am Christopher Moquino, Governor of the Pueblo de San Ildefonso. I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of H.R. 6869 - legislation to amend the Aamodt Litigation Settlement Act to extend certain dates for completion of the Pojoaque Basin Regional Water System.

I submit this testimony in support of the shared interests of the Pueblo de San Ildefonso, the Pueblo of Nambé, the Pueblo of Pojoaque, the Pueblo of Tesuque, and Santa Fe County. Together, these five New Mexico partners will benefit from, own, and operate the Pojoaque Basin Regional Water System. The Regional Water System is the centerpiece of the settlement of the long-running Aamodt water rights litigation and is essential to fulfilling the intent and purposes of the federal settlement legislation.

Construction of the Regional Water System is progressing, but increased costs and remaining funding challenges require a practical and carefully sequenced approach. The Pueblos and Santa Fe County have worked closely with the Bureau of Reclamation to address these challenges and to support a revised contracting and construction strategy. That strategy is designed to bring the system into operation as efficiently and economically as possible, allow it to begin serving customers and generating revenues, and permit additional distribution lines and related features to be added as funding becomes available.

To implement this practical strategy, Reclamation has had to redesign certain aspects of the system and revise its contracting plan. Those necessary adjustments have extended the projected completion timeline into 2030. The Pueblos and Santa Fe County support that schedule because it provides the most feasible path for bringing the Regional Water System into operation as soon as possible while preserving the benefits Congress intended through the settlement.

A legal obstacle now stands in the way of that practical approach. Section 623(e) of the Aamodt Litigation Settlement Act, as amended in 2021, allows one or more Pueblos to petition the decree court to void the settlement if the Secretary of the Interior determines the system cannot be substantially completed by June 30, 2028. While none of the Pueblos want construction to cease while funding remains available, the Department of the Interior has interpreted the 2028 date as a hard cutoff for construction activity on the Pojoaque Basin Regional Water System. This interpretation would halt work irrespective of remaining funds, design cost-savings, or project efficiencies.

H.B. 6869 would address this problem by amending Section 623(g). The bill permits the extension of the subsection (e) dates if the Pueblos, the State, the City, the County and the United States acting through the Secretary, mutually agree it is reasonably necessary. This narrow, technical amendment does not reopen the settlement, alter substantive rights, or impose new costs on the United States. Instead, it simply allows all settlement parties to align the construction timeline with current construction realities and logistics.

Passing this legislation is necessary to remove an artificial barrier to the project's completion, ensuring that the Regional Water System can finally deliver its intended benefits to the Pueblos, Santa Fe County, and the surrounding communities.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge this House sub-committee, and ultimately, the House Committee on Natural Resources, to act favorably on this legislation and support its prompt passage. We appreciate the continued support for the Aamodt settlement and for the completion of the Pojoaque Basin Regional Water System. Thank you.