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Statement from  
Taos Pueblo Governor Paul T. Martinez, War Chief Luis Romero  
and the Taos Pueblo Tribal Council on the  
Taos Pueblo/Abeyta Indian Water Rights Settlement  
July 31, 2008

I, Governor Paul Martinez, and I, War Chief Luis Romero, with our Taos Pueblo Tribal Council, are very pleased that yesterday all of the local parties confirmed their support for our Congressional delegation to introduce legislation today to authorize the Taos Pueblo/Abeyta Indian Water Rights Settlement. It has been a long and arduous road and although we are not at the end, the introduction of legislation is a major milestone. Senator Pete Domenici, Senator Jeff Bingaman and Congressman Tom Udall have earned Taos Pueblo's abiding gratitude and respect for their leadership in sponsoring this legislation. We are grateful for the longstanding encouragement and support of our entire Congressional delegation. We benefitted from the skill and experience of their staff members who worked closely with the parties in crafting the legislation, in particular Mike Connor, Counsel to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

We are also grateful, first of all, to our Pueblo negotiation team, Mr. Nelson Cordova, Mr. Gilbert Suazo, Tribal Attorney Susan Jordan, Water Task Force members Geronimo Lujan, Ignacio Suazo, Isidro "Sonny" Mirabal and Richard Archuleta, technical consultants Lee Wilson and Ron Billstein, and former Pueblo Attorney Stephen Greetham, all who contributed to the overall effort. We especially remember those who have passed on that worked on this effort: Water Task Force members Paul J. Bernal, Doroteo Samora, Teresino Giron, Patricio Romero, Delfino Reyna, Alejandro Lujan, Rafael Reyna, and John Sandoval, and Tribal Attorneys Bill Schabb and Les Taylor.

We commend the other settlement parties, the Taos Valley Acequia Association, the Town of Taos, El Prado Water and Sanitation District, and the Mutual Domestic Water Consumers' Association, for their cooperation and commitment. Governor Bill Richardson, through Bill Hume, his Director of Policy and Strategic Planning, has tirelessly supported our efforts to move the settlement from a signed local agreement to a Congressional bill. Our Federal Negotiations Team Chair John Peterson, as well as Michael Bogert, Counselor to the Secretary of Interior, and Pam Williams, Director of the Secretary's Office on Indian Water Rights, have personally labored with us to overcome obstacles to accomplishing the settlement.

We look forward to proceeding in unity with our neighbors in the Taos Valley to support passage of the legislation and the necessary funding bills.

  
Governor Paul T. Martinez

  
War Chief Luis Romero

  
Tribal Council Secretary Frank Marcus