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## **President Obama Signs Legislation into Law for Indian Water Rights Settlements**

**(SANTA FE, New Mexico)** – President Barack Obama signed into law today legislation that resolves Indian Water Rights claims in New Mexico, as well as other water rights issues.

The U.S. Senate approved the bill earlier in November. The House approved the legislation on December 2.

The legislation resolves the Nambé-Pojoaque-Tesuque Valley litigation known as the *Aamodt* case, which has been unsettled for more than 40 years. Also, the bill resolves and provides funding for the Taos Pueblo water-rights claims (known as the *Abeyta* case) and provides direct funding of \$180 million for a Navajo-Gallup pipeline, which is part of the Navajo Water Rights Settlement in New Mexico.

The bill provides direct funding of \$81.8 million for the *Aamodt* agreement, which includes building a new Rio Grande diversion and a pipeline to deliver water to the Pojoaque Basin area. The bill also provides direct funding of \$66 million for the Taos Pueblo Water Rights Settlement. It authorizes \$92 million in future for the *Aamodt* Settlement and \$58 million for the *Abeyta* Settlement.

The three water rights settlements will receive more than \$478 million.

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"The support of our New Mexico's U.S. Congressional delegation helped make this funding a reality," said New Mexico State Engineer John D'Antonio. "Now it is up to the New Mexico State Legislature to use the funding tools available via the Indian Water Rights Settlement Fund, the Water Trust Board, and the recently passed Indian Infrastructure funding bill that becomes effective in 2012."

"This is a huge achievement for the State of New Mexico as these settlements provide certainty of water rights for Indians as well as non-Indians," said D'Antonio. "It also provides future economic benefits by creating jobs to build water infrastructure for critical drinking water needs."

*The Office of the State Engineer is charged with administrating the state's water resources. The State Engineer has power over the supervision, measurement, appropriation, and distribution of all surface and groundwater in Hew Mexico, including streams and rivers that cross state boundaries. The State Engineer is also Secretary of the Interstate Stream Commission.*

*The nine-member Interstate Stream Commission is charged with separate duties including protection New Mexico's right to water under eight interstate stream compacts, ensuring the state complies with each of those compacts as well as investigating, conserving and protecting the waters of the state, in addition to water planning.*

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