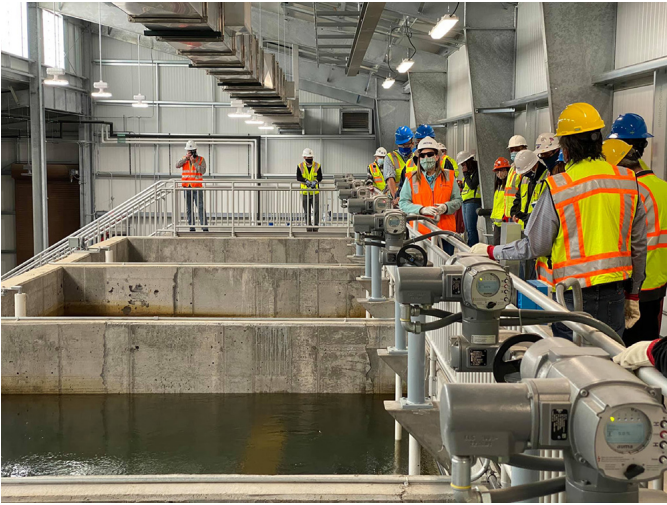


Progress continues on Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project

Written by Staff Reports

Friday, 30 October 2020 02:49



Providing clean water to Navajo communities

DZIL NA OODILII, N.M. – A new water treatment plant will facilitate the delivery of clean water to rural Navajo communities and the Jicarilla Apache Nation. along the Cutter Lateral, which is one of two major water pipelines being developed as a result of the San Juan River Water Rights Settlement between the Navajo Nation and the State of New Mexico.

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The other major pipeline, the San Juan Lateral, is also under construction along U.S. Highway 491.

“We owe a lot of gratitude to our past Navajo leaders who helped negotiate and finalize the San Juan River Water Rights Settlement, which provided the funds and water allocations to construct these two major water pipelines and water treatment sites to help build our communities in the state of New Mexico,” Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez said. “They had a vision and the foresight to help bring much-needed water infrastructure for many communities in the eastern portion of our Nation.

“We also thank the 24th Navajo Nation Council for their support as we move forward. Many families will soon have access to clean water thanks to the work being done with our federal partners under the leadership of Commissioner [Brenda] Burman,” he said.

Nez previously supported the project as a former member of the Navajo Nation Council and as the former Vice President of the Navajo Nation.

During the visit, Nez was joined by Office of the President and Vice President executive staff assistant Leonard Tsosie, who played an instrumental role in finalizing the San Juan River Water Rights Settlement as a former member of the New Mexico State Senate. Nez also stated that the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project could serve as a model for water projects in other areas of the Navajo Nation, including the Western Navajo Agency.

The Office of the President and Vice President and the 24th Navajo Nation Council continue to advocate for the Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement Act, which is awaiting consideration by Congress.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified the need for clean running water for all Navajo people living on the Navajo Nation. In the most powerful country in the world, the first people of this land should not be living without running water and electricity,” Nez pointed out. “We have to continue moving forward through partnerships with state and federal partners to build more infrastructure to meet the needs of our Navajo people.”

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The new water treatment plant will remove contaminants and other materials from water that will be pumped from the Navajo Reservoir and eventually diverted to over 40 communities in the eastern part of the Navajo Nation and Jicarilla Apache Nation in New Mexico.

Now that the construction of the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project's Cutter Lateral Water Treatment Plant is completed, the Bureau of Reclamation and Navajo Tribal Utility Authority will monitor the operation of the plant for a 6-month period. NTUA will eventually assume full operations of the water treatment plant following the 6-week testing and monitoring period.