Water settlement one of six settlements reached during the Obama Administration that will help deliver clean drinking water, certainty to water users across the West

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SANTA FE, NM – As part of President Obama's commitment to empowering American Indian tribal nations and strengthening their economies, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Kevin K. Washburn today joined New Mexico Governor Susanna Martinez and leaders from four Pueblo tribes—the Tesuque, Nambe, Pojoaque and San Ildefonso—at the Santa Fe Indian School to execute settlement documents and celebrate the historic New Mexico vs. Aamodt water rights settlement.

"By executing this settlement today and reaching agreement on five other water rights settlements since 2009, we not only have closed the chapter on these longstanding water disputes, but also opened a new chapter in Indian Country – delivering clean drinking water and certainty to water users across the West while providing more than $2 billion to help tribes," said Secretary Salazar.

"I also am proud of the water settlements achieved under President Obama," said Assistant Secretary Washburn. "The settlements like this one we celebrate today in my home state of New Mexico will bring both drinking water and hope to Indian communities. The 'Aamodt' water rights settlement resolves four decades of litigation and will create jobs through much-needed infrastructure investments."

Other dignitaries who participated in today's ceremony included the tribal leaders of the Pueblos – Phillip Perez, Governor, Pueblo of Nambe; Mark Mitchell, Governor, Pueblo of Tesuque; George Rivera, Governor, Pueblo of Pojoaque; and Terry Aguilar, Governor, Pueblo of San Ildefonso – as well as Charles Dorame, Chairman, Northern Pueblos Tributary Water Rights Association and Former Governor, Tesuque Pueblo; Kathy Holian, Chair of the Santa Fe County Commission; David Coss, Mayor, City of Santa Fe; and other local and state officials.

Often described as one of the longest-running cases in the federal court system, the Aamodt case concerned water rights related to the Rio Pojoaque Basin north of Santa Fe, New Mexico, which is the homeland of the four tribes. Today's action provides finality to the Pueblos' water rights and certainty for non-Indian water rights in north central New Mexico.

The Aamodt settlement provides innovative mechanisms for managing water in the Pojoaque River basin to satisfy the Pueblos' current and future water needs while minimizing disruption to the non-Indian water users. In addition to the four tribes, this process has included the State of New Mexico, Santa Fe County, the City of Santa Fe, and numerous local water users.

This settlement is one of four water rights settlements included in legislation signed by President Obama in the 2010 Claims Resolution Act that will help deliver clean drinking water to tribes in New

Mexico, Arizona and Montana. The other three settlements in that law were the Taos Pueblo Indian Water Rights Settlement provisions, the Crow Tribe Water Rights Settlement provisions, and the White Mountain Apache Tribe Water Quantification provisions.

Two additional water rights settlements were included in the 2009 Omnibus Public Land Management Act – the Northwestern New Mexico Rural Water Projects provisions settling the water rights claims of the Navajo Nation in the San Juan River system in New Mexico and the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley Water Rights Settlement quantifying the tribe's water rights in Nevada.

A summary of the six American Indian water rights settlements since 2009 follows.

AMERICAN INDIAN WATER RIGHTS SETTLEMENTS SINCE 2009

- **The Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley Water Rights Settlement** provisions of the 2009 Omnibus Public Land Management Act quantify the tribe's water rights, provide funding for tribal water development projects, and provides the Tribes with $60 million in funding for water rehabilitation of irrigation projects and other water-related matters.
- **The Northwestern New Mexico Rural Water Projects Settlement** provisions of the 2009 Omnibus Public Land Management Act settle the water rights claims of the Navajo Nation in the San Juan River system in New Mexico in exchange for the construction of a large municipal and industrial water delivery system to deliver water to eastern portions of the Navajo Reservation and adjacent communities.
- **The Aamodt Water Rights Settlement** provisions of the 2010 Claims Resolution Act settle water rights related to the Rio Pojoaque Basin north of Santa Fe, New Mexico, which is the homeland of the Tesuque, Nambe, Pojoaque and San Ildefonso Pueblos. It provides finality to the Pueblos' water rights and certainty for non-Indian water rights in north central New Mexico.
- **The Taos Pueblo Indian Water Rights Settlement** provisions of the 2010 Claims Resolution Act authorize and approve a settlement among the Taos Pueblo, the State of New Mexico, the Town Of Taos, various non-Indian water users and the United States. It resolves water rights disputes in the Rio Pueblo de Taos and Rio Hondo stream systems in New Mexico.
- **The Crow Tribe Water Rights Settlement** provisions of the 2010 Claims Resolution Act settle all of the Crow Tribe's claims to water in the State of Montana and provide funding for design and construction of a rural water system on the Crow Reservation and for rehabilitation and improvement of the Crow Irrigation Project, while also providing for administration and current and future use of water by all Indian and non-Indian water users on the Reservation.
- **The White Mountain Apache Tribe Water Quantification** provisions of the 2010 Claims Resolution Act settle the White Mountain Apache Tribe's claims to both the Gila and the Little Colorado Rivers in Arizona. The agreement provides funding for design and construction of a domestic water delivery system on the Reservation and provides water certainty for the City of Phoenix, the Salt River Project, and other downstream water users.

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