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For Immediate Release: January 15, 1993
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Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan today signed an agreement implementing legislation to resolve a long-standing dispute over the water rights of the Fort McDowell Indian Community in Arizona.

"This settlement averts lengthy, costly litigation and uncertainty for the tribe and the Federal Government," Lujan noted. "Even more important is the fact that this settlement provides the opportunity for increased economic self-sufficiency and meaningful self-determination for the Community."

Chairman Clinton Pattea signed the agreement for the Community, which is located in central Arizona near Phoenix.

Among others attending the signing ceremony in Lujan's office were Eddie Brown, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs, and Dennis Underwood, Commissioner of Reclamation.

"This is an especially happy occasion for me because this settlement benefits a tribe in my home State of Arizona," Brown observed. Underwood said, "The Bureau of Reclamation is very proud of the role we played in achieving this agreement and others involving Indian tribes over the past four years."

In accordance with the Fort McDowell Indian Community Water Rights settlement Act of 1990, the tribe will receive a maximum annual diversion right of 36,350 acre-feet of water from the Verde River. The Community may lease a portion of its water, and has agreed to lease 4,300 acre-feet to the City of Phoenix. In addition, the Federal Government will provide the Community a development fund of $31 million and a Small Reclamation Project Act loan of $13 million for irrigation development on the reservation.