



**The Navajo Nation** **DR. BUU NYGREN** *PRESIDENT*  
Yideeskáądi Nitsáhákees **RICHELLE MONTOYA** *VICE PRESIDENT*

January 31, 2024

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
S-221 U.S. Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
S-230 U.S. Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker  
H-204 Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leader  
H-204 Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brian Schatz  
Chair  
Senate Committee on Indian Affairs  
722 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Indian Affairs  
522 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

**Re: Support for the Tribal Access to Clean Water Act of 2023**

**Honorable Congressional Leaders:**

I am writing to express strong support for the Tribal Access to Clean Water Act, S. 2385 and H.R. 4746, which will provide technical assistance, capacity, and resources to address the inequity in access to clean water for Tribes.

Access to clean water is a basic human right. Clean water is foundational for human health, growing economies, and a minimum level of support for communities. However, an estimated [48 percent of Native American households do not have clean water or adequate sanitation](#). Indeed, Native American homes are [19 times more likely than white households to lack indoor plumbing](#). Such water inequity is particularly egregious in light of the federal treaty and trust responsibility to ensure Tribes have a viable, permanent homeland. Water is a necessity for any homeland.

Funding for safe drinking water systems for Tribal communities received a significant boost from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act. While groundbreaking and long overdue, the funding now available for construction and repair of Tribal water systems is not a complete solution. Technical assistance is needed to allow Tribes to plan and design the systems necessary to access clean drinking water and bring those plans to the “shovel ready” stage where they can take advantage of the newly available construction funding.

While the Navajo Nation is blessed to have created a multi-purpose utility in 1959, many Tribes need support to develop the managerial, financial, and regulatory capacity required for a fully functional and self-sustaining utility. Importantly, because Tribes, including the Navajo Nation, cannot currently rely on the same types and volumes of revenue streams to support operation and maintenance (O&M) of water systems, O&M assistance helps to ensure that the benefits of the historic investment in infrastructure are fully realized and allows the customer to put their income to other uses, such as food, education, and childcare.

The Tribal Access to Clean Water Act of 2023 would address these gaps and advance the federal government’s treaty and trust obligations to provide clean and accessible water for Native communities. I strongly support swift passage of The Tribal Access to Clean Water Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Nygren", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Buu Nygren, *President*  
**THE NAVAJO NATION**