

The original documents are located in Box 1, folder “Arizona Water Rights” of the Bradley H. Patterson Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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AUG 16 1976

Saturday Review

488 MADISON AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022

DOROTHY RE
Cartoon Editor

(212) 751-5908

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Gerald Ford, President
The White House
100 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C.

August 10, 1976

Dear Sir:

I have written to you about somewhat more serious matters, Mr. Nixon's pardon, to which you most graciously replied.

The enclosed article from the Times of last week is, to me, no less a matter of grave importance. The Indians have been mistreated for too long a time. It is one of Americas saddest errors. We cannot expect to maintain our freedoms and our way of life, our high standard of living, if we do not insure it for those whom we have conquered and now assimilate. We have abanoned a proud people. We have treated them disgracefully as history will show whether we do anything for them now or not. Their history has been a concern of mine since childhood when I lived in New Mexico and saw how they tried so hard to preserve their fine heritage. They must be helped in their effort to remain Indian and they must be aided in every way in their daily living needs.

The enclosed article is a plea from the Indians of Arizona. It is my hope and prayer that you will be able to do something for Indians across this entire land. The fact that this is written on the eve of the Republican Convention is prompting me to say that this issue is a very important one to many of us and that without donning the Indian headdress and posing for the old political, and overworked, pictures you might just do something that would boost your slim margin, which incidently I think is another national disgrace. You should not have to do battle within your own party after your excellent performance as President.

I must close with saying that your dancing with the Queen of England so graciously and handsomely was a highspot in our lives as Americans.

Very sincerely,

Dorothy Wicker Re
Dorothy Wicker Re

*Answered
by phone 8/24/76*

WHITE HOUSE
MAIL ROOM

1976 AUG 12 PM 1 06

An Arizona Indian Asks Congress To Enact a Water-Rights Bill

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — My people, the Pima-Maricopa Indians of central Arizona, and our friends the Papagos and Mohave-Apaches, are in the midst of a desperate battle for enough water to survive as a people.

Our strength is in the law and in the good will of the American people and their elected representatives.

For 2,000 years the Pimas peacefully farmed the Salt and Gila River valleys and we prospered. We irrigated our crops of corn, pumpkins and beans through a vast and complex system of earthen canals constructed with wooden and stone tools and a high degree of engineering skill. We had developed our famous cotton, and early travelers prized the silken blankets woven from it.

We shared our abundance generously and no traveler left our land hungry. When Kit Carson offered to buy bread from the Pimas, our response was: "Bread is to eat, not to sell; take what you want." It is estimated that the Pimas fed, "with more than Christian charity," 60,000 suffering emigrants and gold-rushers on the trail to California, according to a contemporary observer.

A century ago settlers began diverting the rivers that irrigated our farms. Lush Indian farmland reverted to desert, and by the 1900's Indian people noted for their prosperity and generosity were starving to death. Now we must depend on welfare to buy the very provisions that we once produced abundantly ourselves.

If we had the water to which we are legally entitled, we could become self-sufficient again.

The United States Supreme Court

By Gerald Anton

in 1908 held that Indian tribes were entitled to enough water to make their reservations viable. However, the Interior Department, charged by law to serve as trustee of Indian water rights, has in the past actively participated in collusions to violate the law and rob the central Arizona tribes of their water. Because of the shameful acts and omissions of the Interior Department, the Pimas and our neighboring tribes today have only enough surface water to farm an average of less than one acre per person.

While it has impoverished the tribes, Interior has been generous in bestowing Indian water on powerful commercial interests. Some large corporate farms irrigated by Federal reclamation projects use more surface water than all the 2,700 Salt River Pima-Maricopas or the 18,000 Papagos.

Having reduced the Indian people of central Arizona from prosperity and abundance to poverty and deprivation, the United States Government now pays out tens of millions of dollars per year to provide welfare and other special services to us. But the real cost is reflected in high rates of unemployment—about five times the current rate in New York City—alcoholism and family disintegration, and in grossly substandard housing, poor nutrition, sickness and shortened lives.

The past and continuing failure of the Interior Department to enforce Indian water rights is ultimately the failure of the office of the President as well. We appeal to President Ford to finally end a century of dishonor

and act expeditiously to bring about a legislative settlement of our water rights.

Congress has before it the Central Arizona Indian Tribal Water Rights Act of 1976, introduced by Senator Edward M. Kennedy at our request. This legislation would restore the lawful water rights of the 30,000 Pima-Maricopas, Papagos and Mohave-Apaches of Arizona, allow our tribes to be self-sufficient again, and relieve the taxpayers of the costs of welfare for our people.

The bill would also eliminate the need to build the \$1 billion Wellton-Mohawk desalting complex in southwestern Arizona—and save the American taxpayer from a staggering subsidy of \$6.6 million per farm to the owners of 151 non-Indian farms.

We petitioned the President to support the bill or to submit legislation of his own, believing that if the President and the Congress acted quickly, there would still be time this year for a water-rights bill to be enacted.

Hearings on the Kennedy bill were scheduled before the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee. The five central Arizona tribes were invited to testify next week. Suddenly everything has been called off. Once more we are denied our constitutionally protected right to petition for redress of grievances. Where can we turn when both the President and Congress fail us? We appeal to our fellow Americans to add their voices to ours, and maybe then we will be heard.

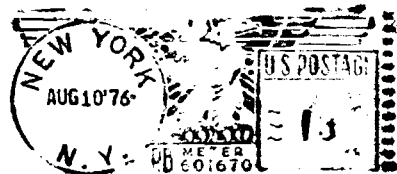
Gerald Anton is president of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian community.



Saturday Review
WORLD MAGAZINE

488 MADISON AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022

Dorothy Wicker Re



Gerald R. Ford
President of the United States
The White House
100 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Trimble:

The President has asked me to thank you for your letter of August 6 concerning S. 3298.

In doing some checking, I find that your letter should really have been addressed in the first instance to the Congress, since whether or not hearings are held (as in the Senate) or whether or not a bill is introduced (as in the House) is a matter for decision at that end of Pennsylvania Avenue. As soon as hearings are in close prospect, the Administration will gear up to make a report on the bill.

As NCAI knows, over the past 6 years the Administration and the Office of the President have been in the forefront of protecting Indian natural resources rights; we are proud of that record and will continue to maintain it.

Sincerely yours,

Bradley H. Patterson, Jr.

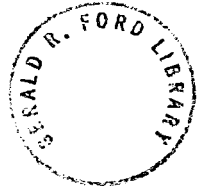
Mr. Charles E. Trimble
Executive Director
National Congress of American Indians
1430 K Street NW - Suite 700
Washington, D. C. 20005

BHP:msp



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Not introduced
in House



K introduced

Cardwater upright
"interaction"

Hearings required was
Council

buffer objected as
O's request

Not to be rescheduled
this session

Negative report

No report found
Justice opposed
experience



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August 6, 1976

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The Honorable Gerald R. Ford
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D. C.



RE: Denial of the Central Arizona Indian Tribes' Right to a Hearing in the Matter of Their Legal & Longstanding Water Rights Claims

Dear Mr. President,

The attached New York Times editorial of August 5 addresses the legal and longstanding water rights claims of 30,000 Indian people in Arizona, the ongoing failure of the Interior Department to enforce these water rights, and recent Administrative and Congressional actions which have thwarted the Tribes' attempts to legislatively settle these rights in a fair and orderly manner.

We note with interest that numerous scheduled hearings before the Senate Committee on Interior & Insular Affairs are being conducted according to routine procedure and commitment, while the hearing regarding the Central Arizona Indian Tribal Water Rights Act of 1976 (S.3298, introduced by Senator Kennedy and co-sponsored by Senators Hart, Hollings and Mondale) has been cancelled in sudden and unexplainable fashion. We can only conclude that the Indian people have been singled out in this regard by the same forces within the Interior Committee and within the Administration who vowed to the Tribes' Chairmen that their legislative endeavors would not be allowed to proceed through the Congress of the United States.

Enforcement of the Tribes' legal entitlements to water would accord the opportunity for a return to self-sufficiency through irrigation of their once-green farmlands which have been dried to wasteland by a century of non-Indian diversion projects. In Salt River President Anton's Times editorial, it is stated that the failure to enforce the Indian water rights is "ultimately the failure of the office of the President....We appeal to President Ford to end a century of dishonor and act expeditiously to bring about a legislative settlement of our water rights."

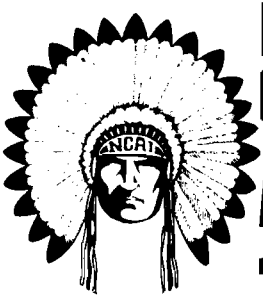
In your remarks of July 16, 1976, to Indian leaders gathered at the White House, you delivered a message of great hope by stating that "(a)n important task we can help you with is the challenge of economic development of your lands. I congratulate you on the initiative that you have shown. I pledge encouragement. I pledge help in your efforts to create long-term economic development."

WHITE HOUSE
MAIL ROOM

1976 AUG 10 PM 12 04

UNITED STATES BOND

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Correspondence / President Ford / Indian Water Rights
8/6/76 page 2

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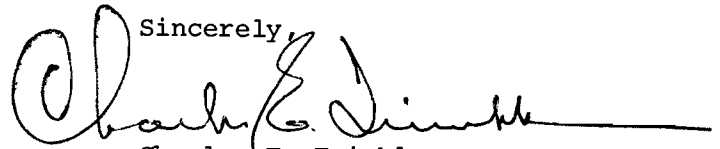
Rachel Nabahe
Shoshone/Paiute

SOUTHEAST AREA

Jonathan Ed Taylor
Cherokee

The Central Arizona Tribes are asking for that promised help and encouragement. The National Congress of American Indians adds its voice to the Tribes' appeal for economic development and, indeed, survival.

Further denial of the Tribes' rightful and lawful claims must end. Further denial can only continue in disregard of history, law and the high moral standard which form the foundation of the United States. We respectfully urge that your actions in this matter comply with the basic principles of treaties and the trust responsibility.

Sincerely

Charles E. Trimble
Executive Director

CET/ssh

encl.

cc: Members, Senate Interior & Insular Affairs Committee
Sponsors, Central Arizona Indian Tribal Water Rights Act of 1976
Chairmen, Central Arizona Indian Tribes
Secretary, Department of the Interior
Members, Congressional Delegation of Arizona
Editor, The New York Times



An Arizona Indian Asks Congress To Enact a Water-Rights Bill

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The United States Supreme Court

By Gerald Anton

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N. Y. TIMES, Aug. 5, 1976





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The Honorable Gerald R. Ford
President of the United States
The White House
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