ARIZONA SENATOR
MARK KELLY

Yavapai-Apache Nation Water Rights Settlement Act of 2026

Purpose

This bill ratifies and funds the Yavapai-Apache Nation Water Rights Settlement in the State of Arizona.

Background and Need

The Yavapai-Apache Nation is located in the Verde Valley of Arizona. The Nation is comprised of over 2,500 enrolled tribal members from five different tribal communities. The Yavapai-Apache Nation Water Rights Settlement was approved by the Tribal Council on June 26, 2024. This settlement resolves the Nation's longstanding water rights claims in collaboration with Salt River Project, the State of Arizona, the Department of the Interior, local communities, and others to achieve a final resolution that brings additional water supplies to the Verde Valley and will help keep the Verde River flowing. This initiative underscores a comprehensive effort to foster environmental stewardship and community resilience.

Summary

The *Yavapai-Apache Nation Water Rights Settlement Act of 2026* provides economically and culturally sustainable tools for the people of the Yavapai-Apache Nation.

The new pipeline will deliver water to the Yavapai-Apache Nation and surrounding communities from the C.C. Cragin Reservoir. The bill directs the Secretary of the Interior to plan, design, and construct the pipeline as a part of the Salt River Federal Reclamation Project. The costs of the pipeline project and other provisions relating to litigation settlement in the Act are as follows:

Cragin-Verde Pipeline Construction	$731.059 Million
YAN Surface Water Drinking Plant and Main Transmission Lines on the Reservation	$152.490 Million
YAN Water Settlement Trust Fund	$156 Million
Total	$1.039 Billion

Under this settlement, the Yavapai-Apache Nation will have confirmed water rights to use 4,610 acre feet per year (including the Nation's Central Arizona Project or "CAP" water), and to reuse all of the effluent produced by this water supply on its farming operations.

As part of this settlement, the Yavapai-Apache Nation will waive claims for damages to water rights against existing water users in the Verde River watershed and against the United States.

The bill also directs the Forest Service to work expeditiously under existing authorities to transfer a certain 40-acre parcel of land within the Town of Camp Verde to the Town of Camp Verde for public safety and other municipal purposes.

Supporting Organizations: Yavapai-Apache Nation, the State of Arizona, the Salt River Project Agricultural Improvement and Power District & Salt River Valley Water Users' Association, City of Cottonwood, Town of Camp Verde, Town of Clarkdale.