



Utah Department of Natural Resources Responds to Ute Tribe's Water Claims

A federal judge [dismissed 12 of the 16](#) claims against the United States and the State of Utah regarding the Ute Indian Tribe's water rights in Utah and transferred the remaining four claims to the District of Utah Federal Court in September 2021. The court's ruling dismissed the tribe's claim of discrimination regarding its water rights.

Neither the State of Utah nor the Lake Powell Pipeline (LPP), a planned water project for southwest Utah, has taken the Ute Indian Tribe's water rights. The tribe has long held a federally decreed water right for 144,000 acre-feet of depletion from the Colorado River system. The state has recognized and respected this water right and the tribe's annual use of water under it. The state's allocation of water from the Colorado River system accommodates the tribe's reserved water rights along with other water rights, including the right for the LPP.

The state has not prevented the tribe from exercising its federal reserved water rights, nor will the LPP diminish those rights. The LPP's water right is distinct from the tribe's water rights. The early priority of the tribe's rights will allow it to beneficially use those rights regardless of the pipeline's operation.

Additionally, the tribe has accepted hundreds of millions of dollars Congress provided under the Central Utah Project Completion Act or CUPCA as final settlement of the tribe's water-related claims.

The state is pleased the tribe's claims against the Department of the Interior, State of Utah, and Central Utah Water Conservancy District have recently been dismissed. However, dismissal of the claims does not alter the state's ongoing commitment to cooperatively work with the tribe regarding water resource matters. Read the state's full statement at <https://naturalresources.utah.gov/news>.