

H.R. 8937, introduced by Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva (D-Ariz.) on July 8, 2024, will create new subaccounts in the Indian Water Rights Settlement Completion Fund to help bring **safe, clean, reliable water** and **water infrastructure** to Indian Country.

How do water rights settlements help Indian Country?

Dating back to a 1909 Supreme Court ruling, the federal government has a legal responsibility to help ensure access to water for federally recognized tribes. However, that obligation has often gone unrealized. Across the U.S., many Native communities do not have access to reliable water sources, clean drinking water, or basic water delivery infrastructure.

Indian water rights settlements help address this issue by legally securing tribes' water rights and facilitating the construction of water delivery infrastructure to tribal communities.

What is the current status of water rights settlements?

Currently, there are 39 approved water rights settlements, with a total estimated cost of over \$8.5 billion, as well as 22 potential settlements currently being negotiated that will cost several billion dollars more. In addition, many more settlements will need to be negotiated and funded in future years; there are over 280 federally recognized tribes in the West alone (excluding Alaska).

How will H.R. 8937 help?

The Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act (IIJA) provided a historic \$2.5 billion to fund water rights settlements through the Indian Water Rights Settlement Completion Fund. That funding helps pay for tribal water rights settlements and infrastructure projects that were negotiated prior to IIJA and has been critical in addressing the backlog. But IIJA funding is running out; \$2.4 billion has already been allocated.

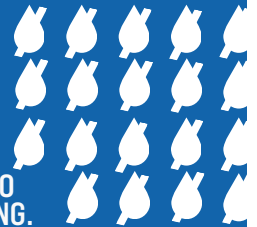
H.R. 8937 will support the Completion Fund by establishing two new subaccounts for existing and new settlements:

- **Operations, Maintenance, and Repair Subaccount** will provide \$34 million per fiscal year through 2033 for the Ak Chin Indian Water Rights Settlement Project, the Animas-La Plata Project, the Columbia and Snake River Salmon Recovery Project, and the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project.
- **New and Continuing Settlements Subaccount** will provide \$250 million per fiscal year through 2033 for existing or new water rights settlements.

NATIVE AMERICAN HOUSEHOLDS ARE

19x

MORE LIKELY THAN
WHITE HOUSEHOLDS TO
LACK INDOOR PLUMBING.



WATER IS LIFE.



LACK OF RELIABLE ACCESS TO WATER
HAS PROFOUND IMPACTS ON PUBLIC
HEALTH, SAFETY, AND LOCAL
ECONOMIES.

Supporters

The bill is supported by Yavapai-Apache Nation, Fort Belknap Indian Community, Southern Ute Indian Tribe, Ak-Chin Indian Community, and the Native American Rights Fund (NARF).