The rejection of the Little Colorado River settlement marks the first time that an Indian water rights settlement was rejected by a tribal council while the settlement was pending before Congress. This was especially surprising in view of the recent success of the Navajo New Mexico settlement and the very favorable terms resulting from the negotiation. The settlement was rejected largely out of the misplaced perception that it would benefit mining and power interests, a view that was fostered by a coalition of environmental groups who utilized social media to spread misconceptions about the settlement. What were the lessons learned from this experience?

Stanley M. Pollack has represented the Navajo Nation since 1985, working on five general stream adjudications in Arizona and New Mexico and settlement negotiations with Utah. Stanley has lectured extensively on Indian Reserved Rights, Colorado River issues, and the impact of the Endangered Species Act on tribal water rights.

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