

**TESTIMONY OF ERNEST HOUSE  
CHAIRMAN, UTE MOUNTAIN UTE TRIBE OF COLORADO**

**SUBMITTED TO THE COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

**ON JUNE 7, 2000**

**CONCERNING S.2508 COLORADO UTE WATER SETTLEMENT ACT  
AMENDMENTS OF 2000**

Good morning. My name is Ernest House, Chairman of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe located in Towaoc, Colorado. I want to thank our United States Senator, Ben Nighthorse Campbell, for all of his years of hard work and great courage in implementing the Colorado Ute Water Rights Settlement Agreement of 1986. I was a signatory to that Agreement in 1986. It was a great day for the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe when President Reagan signed in 1988 the Colorado Ute Water Rights Settlement Act.

Throughout this long effort, Senator Campbell has been a beacon of strength and hope for the Colorado Ute Tribes. He has consistently provided leadership, and he has insisted that a resolution of the Ute Tribal Water Rights in Southwest Colorado be done in a manner that protects our non-Indian neighbors and provides the Tribes with a reliable water supply. We are indeed indebted to you Senator Campbell. We pray and trust that your efforts today will bring finality to this long-overdue matter.

We know that there exist several unresolved issues which must be addressed to allow the 2000 amendments to be presented to the Congress with the full agreement of the Clinton Administration and the Colorado and New Mexico citizens. The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe urges all parties to this Agreement to promptly finalize these matters.

We have watched Senator Campbell work hard on our behalf for 15 years. We have also watched the Clinton Administration aggressively move to finalize these difficult issues over the past two years. Everyone we talk to agrees that now is the time to finalize this matter. The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe remains available to assist in any way to accomplish this goal.

In conclusion, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and its members thank this Committee and thank the United States Senate for their long support for the Tribe and for the Settlement. We look forward to Senator Campbell once again leading the charge and having this matter put to rest so that the Tribal and non-Tribal citizens in Southwest Colorado and Northwest New Mexico can plan their futures and the Treaty rights of the Colorado Utes can be preserved.