

## **TRIBAL WATER RIGHTS SETTLEMENTS**

Monday, March 3

9a-12p, Ashlawn North

Following the NCAI 2007 Annual Meeting, many tribes expressed concern for their water resources and securing their water rights, especially amidst potential climate change induced droughts or ecosystem changes. For many tribes, their most important water resource is their water rights, and exercising it may provide significant environmental and economic benefits in the future.

This session will deal with the issues surrounding tribal water rights claims and focus on legislative and funding mechanisms to settle them. Currently, water rights settlements are hindered by the inability to fund projects, even if cooperative agreements and alliances are reached with adjacent water users. Panelists from Congress, government agencies, and experienced water rights attorneys will discuss the best strategies in developing and implementing water rights agreements and discuss the outlook for settlements in Congress.

### **MODERATOR**

John Echohawk – Executive Director, Native American Rights Fund

### **PANEL:**

Mike Connor – Democratic Counsel, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Michael Bogert – Counselor to the Secretary, US Department of the Interior

Steve Moore – Staff Attorney, Native American Rights Fund

Camille Calimlim – Legislative Staff, House Natural Resources Committee, House Sub-Committee on Water and Power

Josh Pitre – Legislative Staff, House Natural Resources Committee, Office of Indian Affairs

### **AGENDA:**

- I. Introductory Address
- II. Directed Topics of Discussion:
  - a. Water Settlements in 110<sup>th</sup> Congress
  - b. Water Rights Funding Ideas
  - c. Settlement ideas that have worked, ideas that haven't
  - d. What tribes need to know about the process
  - e. Audience questions....