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## For Immediate Release

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### **GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY FILES \$225 MILLION SUIT AGAINST THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION FOR FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE ARIZONA WATER SETTLEMENTS ACT**

**SACATON, AZ** – The Gila River Indian Community filed a \$225 million suit against the Trump Administration today in the United States Court of Federal Claims for the United States’ failure to properly invest federal funds set aside for the Community’s and other Arizona tribes’ settlements. The federal funds in question are the Lower Colorado River Basin Development Fund, which the United States underinvested, and at times did not invest at all, resulting in a massive shortfall in the Fund.

Under the Arizona Water Settlements Act (AWSA), the United States has a mandatory statutory duty to invest the Fund for the benefit of the Community and other Arizona tribes with settlements. The United States failed to properly invest the fund, or did not invest the Fund at all, and violated its duty under AWSA. As a result, the value of the Fund decreased by \$225 million. AWSA was approved in December 2004, and the United States hid its failure to comply with AWSA from 2005 to 2017.

The Community first became aware of the United States’ failure in 2017, and soon after this discovery it began discussions with the Trump Administration to find a solution to ensure the Fund’s value would be enough to meet the United States’ settlement obligations under AWSA.

“We entered into good-faith negotiations with the current Administration and thought we had reached a framework agreement at the end of 2019,” said Stephen Roe Lewis, Governor for the Gila River Indian Community. “Unfortunately, it appears the current Administration wasn’t really serious about fixing this problem and strung us along, and now our only option is to sue. I am hopeful that the new Administration will be more receptive to fixing this problem that the United States created,” added Governor Lewis.

For more information or to arrange interviews, contact [Roberto.Jackson@gric.nsn.us](mailto:Roberto.Jackson@gric.nsn.us).

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*Gila River Indian Community located on 372,000 acres in south-central Arizona and home to the indigenous O’odham (Pima) and Pee Posh (Maricopa) people. The Tribe is comprised of seven districts, the administrative offices and departments are located in Sacaton, and serve the people throughout these seven community districts. 100% of its profits from gaming and 17 other Enterprises are utilized by the community providing services and opportunities to achieve the highest quality of life.*