# Joint Village Strategic Planning Report to Hopi Tribal Council

October 1, 2026 | Volume 50

*As Requested by the Hopi Tribal Council H-51-2022 Resolution*

## Project Purpose

The purpose of Joint Village Strategic Planning (JVSP) is to address the impacts of the Bennett Freeze and Forced Relocation by planning for infrastructure, housing, community facilities, and economic development investments.

JVSP coordinates with the Hopi Tribal Council to advocate for such funding and investment.

*Joint Village Strategic Planning (JVSP) has been active since 2017.*
*JVSP has held weekly meetings most Tuesday mornings at 10 am MST since the spring of 2020.*

**For more information, visit www.HopiResilience.org**

# Moenkopi Wastewater Treatment Plant: Congressional Funding Request Advances

The Hopi Tribe's Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) request for the Moenkopi Utility Authority (MUA) Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements has cleared the first round of Congressional review. Senators Mark Kelly and Ruben Gallego notified the Hopi Tribe that $2.0 million of the original $2,997,000 request remains under consideration.

This report summarizes how the request was built, what the first-round notice means, how MUA revised the project budget to $2.0 million, and what must happen next to keep the project moving.

**What "Clearing the First Hurdle" Means**

Advancing past the first round of Congressional review means the request is still under consideration. It is **not** an award, and it does not guarantee funding.

Congressionally Directed Spending is realized only if the project remains in the final FY2027 appropriations bill and that bill is enacted. The amount can still change, and the project can still be removed, at any stage before enactment.

Moving quickly and clearly at each stage keeps the project competitive. That is why the revised budget is being returned to the Senators now.

**Building Communities Prepared and Submitted the Original Request**

Building Communities prepared the original Wastewater System Improvement Project Request with the Hopi Tribe and MUA. The request was submitted by the Hopi Tribe, in coordination with MUA, to the offices of Senator Kelly and Senator Gallego. It sought $2,997,000 across 20 line items.

The request made a documented case for federal investment:

- MUA serves approximately 1,200 residents of Upper Moenkopi Village, most of them low- and moderate-income.
- The plant was built in 2007 and has now passed its anticipated 15-year design life after more than 18 years of continuous operation.
- A 2024 electrical failure shut down the plant entirely. Repairs took six months and cost $143,000.
- The shutdown permanently raised operating costs by $35,000 per year, and EPA-required E. coli testing adds $20,000 per year.

- The plant uses a Sequencing Batch Reactor system chosen to avoid land-intensive lagoons and protect culturally significant land, so many of its components are specialized.
- The project advances the Hopi Tribe's 2025–2030 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and protects the Tribe's CARES Act and ARPA investments in Moenkopi water supply.
- All work stays within the existing facility footprint, supporting streamlined environmental and historic preservation review.

The request also connects directly to the water progress described in Volume 49. The Side Rock wells and transmission line now deliver new water to Upper Moenkopi, and that water is opening the door to new housing. More water use means more wastewater. Without a reliable treatment plant, the gains in water supply cannot fully translate into homes and economic development.

Luther Lee of Senator Kelly's office toured the facility and documented project needs, and he has remained an active supporter of the request.

**The Request Cleared the First Round of Congressional Review**
Senators Kelly and Gallego advised the Hopi Tribe that the request had successfully cleared the first round of Congressional review. The notice also stated that the amount still under consideration was $2.0 million, down from $2,997,000.

This is a significant step, but additional hurdles remain before any funds are realized. Building Communities recommended that MUA and the Hopi Tribe respond proactively by telling both Senators that a $2.0 million award would be both appreciated and fully usable, and by showing exactly how the project would be delivered at that amount.

**MUA Set the Priorities for a $2.0 Million Budget**
Building Communities met in person with Neil Yazzie of MUA in Moenkopi to review the budget line by line. Mr. Yazzie made the decisions on where the budget would be reduced and what the project must keep. Building Communities and JVSP then translated those decisions into the revised $2.0 million budget.

MUA reduced four line items by a combined $997,000. The other 16 line items are unchanged.

| Line Item | Original | Revised | Reduction | MUA Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sludge Drying Bed Replacement | $800,000 | $120,000 | $680,000 | Defer construction to a future year; retain $120,000 for design so the work is ready for a separate funding request |
| Back-up Generator | $400,000 | $100,000 | $300,000 | Maintain the existing generator instead of purchasing a second unit |
| Blower Replacement | $120,000 | $118,000 | $2,000 | Replace three blowers instead of five |
| Perimeter Fencing | $15,000 | $0 | $15,000 | Use the existing perimeter fence without upgrades |
| **Total Project Cost** | **$2,997,000** | **$2,000,000** | **$997,000** | |

The revised budget keeps the core of the project in place, including the augers, pumps, sand filter work, SCADA and motor controls, secondary UV, and the second effluent tank, which are the components most directly tied to the 2024 shutdown and to continued compliance with federal effluent standards. Clearing the first round does not guarantee funding, and the project still has to remain in the final FY2027 appropriations bill. By answering Congress's lower funding level with a clear, MUA-directed plan for $2.0 million, the Hopi Tribe has put the project in the strongest position it can for the decisions ahead.