October 24, 2003

U.S. Senator John McCain
241 Russell Senate Ofc. Bldg.
United States Senate
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Senator McCain:

I write today in support of a proposal regarding the San Pedro River in Arizona and Representative Renzi’s rider to the Defense Appropriations bill. My understanding is that this proposal, which has been brought forth by the Center for Biological Diversity and other parties, would entail securing funding to support the Upper San Pedro Partnership’s proposed projects. Providing funding for the Upper San Pedro Partnership’s projects would help to balance the area’s water deficit by 2011, and would help the communities mitigate off-post groundwater pumping.

Pursuant to the agreement, Representative Renzi would agree to withdraw his rider to the Defense Appropriations bill, which otherwise would exempt the Fort from its responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act.

The San Pedro is the last naturally functioning desert river ecosystem in the southwestern United States. We simply must save it. However, exempting the Fort from responsibilities under federal law is not the proper course. Instead, enabling local entities to save the river by planning appropriately for the communities’ future is a very important step in the right direction.

I hope you will strongly consider this proactive and solution-oriented approach to the issue. I believe this compromise will enable the San Pedro to survive as a living river and is also vitally important to the ability of local communities to plan their future.

Sincerely,

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress