

A Proposal For The Future Sitgreaves County, Arizona.

By Jesse Valencia



**SITGREAVES COUNTY SEAL**  
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The official Sitgreaves County Seal. The two stars are representative of the unification of the White Mountain regions of Navajo and Apache Counties, which would together form the new county of Sitgreaves. The Ponderosa Pine in the center is representative of our beautiful forest, and the wreath symbolizes the future victory of achieving the dream of the new county.

Designed by Jesse Valencia.

**[www.SitgreavesCounty.com](http://www.SitgreavesCounty.com)**

**#WeNeedANewCounty**

**#WhiteMountainsUnited**

Dear Public Official or Citizen,

My name is Jesse Valencia. I am a resident of Show Low, a veteran of the US Army, and hold two Master's degrees and a Bachelor's Degree from Northern Arizona University. I am also a published author, working musician and screen actor currently attending the David Lynch Graduate School of Cinematic Arts. I am writing to you about an issue that is very important to me, and very important to my community.

In recent months, I have undertaken an independent research project concerning our counties, namely Navajo and Apache county, which has resulted in a solution to many of our problems in the region that seems so plain and clear to me now that it is a wonder why we have not done it sooner. Many have tried, and many have failed, but there has been no better time than now, and I am offering you a chance to help us change the course of Arizona history.

I propose that a new county, which I have named Sitgreaves County, be formed out of the present-day southern portions of Navajo and Apache counties, which includes the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest as well as the Fort Apache Indian Reservation.

For a basic overview - Navajo County and Apache County will still exist. Since school districts are the number one beneficiary of county funds, I have drawn the map according to them. Navajo County will be the districts of Holbrook, Joseph City, Winslow, and everything north of those districts. Apache County will be St. Johns and everything north of that district. Sitgreaves County will be comprised of the Heber-Overgaard, Snowflake-Taylor, Show Low,

Pinetop-Lakeside (Blue Ridge), Vernon, Concho, Springerville-Eagar (Round Valley), Alpine, McNary, and Whiteriver districts. The new county seat will be in Show Low.

Before I get into the specifics of why we need a new county, here is a little history on attempts to make this happen previously. The most recent attempt at forming a new county was the ‘Constitutional County’ project a few years back, led by Sheriff Richard Mack and his associates. Concurrent to this, residents of Apache County attempted to break off and form their own county, which would have included annexing portions of Greenlee County. Back in the 1980’s, a bill was passed by the Arizona State Legislature which would have consolidated the northern portions of Navajo and Apache Counties, comprised mostly of Navajo Nation land, into its own county, but the bill was vetoed by then-governor Bruce Babbitt, and there have been other attempts.

Our county project takes into account the reasons for these other projects’ failures. Our view is that our vision for Sitgreaves County will succeed and one day be a reality because it is a true manifestation of the American Experiment in the modern era, and necessary for the survival of our communities.

It is not a concept rooted in the issues of the left-right paradigm, but one born completely from reason consistent with the ideals of the Enlightenment, the same as those of our Founding Fathers, namely the maxim “no taxation without representation”, but beyond this, Sitgreaves County has the potential to become an economic powerhouse in Arizona and the Southwestern United States at large.

And now, to get into why Sitgreaves County must happen. In both Navajo and Apache Counties, Navajos make up a majority of County Supervisors,

representing districts which do not contribute to either county's treasury, while holding 'majority rules' powers over tax-paying residents, and outvoting our elected officials on nearly every issue. The job of county supervisory boards is to decide how to best spend a given County's money as required of them by the Arizona State Constitution, and a significant portion of county revenue, around ¼, are comprised of property taxes paid to county governments by the residents of a given county.

In Arizona, Reservations own over 27 percent of the land in the state. Only about 18 percent of our land is privately held. This means that the property tax paid to the counties in which those Reservations exist and benefit is being shouldered by a proportionally smaller percentage of taxpayers, while no property tax is generated by the Reservations, which are presently considered by the Federal government to be sovereign nations. As such, they receive Federal funding for many of their programs in addition to the monies they extract from property owners who do not live on the Reservation, for Reservation projects, civic and otherwise. It is not a stretch to say that this is a broken system. Not only do those not living on reservation districts shoulder the entire responsibility of providing property tax revenue for these counties, but under this system Natives themselves struggle to make a life for themselves, as unemployment and poverty rates have, according to 2010 census data, rendered our region the most impoverished in the American West, on par with some of the poorest counties in the Deep South.

Where this concerns the White Mountain Apache Tribe, we see our futures as being interlinked, because unlike the Navajo Nation, we share a common geography, environment, and culture. We hunt in the same places, fish in the same places, camp and go hiking in the same areas, ski and snowboard in the same

places. The White Mountain Apache Tribe, and their commitment to bringing tourism to the region, shares much in common with other White Mountain communities, namely those closest to the Reservation or within the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. We share rivers and water, trees and wildlife. The Navajo Nation is made up primarily of rock and high desert plateau, with a vast valley of ranchland between our two regions. The culture and way of life on the Navajo Nation, or basically everything north of I-40 is as different from our way of life here as Tucson or Phoenix. The nearest Navajo Nation town is 100 miles from Show Low, our proposed new county seat.

So why are we not joining forces to take charge of our shared future? County supervisors representing districts on the Navajo Nation primarily assume their office in order to vote in policies intended to allocate taxpayers' money directly back to the Navajo Nation, with no oversight and with only enough concern for the rest of us to make sure we're bringing in enough money to pay their bills. This has been the case for decades.

In the 1993 Sheperd v. Platt case, the Navajo Nation's power to do this was challenged in court. The court ruled in favor of the Navajo Nation, while also admitting that a conflict of interest existed between Navajo Nation districts and tax-paying districts. Basically, the argument was that because the Navajo Nation was within the borders of the county, and had elected supervisors to represent those districts, it was lawful for them to allocate county money to reservation projects, even though the reservation does not pay property tax.

In this situation it could be easily argued that citizens paying property tax in either Navajo or Apache county do so primarily for the benefit of the Navajo Nation. The District Supervisors who represent Navajo Nation districts in both

counties openly admit that their intent is to only serve their people, while the rest of our communities are forced to take a backseat to meet their needs and goals. Going back to the American Experiment, this is 'no taxation without representation' at its finest. Yet, when we break off from our northern halves to go our own way, and make our own future, the leaders of the Navajo Nation, and their puppets in the Navajo County and Apache County supervisory boards, will no doubt say that we are stealing from them, or taking from them, money which they did not work for themselves. They feel entitled to our hard-earned money, despite having nothing to do with our communities, nothing to do with our mountain culture, and nothing to do with our beautiful forests. Why are we allowing them to make these decisions for us?

It would be misinformed, and too easy, to call this situation 'socialism.' What exists on the Navajo Nation is socialism. Technically, what they are doing to us is a form of socially-sanctioned wealth extraction operating under a feudalist model, not unlike Russia leading up to the October Revolution of 1917. Wealth is generated by the people working and living not on the Navajo Reservation through property tax, and that tax is then redistributed back to them, not equitably among the communities paying into the coffers.

Because they do not pay their fair share into the counties, we are in a severe economic lull in the region that has lasted, and will continue unless something is done, for decades. We make more money, they raise taxes. They need more money, they raise taxes. Either way you look at it, we get no real say. If you combined both counties as their boundaries are now, we'd be outvoted 5 to 3 every time, as we already are in each county individually. No amount of tax cuts, breaks,

or stimulus in the region could change this. It is a fundamental, systemic problem that cannot be solved without the creation of the new Sitgreaves County.

Only a little over 35 percent of the total combined population of Navajo and Apache Counties are tax-paying citizens. What could we do, what civic projects could we undertake, if that number were closer to 100 percent? This is the future that we, and our community, desire for ourselves, our families, and future generations to come: **to govern ourselves.**

Both Apache and Navajo Counties pay property tax at a rate comparable to Maricopa County, despite being two of the poorest counties in the entire country, let alone Arizona, because of the financial strain upon our communities due to the influence of the sovereign Navajo Nation government. Meanwhile our neighbors, Coconino and Yavapai Counties, pay almost a quarter less than we do in tax, and for them, business is booming. In addition to this, the median income in our counties are among the lowest in the state. I believe that there is an intrinsic link between median income and property tax rates, and that as the tax rate goes down, the median income goes up.

Prescott, Flagstaff, and neighboring municipalities have experienced exponential growth in recent years, so why can we not compete with them at these levels? The answer is simple: politicians representing the Navajo Nation have dedicated themselves ideologically to dominating our county supervisory boards, with the express purpose of securing funds generated by commerce conducted in the county on non-Navajo land back to the Navajo Reservation. Meanwhile, the Navajo Nation government has not done well by their own people, and made them largely dependent on the broken system they perpetuate. As long as this continues, we will never find a way forward for our respective communities.

**Sitgreaves County - Why The Name?**

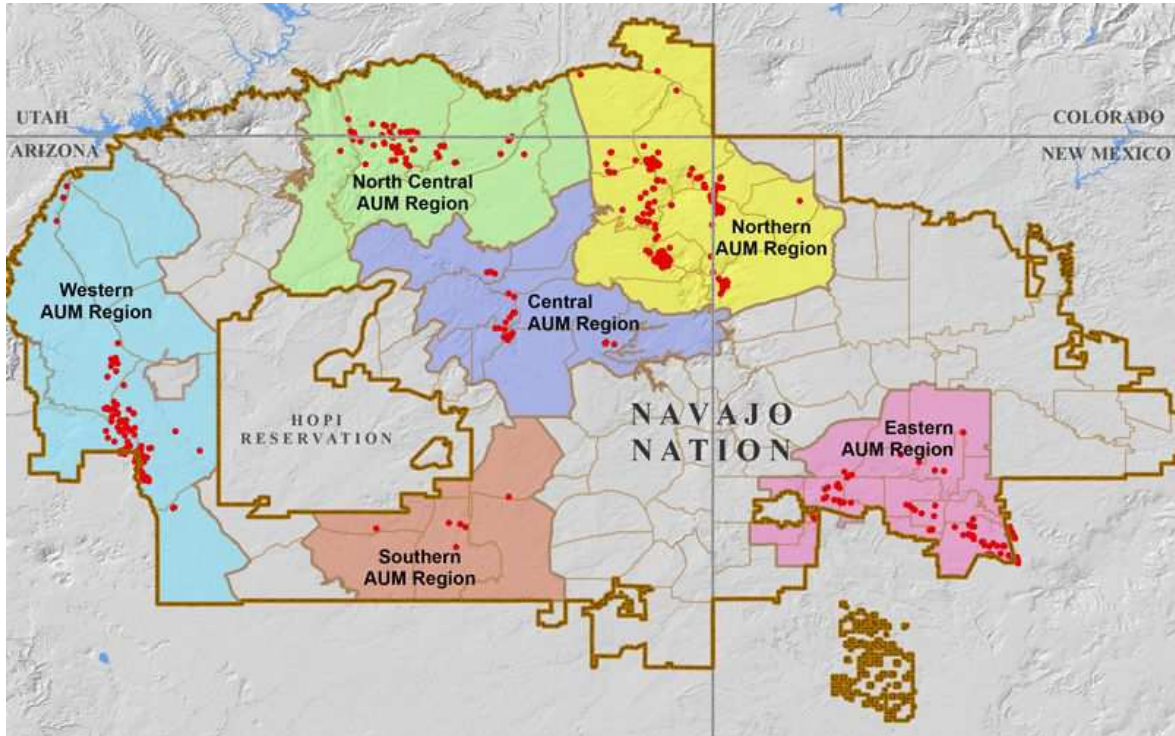
About a decade before the Navajo Nation was founded, three decades before Apache County was declared, and four decades before Navajo County was declared, Captain Lorenzo Sitgreaves led the first topographical expedition across Arizona in 1851 and came right through present-day Apache and Navajo counties, surveying the Zuni and Little Colorado Rivers. Our beautiful forest, the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, the key treasure of the county, was named after him. It only makes sense to name the new county after him.

**Redrawing Outdated County Lines.**

The current shapes of Navajo and Apache county date from the late 1870's to the mid 1890's, a decade or so after the territory covering Navajo Nation was first declared in the northern part of the counties. The southern parts of these counties were embroiled in the Apache Wars until the 1920's, and several annexations have been declared by the Navajo Nation leading to the present day. Please refer to Figure 1, on the next page.

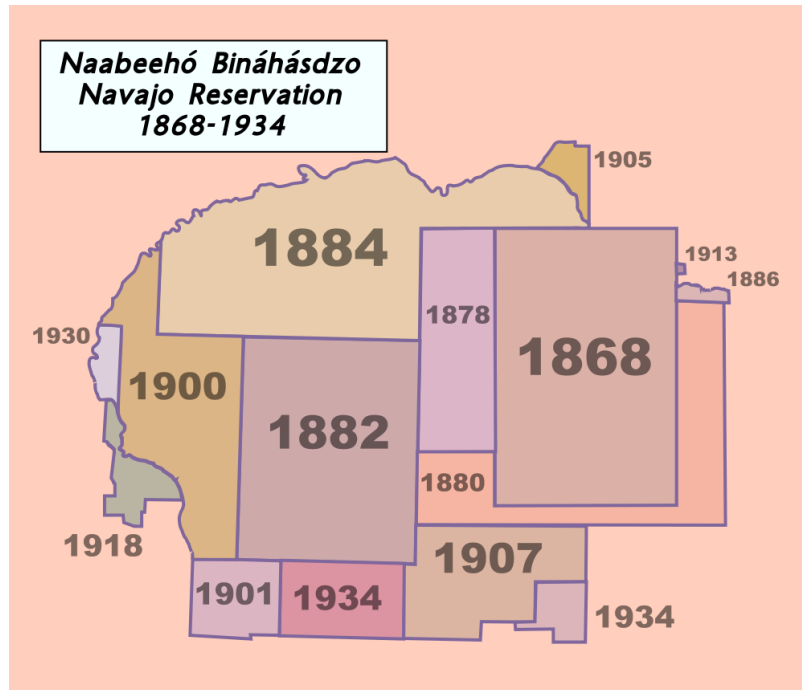


**FIGURE 1 - PRESENT-DAY NAVAJO NATION**



*Present-day map of the Navajo Nation, which does not pay property tax to Navajo, Apache, or Coconino Counties.*

**FIGURE 2 - NAVAJO NATION LAND ACQUISITION**



(information on next page)

**Expansion of the Navajo Reservation, 1868-1934. The Navajo Nation continues to annex lands to this day.**

During this time period of approximately 70 years, numerous settlements on non-Navajo land sprouted up along the Little Colorado River and its tributaries, and during that time span those lands declared sovereign to the Navajo and Apache tribal communities, respectively, expanded to the point where they engulfed well over half our counties' total land mass. At that time, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railways were essential to connecting Chicago to Los Angeles, and it went right through the middle of Navajo and Apache counties. Now I-40 performs that role. The old railway system is literally the only reason why our counties are shaped the way they are. It is completely unnecessary for us to continue in this

19th-century system, using borders created over 130 years ago. We can create a new and efficient county, one that better reflects the geography and will of the tax-paying citizens of this region in the present day.

### **How Do We Do This?**

We want the fastest possible avenue to split the counties. Step one is to actually create Sitgreaves County through a bill passed by the Arizona State Legislature, a rough draft of which I have included at the end of this proposal. In order to get enough of the State Legislature, as well as the Governor on the side of our proposal, we must show them that splitting the counties up in the way that I've designed is the logical, financial, and moral thing to do for our communities and for greater Arizona.

The principle that we must hold to is that no matter what happens, this decision is the right one. It won't come without struggle, but in the end it will be worth it, because at least we will be making our own decisions for ourselves.

Once the new county is formed, we elect a Supervisory Board who will lower the property tax rate to a level comparable to but below that of Coconino and Yavapai counties, with the exclusive aim of attracting business and commerce to the region. Whether later the business and industry brought to the region is energy, manufacturing, a university, logging, or some other endeavor, step 2 of the plan absolutely needs to be that we work together to engineer an economic boom that will benefit both the county and its individual communities. Our citizens are sick of seeing widespread poverty, crumbling roads and infrastructure, and countless youth leaving this beautiful place to seek opportunity elsewhere. We should be

making opportunities here, for ourselves, and all of that begins with Sitgreaves County.

Beyond the taxation issue, electing a Supervisory Board that will actually work for our communities and put our money to good use is the #1 goal of the Sitgreaves County Project. We have within our borders the potential to generate vast amounts of county sales tax through natural gas and geothermal development. Property taxes will go down, revenues will go up, and jobs will come to the region. That begins with you helping us make Sitgreaves County a reality.

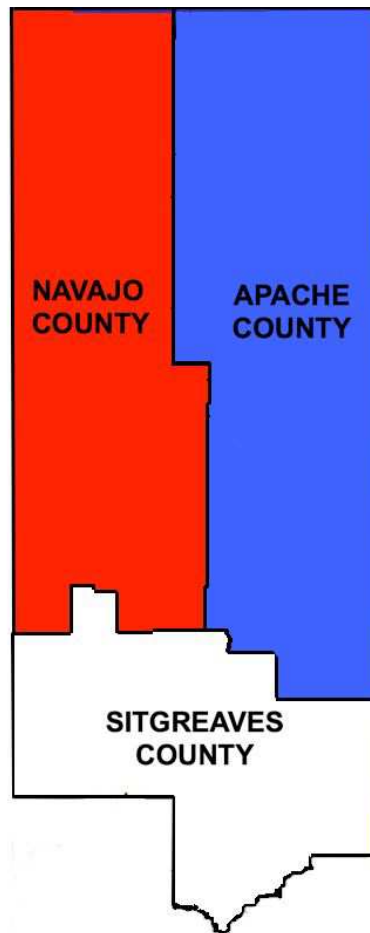
I hope you will deeply consider the points that I touch on in this proposal, and help us to draft an official bill, to be submitted to the Arizona State Legislature, that would reflect these boundaries and make Sitgreaves County a reality. I thank you for your time in reading this proposal, and I hope to hear from you soon!

Sincerely,

Jesse Valencia,  
*Sitgreaves County Project, Founder.*

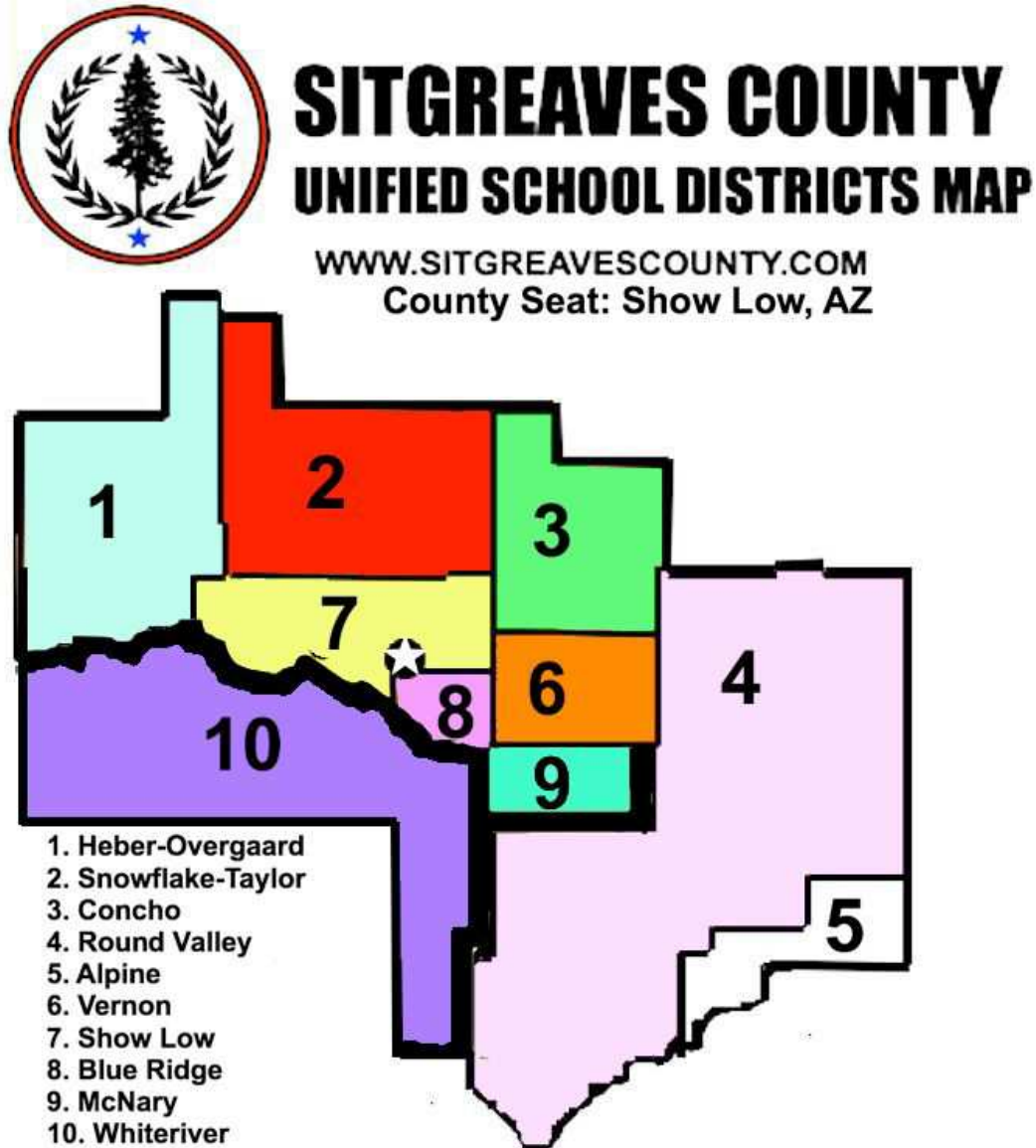
**Email: [jessemgvalencia@gmail.com](mailto:jessemgvalencia@gmail.com)**

**FIGURE 3 - PROPOSED LOCATION OF SITGREAVES COUNTY**



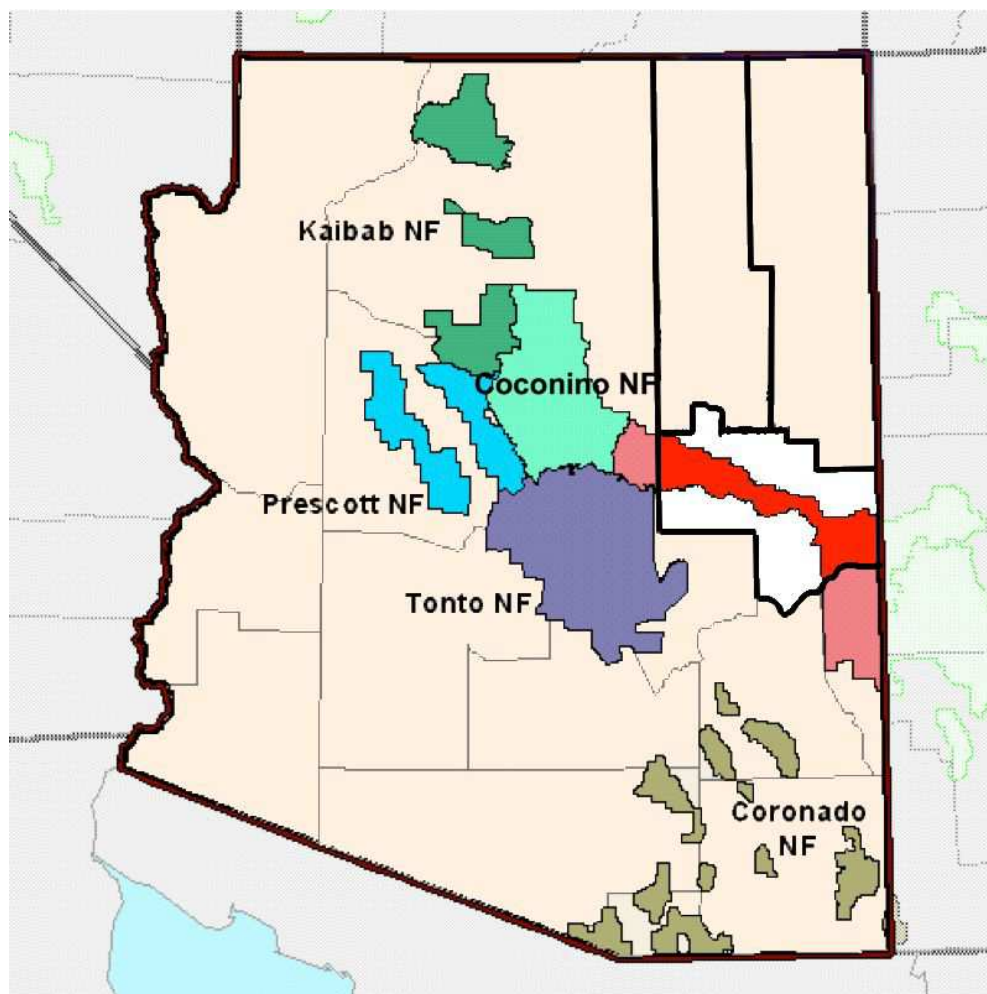
*Sitgreaves County will be formed out of the Southern portions of Navajo County and Apache County, which will retain their county seats, Holbrook and St. Johns, respectively.*

**FIGURE 4 - SCHOOL DISTRICTS MAP**



*Sitgreaves County will be comprised of the Heber-Overgaard, Snowflake-Taylor, Show Low, Pinetop-Lakeside, Vernon, Concho, Springerville-Eagar, Alpine, McNary, and Whiteriver School Districts. The County Seat will be in Show Low.*

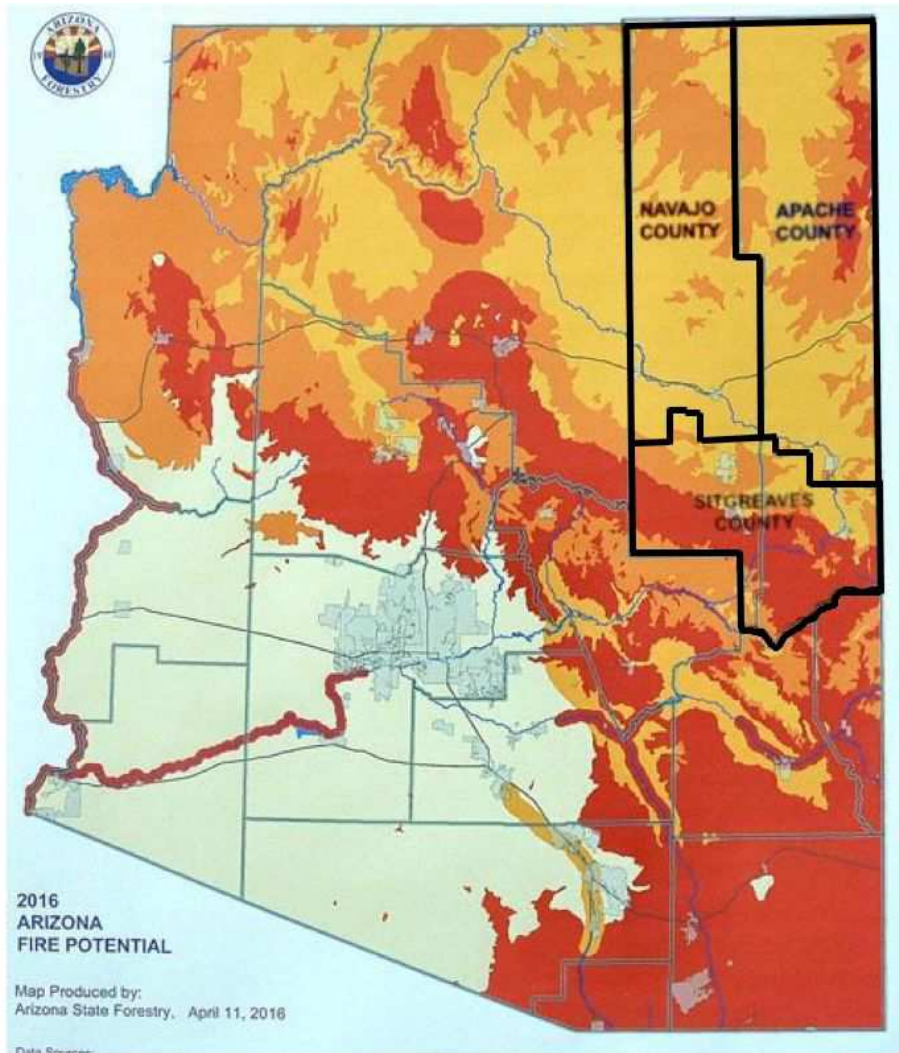
**FIGURE 5 - CONCENTRATION OF APACHE-SITGREAVES NF**



*As with our neighboring counties which have large national forests within their borders, the borders of Sitgreaves County (in white) will contain the largest portion of the forest for which it is named. This will allow for better management of county resources with regards to all Apache-Sitgreaves NF issues that may arise, particularly devastating forest fires.*



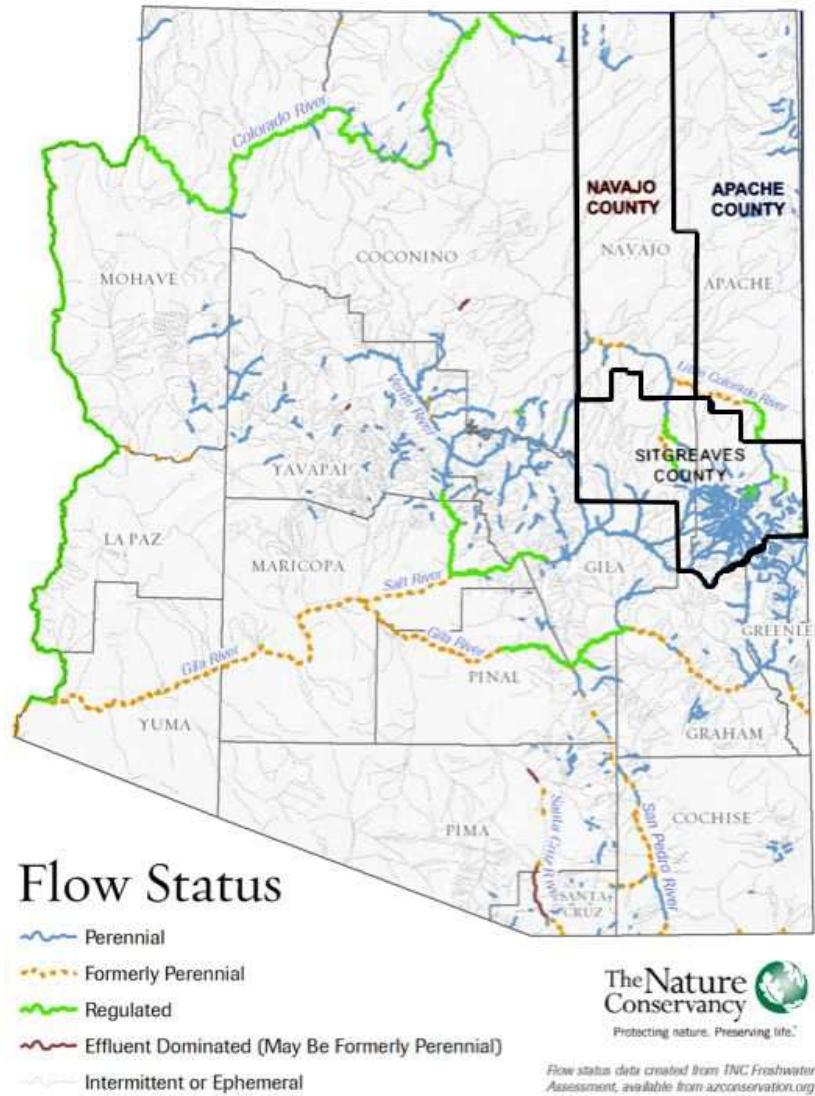
**FIGURE 6 - FIRE DANGER**



*According to this map produced by Arizona State Forestry, the White Mountain region where Sitgreaves County is located is a high-risk for forest fires. A county supervisory board whose interests lie in the White Mountain region would be better prepared to handle emergency relief in the event of another devastating fire.*

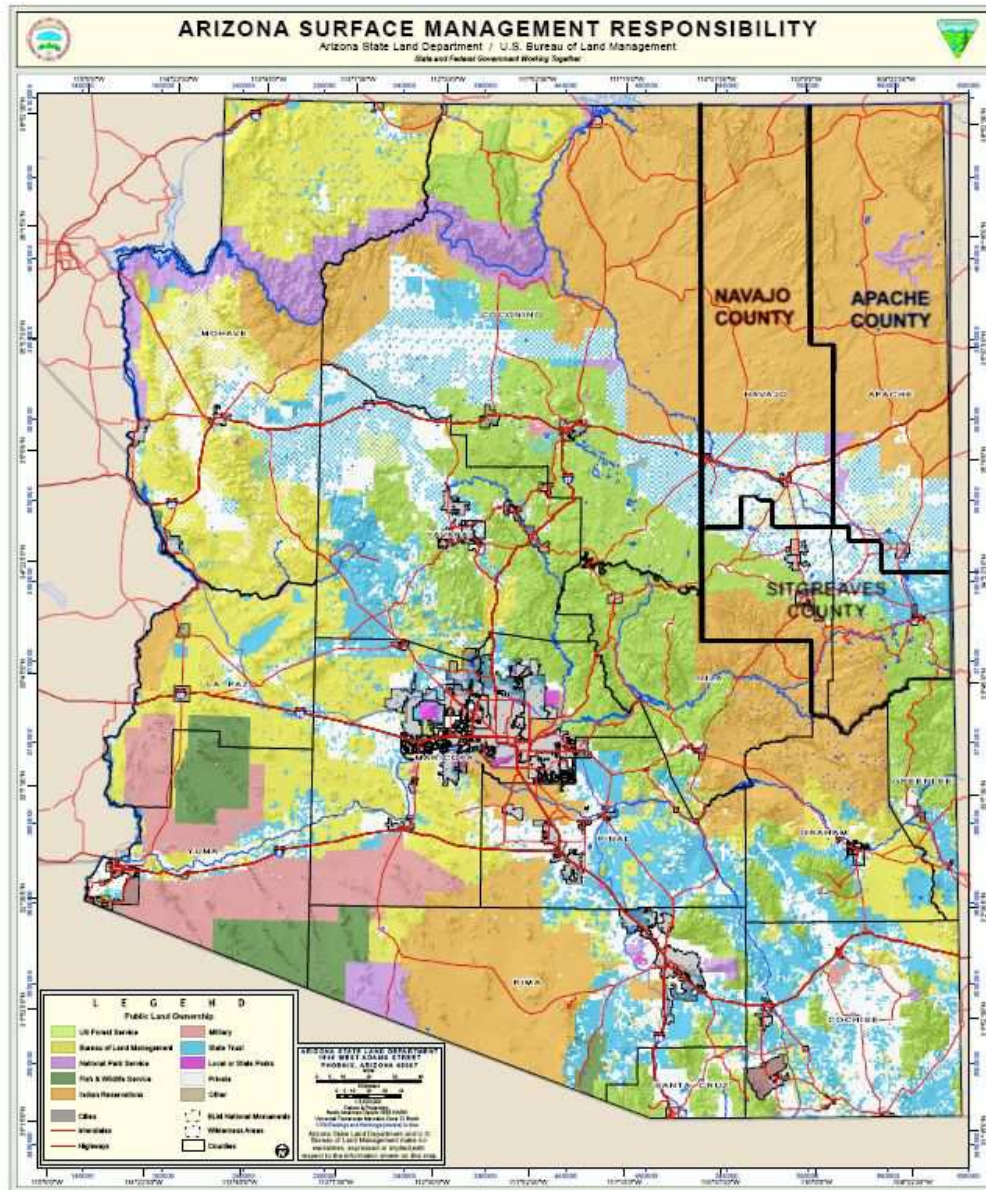


**FIGURE 7 - WATER FLOW**



*Sitgreaves County will have the largest concentration of perennial water in the state of Arizona. For a region so marred by fire and drought, it is imperative that we are able to control it and conserve it to the best of our abilities.*

**FIGURE 8 - ARIZONA SURFACE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY**

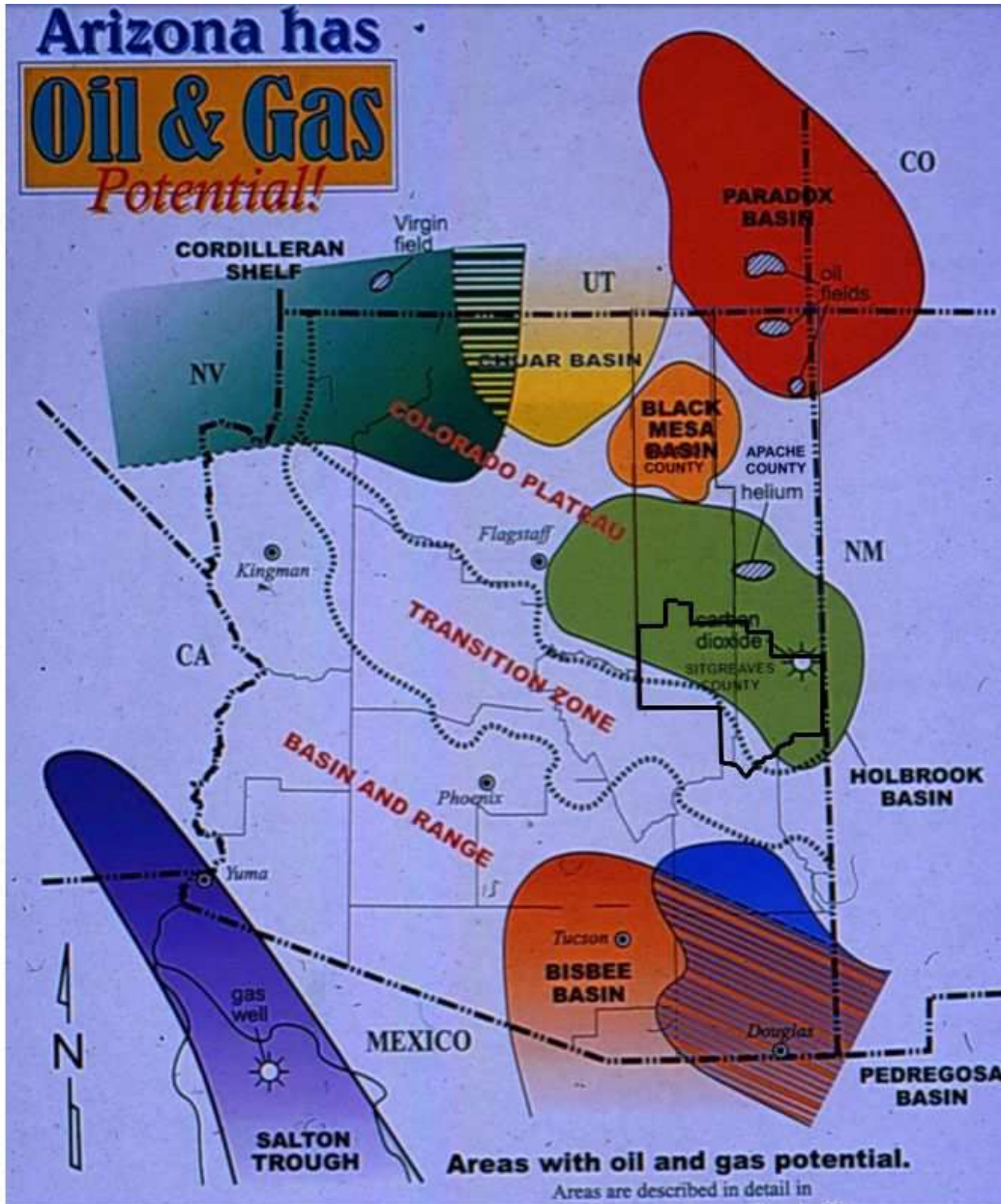


*The creation of Sitgreaves County will eliminate the issue of land owned in the county by the Navajo Nation, empowering taxpayers in the White Mountain and Apache-Sitgreaves regions to take control of their own land,*



*as well as empower a new County government to address issues of lands held in common by the State Trust.*

**FIGURE 7 - NATURAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**



*A significant portion of the Holbrook Salt Basin exists in Sitgreaves County. While our beautiful forests in the southern region of the county will be kept for parks, recreation, and tourism, lands in the north could be developed for*

*natural gas production, leading to a significant economic boost in the region and greatly enhancing county property and sales tax revenue.*

**FIGURE 8 - GEOTHERMAL ENERGY DEVELOPMENT**



*As you can see, the Eastern portion of Sitgreaves County contains vast potential for geothermal energy development. A county supervisory board that supports such a venture would help bring jobs to the region and tax revenue to the county and local businesses.*

# What We Need:

## A Bill, To Be Passed Through the Arizona State Legislature, Officially Recognizing Sitgreaves County.

After taking all of this information in, we hope you will join our cause to make Sitgreaves County a reality. To do that, we need a bill, and to get a bill, we need our legislators on our side!

I am not a lawmaker, and thus I do not know the necessary format required for bills to be written, but I have taken it upon myself to draft a rough draft of such a bill. If you are reading this proposal and are a legislator in our State congress, we hope you will consider the points in this draft, to be included or incorporated into the final draft of the bill we hope you will help us write. This draft not only officially recognizes Sitgreaves County, and the County Seat as Show Low, but it closes every loophole I could find in the Arizona Revised Statutes which could stall or halt the formation of Sitgreaves County by legislative enactment.

Title 11, Chapter 1, Article 3, 11-131, section A of the Arizona Revised Statutes states that “Counties may be formed or divided either by legislative enactment, by statewide initiative pursuant to article IV, part 1, section 1, Constitution of Arizona, or by county initiative pursuant to this article,” but all of the other rules for the formation of new counties as presented in Title 11 are vague. This is the only section of the Arizona Revised Statutes that references new county formation by legislative enactment. All the other rules state they are applicable to petitions, which are statewide or county initiatives, but the rules regarding new counties formed by legislative enactment are grossly unclear. This bill amends Title 11, Chapter 1, Article 3 of the ARS to close these loopholes.

Again, we want to form the county by legislative enactment, rather than by a state or county initiative. Also, the Sitgreaves County Project is a grassroots movement, and not a Political Action Committee. Therefore, it is not required of the SCP to report to the Secretary of State as required by PAC's pursuant to Article 11-138.

In order to ensure that any bill recognizing Sitgreaves County will be successful, and not subject to the pitfalls of potential loopholes in the Arizona Revised Statutes regarding the formation of new counties, the bill must include some form of the following language, to be refined and altered according to the requirements and rules of the Arizona State Legislature regarding written law. For all intents and purposes, this is a rough draft, but it says exactly what it needs to. If you are an elected official currently serving in the Arizona State Legislature, please keep this in mind as you help us draft the official bill. All new or amended language is in **bold**.

**A Bill Recognizing the Formation of Sitgreaves County,  
Authored by Jesse Valencia**

Pursuant to ARS Title 11, Chapter 1, Article 3, 11-141, as amended: The Government of the State of Arizona recognizes Sitgreaves County as declared in the proposed borders in the amendment to Title 11, Chapter 1, Article 1, recognizes that the new county shall be called Sitgreaves County, recognizes that the county seat for Sitgreaves County shall be the municipality of Show Low, that the county seat for Navajo County will remain in the municipality of Holbrook, and that the county seat for Apache County will remain in the municipality of St. Johns.

Pursuant to ARS Title 11, Chapter 1, Article 4, the county seat for Sitgreaves County may not be changed from Show Low until at least five years following the formation of the new county.

This bill proposes the following amendments to Article 1 and Article 3 of the Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 11, Chapter 1:

Amendments to Article 1:

An amendment to ARS Title 11, Chapter 1, Article 1, 11-103 - Altering the Southern border of Apache County, that the southernmost border of Apache County shall be redrawn along the lines of the northernmost boundaries of the Concho and Round Valley unified school districts, pending the final boundaries of Sitgreaves County pursuant to Title 11, Chapter 1, Article 3, 11-136 as amended in this bill.

An amendment to ARS Title 11, Chapter 1, Article 1, 11-111 - Altering the Southern border of Navajo County, that the southernmost border of Navajo County shall be redrawn along the lines of the northernmost boundaries of the Heber-Overgaard and Snowflake-Taylor unified school districts, pending the final boundaries of Sitgreaves County pursuant to Title 11, Chapter 1, Article 3, 11-136 as amended in this bill.

An amendment to ARS Title 11, Chapter 1, Article 1, the proposed Article 11-118 - Defining the borders of Sitgreaves County, to include the present-day southernmost borders of Navajo and Apache counties, as well as the present-day northern boundaries of the Heber-Overgaard, Snowflake-Taylor, Show Low, Blue Ridge, Concho, Vernon, Round Valley, Alpine, McNary, and Whiteriver unified school districts as currently recognized by the Arizona State Government, pending the final boundaries of Sitgreaves County pursuant to Title 11, Chapter 1, Article 3, 11-136, as amended in this bill.

Amendments to Article 3:

- An amendment to ARS Title 11, Chapter 1, Article 3, 11-131, which currently states: “Counties may be formed or divided either by legislative enactment, by statewide initiative pursuant to article IV, part 1, section 1, Constitution of Arizona, or by county initiative pursuant to this article.”

The language of section 11-131 will be changed to: “Counties may be formed or divided either by legislative enactment *pursuant to this article*, by

statewide initiative pursuant to article IV, part 1, section 1, Constitution of Arizona, or by county initiative pursuant to this article.”

- An amendment to ARS Title 11, Chapter 1, Article 3, 11-136, subsection A, which currently states: *“Within fifteen days of receipt of certification of the petition pursuant to section 11-135, subsection D, the governor shall appoint a county formation commission of three members, none of whom may reside in an affected county and no more than two of whom may be members of the same political party. At least one of the appointees must be a member of the state bar of Arizona, at least one of the appointees must be a certified public accountant and at least one of the appointees must have experience in property valuation and appraisal procedures. The governor shall designate one member to act as chairman. Members of the commission are entitled to receive compensation of one hundred dollars for each day engaged in the service of the commission plus reimbursement for travel and subsistence expenses pursuant to title 38, chapter 4, article 2. The commission may employ or contract for such clerical and professional staff services as may be necessary to perform its functions. The initial meeting of the commission shall be held at the call of the chairman within ten days after notice and acceptance of the members' appointment. No member, employee, agent or representative of the commission may use or promise to use any official authority or influence for the purpose of influencing the outcome of the proposed formation of new counties.”*

The language of Article 3, 11-136, subsection A will be changed to: *“Within fifteen days of receipt of certification of the petition pursuant to section 11-135, subsection D, **or within fifteen days of receipt of certification of a new county formed by legislative enactment pursuant to section 11-131,** the governor shall appoint a county formation commission of three members, none of whom may reside in an affected county and no more than two of whom may be members of the same political party. At least one of the appointees must be a member of the state bar of Arizona, at least one of the appointees must be a certified public accountant and at least one of the appointees must have experience in property valuation and appraisal*



*procedures. The governor shall designate one member to act as chairman. Members of the commission are entitled to receive compensation of one hundred dollars for each day engaged in the service of the commission plus reimbursement for travel and subsistence expenses pursuant to title 38, chapter 4, article 2. The commission may employ or contract for such clerical and professional staff services as may be necessary to perform its functions. The initial meeting of the commission shall be held at the call of the chairman within ten days after notice and acceptance of the members' appointment. No member, employee, agent or representative of the commission may use or promise to use any official authority or influence for the purpose of influencing the outcome of the proposed formation of new counties."*

- An amendment to ARS Title 11, Chapter 1, Article 3, 11-137 - to add a subsection J, which will state: "***the requirements of this article do not apply to counties formed or divided by legislative enactment.***"
- An amendment to ARS Title 11, Chapter 1, Article 3, 11-139 - which currently states: "*If the formation of new counties is approved by an election pursuant to section 11-137, the attorney general shall immediately initiate proceedings to determine compliance with applicable federal laws. The commission, with the concurrence of the attorney general, may correct minor deficiencies in order to achieve compliance, but if it is finally determined that the formation of the new county or counties does not comply with applicable federal laws, the proceedings under this article regarding those counties are terminated, the new county or counties shall not be formed and the affected county or counties shall continue in existence.*"

The language of section 11-139 shall be changed to: "*If the formation of new counties is approved by an election pursuant to section 11-137, **or by legislative enactment pursuant to section 11-131**, the attorney general shall immediately initiate proceedings to determine compliance with applicable federal laws. The commission, with the concurrence of the attorney general,*

*may correct minor deficiencies in order to achieve compliance, but if it is finally determined that the formation of the new county or counties does not comply with applicable federal laws, the proceedings under this article regarding those counties are terminated, the new county or counties shall not be formed and the affected county or counties shall continue in existence.”*

- An amendment to ARS Title 11, Chapter 1, Article 3, 11-140, subsection A, which currently states: *“County officers of new counties, except clerk of the superior court, shall be nominated and elected at the next regular primary election and general election at which the president of the United States is elected following the election on formation. County officers shall not be elected for the affected county or counties at those elections. The initial clerk of the superior court of each new county shall be appointed under section 11-142, subsection E.”*

The language of Article 3, 11-140, subsection A will be changed to:

*“County officers of new counties, except clerk of the superior court, shall be nominated and elected at the next regular primary election and general election at which the president of the United States is elected following the election on formation, **or following the legislative enactment on formation, whichever comes first.** County officers shall not be elected for the affected county or counties at those elections. The initial clerk of the superior court of each new county shall be appointed under section 11-142, subsection E.”*

- An amendment to ARS Title 11, Chapter 1, Article 3, 11-141, subsection A, which currently states: *“The new county in which the county seat of an affected county is located shall retain the name of the affected county. The county seat of an affected county shall continue as the county seat of the new county in which it is located. If no county seat is located in a new county, or if two or more county seats are located in the same new county, the name and county seat of that county shall be determined pursuant to this section at the general election for the election of county officers.”*

The language of Article 3, 11-141, subsection A will be changed to: *“The new county in which the county seat of an affected county is located shall retain the name of the affected county. The county seat of an affected county shall continue as the county seat of the new county in which it is located. If no county seat is located in a new county, or if two or more county seats are located in the same new county, the name and county seat of that county shall be determined pursuant to this section at the general election for the election of county officers. **The requirements of this article, however, do not apply to counties formed or divided by legislative enactment.**”*

- An amendment to ARS Title 11, Chapter 1, Article 3, 11-144, subsection A, which currently states: *“After the formation of new counties is approved pursuant to the election held under section 11-137 the commission shall act to resolve disagreements involving terminating and transferring the affairs of the affected county or counties, community college, school districts and special taxing districts and actions of the distribution board and may hear disputes, render opinions and issue orders. Pending an appeal, an opinion or order of the commission has the same legal effect with respect to the county officers and state officials as an attorney general opinion has with respect to state officers and agencies.”*

The language of Article 3, 11-144, subsection A will be changed to: *“After the formation of new counties is approved pursuant to the election held under section 11-137 the commission shall act to resolve disagreements involving terminating and transferring the affairs of the affected county or counties, community college, school districts and special taxing districts and actions of the distribution board and may hear disputes, render opinions and issue orders. Pending an appeal, an opinion or order of the commission has the same legal effect with respect to the county officers and state officials as an attorney general opinion has with respect to state officers and agencies. **The requirements of this article, however, do not apply to counties formed***

*or divided by legislative enactment.”*

- An amendment to ARS Title 11, Chapter 1, Article 3, 11-145, subsection A, which currently states: “*All costs of the secretary of state and of the commission under this article are charges against the affected county or counties before their termination and against the new counties after their organization. Costs which can be identified with a specific county shall be charged against that county, but otherwise the costs shall be apportioned between the counties according to their respective assessed valuations.*”

The language of Article 3, 11-145, subsection A will be changed to: “*All costs of the secretary of state and of the commission under this article are charges against the affected county or counties before their termination and against the new counties after their organization. Costs which can be identified with a specific county shall be charged against that county, but otherwise the costs shall be apportioned between the counties according to their respective assessed valuations. **Under this article, ‘new counties’ includes affected counties who were not terminated following the formation of any new counties by either legislative enactment, state or county initiative, and have retained their county seats.***”

All boundary disputes between Navajo County, Apache County, and Sitgreaves County shall be decided upon in accordance with Arizona state law, pursuant to ARS Title 11, Chapter 1, Article 2.

This bill recognizes that the formation of Sitgreaves County as outlined in this bill is pursuant to the rules as presently defined in ARS Title 11, Chapter 1, Article 3, 11-142, regarding the organization of new counties, as well as the powers and duties of county officers in the affected counties pending the organization of new counties, as well as the rules as defined in Chapter 1, Article 3, 11-143, regarding the pending distribution board for both affected counties and new counties, as well as pursuant to all the rules for counties in the State of Arizona as defined in Chapter 2, Chapter 3, Chapter 4, Chapter 5, Chapter 6, Chapter 7, Chapter 8,

Chapter 9, Chapter 10, Chapter 11, Chapter 12, and Chapter 13 of Title 11 of the Arizona Revised Statutes.

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