

## Erin Nelson

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**From:** Ann Kramer <makramer1210@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 27, 2023 7:09 PM  
**To:** Office  
**Subject:** Re: public comment

To Whom It May Concern:

Comments Re: Disconnection Petition  
August 27, 2023

Transparency is a big issue in the disconnect petition for me. After the town denied the disconnect initially, attorney Baird acknowledged at the recent public hearing that the "island issue" could possibly lead the court to deny the disconnect of a 640 acre parcel of land. So in order to pursue this disconnect in court, it was necessary to include more land to avoid that issue. This meant wrangling in SITLA lands along with BLM lands on the Bluff Bench. In addition it also meant including St Christopher's Mission (without their knowledge or permission) in order to avoid creating a "peninsula", I believe. The 640 original acres ballooned into 9,500 acres, a total of 40 per cent of the town.

Certainly disconnection serves the interest of SITLA in that lands that are sold or transferred by them would no longer be subject to regulation by the town of Bluff if that land is disconnected. That presents an attractive selling point, for sure. And now that the Acton property could potentially be surrounded by disconnected property, that certainly increases the value of their land. But how does disconnection serve the Mission when they wish to be part of the town. How does severing the long standing connection between the Mission and the town help maintain the ministry of the Mission to the town and the greater Navajo community? This is property that is inhabited and serves the community in a variety of ways while the Acton property is vacant (with no apparent plans for development, according to Mr. Baird). I question whether "justice and equity" can be served by disconnecting land in ownership by those who do not want to be disconnected. I am unclear how "justice and equity" apply here. Can a disconnect petition just drag unwilling landowners along to serve unknown interests?

As far as transparency, we now know that all this wrangling with SITLA took place between the beginning of February and May behind closed doors as far as the town of Bluff was concerned, perhaps to avoid the "screaming activists" in the town of Bluff as referenced by Mr. Baird. The final petition to disconnect was presented to the town on May 5 with no prior discussion or warning. It almost appears as a "fait accompli" because Mr. Baird uses intimidating language to threaten the town with great financial loss in terms of litigation should the town deny the petition. This must be a standard form because he has used this very same language in reference to a prior disconnect petition and he uses it over and over in his remarks to the town.

I do not understand all the legal issues here but I do understand that power and money are operating here to intimidate the town of Bluff into caving in the face of this disconnection petition in spite of substantive questions, not just "emotional" reactions.

Ann Kramer  
220 E Black Locust  
Bluff