



# GREAT BASIN WATER NETWORK

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March 30, 2013

Governor Gary Herbert  
Governor of Utah  
via email

Governor Brian Sandoval  
Governor of Nevada  
via email

RE: Snake Valley Nevada-Utah Agreement

Dear Governors:

Great Basin Water Network is comprised of organizations and individuals committed to careful assessment of water projects and their environmental, social and economic consequences.

The Nevada-Utah Agreement is premature in that it would commit both states to a number of acre feet of water now known to be inaccurate. What is now known is the amount of water that the Nevada State Engineer will allow Southern Nevada Water Authority to pump from Spring Valley. The hydrological connection between Spring Valley and Snake Valley means that there is even less water available for use in Snake Valley.

GBWN also notes that the negotiators of the agreement met secretly; the negotiations and terms were confidential; discussion with constituencies about the pros and cons of the flawed agreement were forbidden. The State of Nevada did not consider the effect of the SNWA pumping project on existing users. In fact, Nevada did not include anyone from Snake Valley or the affected area on their negotiating team. It is common knowledge in Snake Valley - both in Nevada and Utah - that water levels are already declining just from existing uses. Why doesn't this matter to you?

We believe that the SNWA water exploitation project is a costly (\$15.7 BILLION and rising) and temporary solution to the long term problem of unsustainable water use. Sacrificing productive agricultural land to ensure that urban fountains can flourish is wrong-headed. Ultimately, should this agreement be signed and pave the way for the pipeline project, it will prove to be a fiscal and environmental disaster for both states.

The Bureau of Land Management's own FEIS showed that the impacts will be devastating, and meaningful mitigation is an empty promise.

As leaders of your entire states, we believe you have the opportunity and obligation to use the occasion of this flawed draft agreement to work together to balance the water needs of your states and of both urban and rural residents.

Please use this opportunity to gather more data, engage in inclusive dialogue, participate in the Governor Herbert's water summit this fall, and agree to postpone signing this flawed agreement until you have gathered sufficient data to confirm the amount of water available in Snake Valley and have results from ongoing water management studies.

Sincerely,

Abigail C. Johnson, President  
GBWN Board of Directors

cc: GBWN Board