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PRESS RELEASE

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Las Vegas Water Grab Appeals Rejected by Nevada Supreme Court

Opponents of the controversial proposal to pump and pipe groundwater from a vast region in eastern Nevada to Las Vegas say a Nevada Supreme Court ruling bolsters their case that the pipeline project can't pass scientific, environmental or legal muster.

Great Basin Water Network believes that the February 6, 2015, ruling by the Nevada Supreme Court ([15-04004](#)) should be the final death knell of the ill-conceived and unsustainable project proposed by the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) and approved by the Nevada State Engineer.

The Court rejected the appeals of SNWA and the State Engineer on the grounds that the [decision made by Nevada Senior District Court Judge Robert Estes last year](#) was not a final appealable judgment because it remanded the matter to the State Engineer to determine whether fundamental deficiencies in SNWA's evidence and the State Engineer's rulings could be corrected. Because SNWA failed to produce evidence that its proposed project would not violate basic tenets of Nevada water law, Judge Estes vacated the rulings by Nevada State Engineer Jason King awarding 83,000 acre feet/year of groundwater for export to Las Vegas from rural Spring, Cave, Dry Lake and Delamar Valleys.

“If the Nevada State Engineer lacks information to set concrete triggers for monitoring and preventing or mitigating harmful impacts, then SNWA’s applications must be denied,” said Abby Johnson, president of GBWN. “The District Court decision reversed the State Engineer’s decision on all of SNWA’s water rights applications in Spring, Cave, Dry Lake and Delamar Valleys. The Supreme Court’s ruling requires that the State Engineer and SNWA accept that decision, and confront the deficiencies that Judge Estes held must be corrected before any of SNWA’s water rights applications can be granted,” Johnson continued.

“SNWA has had 25 years to provide basic information proving that its proposed project to pump and pipe water out of these rural valleys would be sustainable and comply with the most basic requirements of Nevada’s water law. The fact that they not only have failed to produce such evidence in all that time, but also have gone on record saying repeatedly that they cannot produce such evidence, only goes to show this misguided proposal never has been and never will be scientifically defensible or legally permissible,” declared GBWN’s attorney, Simeon Herskovits of Advocates for Community and Environment.

Rob Mrowka, senior scientist with the Center for Biological Diversity said, “Once again, the natural heritage that makes Nevada great has been saved by the courts from the ill-conceived and short-sighted plans of the SNWA.”

“All of the science actually shows that SNWA’s plan to pump groundwater out of these rural valleys and pipe it down to the Las Vegas Valley simply will not be sustainable and cannot avoid destroying existing water rights and the environment in the vast affected area,” said GBWN’s Johnson.

This decision marks the fourth consecutive victory of GBWN and allied opponents of SNWA’s controversial proposed project over SNWA in the courts in a real live “David v. Goliath” battle.