

11.22.2011
P.O. Box 5082
Sonora CA 95370

Jason King
State Engineer
901 South Stewart St., Ste. 2002
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Dear Mr. King

I am writing to you because I care about the Great Basin and all the plants and animals that live there, and am dismayed at the Southern Nevada Water Authority's request to pump and export 57 billion gallons of water annually from the aquifers in central and eastern Nevada. Please consider alternative water management such as utilizing the rain that falls in the area, conservation, and desalinization.

Nevada's "interbasin water transfer statute," NRS 533.370(6), currently requires the state engineer, you, to deny an application for an interbasin transfer of water if he finds that the proposed transfer would not be "environmentally sound" for the basin being diverted.

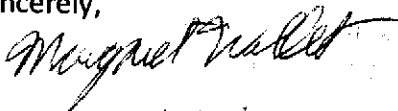
This proposal could eliminate critical wetlands, springs, and streams that serve as an oasis for all of the animals, including humans, that live in the area. Some species of desert fish and springsnails could go extinct. Many others would no longer find refuge, food or water in those depleted areas including the greater sage grouse, pronghorn antelope, and elk.

The drop in water table could significantly change the vegetation, shifting it more toward fine fuels that can support rapid and disastrous fires. As the recent fires near Reno demonstrate, fire is a large concern. I do not support increasing the risk to anyone's home for the sake of those living in a distant city.

The period of huge water projects that sacrifice some areas for areas of more dense population has ended. Are the resources listed above worth less than golf courses in a desert? It is time for cities that are growing in areas that cannot readily support that growth to face the limits of their location. Drawing on the "long term savings" that aquifers represent is not sustainable. It simply delays facing the issues until more areas are affected as well as there is a larger population in Las Vegas.

These applications threaten the very natural heritage of the Great Basin in eastern Nevada and western Utah. Please deny the authority's water-right applications based on the severe, environmentally unsound impacts they would cause.

Sincerely,


Margaret Willets

2011 NOV 28 PM 1:05
STATE ENGINEER'S OFFICE