

## Linda G. Johnson

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Office of the State Engineer  
Attn: Susan Joseph-Taylor  
901 S. Stewart St. Suite 2002  
Carson City, NV 89701

Re: SNWA and Great Basin Water Pumping to Las Vegas

Dear Ms. Joseph-Taylor and Others Whom It May Concern:

I am writing once again to say that as a citizen of Utah, I believe my state and our residents will be adversely affected if the SNWA water removal project is permitted. When it was proposed, I led my organization, League of Women Voters of Salt Lake, to join the protests and to hold a public symposium fully representing all sides of the issue to discover the truth of the water removal from the mountains. As a result of this effort, and some educational efforts, our Governor Herbert refrained from signing the proposed agreement with SNWA to allow water to be removed that would otherwise flow to the southwestern Utah aquifer and our ranchers and businesses.

In addition to the actual water table impacts and loss of livelihood impacting our southwestern quadrant, the expected serious loss of current dryland vegetation due to the lowered or completely depleted water table in southeastern Nevada will impact Utah even as far northeast as our population centers of Provo, Salt Lake County, and up into our panhandle. Our prevailing winds are from the southwest and already dusty. We don't look forward to the desert diseases, heavy metals and radioactive substances that would blow our way without vegetation. And it is not possible for roots to grow as fast as the aquifer will fall.

SNWA has always claimed they would be able to mitigate the long-term impacts of the groundwater mining resulting from its applications, but they have never shown how that actually can be done and how they would do manage and measure it. That did affect Governor Herbert when he decided not to sign, and it is still true. Nothing has changed in that regard. SNWA hasn't done any of the modeling or analysis needed to accurately predict where, when, and how draw-down and impacts from the Groundwater Development Project will occur in these basins, nor have they shown they can effectively mitigate the widespread, destructive effects that its proposed Groundwater Development Project pumping would cause to senior water rights and the environment.

In addition, SNWA claims the project's environmental impacts, and their monitoring and mitigation plan, have been fully evaluated and approved by the federal agencies in the EIS for their main pipeline right of way. But that isn't true. Can claims made by a party that doesn't tell the truth be trusted by any other party affected, or by the Court? I think not.

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I will mention that a concern peripheral to mine but important to Nevada's own residents is SNWA land and ranch management practices. They have ranched very inefficiently compared to ranching families who worked these lands for generations. Their ranch management has been poor, operating at an unsustainable loss and even losing some grazing rights.

And finally, Nevada owns a very special national park. The regional importance of Great Basin National Park and its spectacular clear clean air quality that provides stunning views and boasts the darkest night skies in the lower 48 states will be greatly deteriorated if the already fairly dry land goes to dust. More dust and murky skies will likely mean less tourism. I am not sure what the local pattern of hydrology and water pumping might actually do to Great Basin National Park. But I do know the Federal agencies have said they can't evaluate the actual impacts until SNWA does basin-specific modeling, and are counting on the State Engineer to fully consider the project's real time impacts as part of deciding how much water can be appropriated. I know the Final EIS for this project has been overruled and sent back to the BLM for a failure to provide adequate mitigation measures.

Therefore I do not think the project should be approved now, perhaps ever. For sure not till all the impacts are known and analyzed.

Respectfully,

  
Linda Johnson

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