

This hearing of the SNWA Groundwater Development Project (the Watergrab) is merely a charade to make it look like we live in a democracy. (Need I remind you that Nevadans have never voted on what Nevada Water Law should look like.)

We all know the outcome. The State Engineer is going to give the water in question away to somebody. And this will leave the natural areas dead. And, of course, there will be no water left in case of a water emergency. This system has failed us. Already, 50 Nevada water basins are over-allocated. And no matter who the new State Engineer is, it just gets worse... And I predict this hearing will be just another example of that.

Careless developers, foreign investors, and speculators should not have more influence on Nevada's government than those of us who live here. Nonetheless; (as of 2017) there have now been two efforts to gut the economic and environmental protections of Nevada Water Law in the Nevada Legislature. This is horribly wrong.

Nevada water law should protect Nevadans – *all* Nevadans. So, if we're going to change Nevada Water Law, let's make it better for *all* of us. Let's create a water law that respects everyone (including future generations), quantifiably limits environmental destruction, and has checks and balances to reduce systemic corruption. Let's re-imagine the State (water) Engineer as someone who works for *us* instead of unceasingly greedy people – often from some other part of the world. Moreover, we need to shut the revolving door that allows former regulators to take a paycheck with the very organizations they had previously "regulated."

We want a State that is a healthy place to live for a long time.

This obviously will not happen if we allow the "free market" exploiters to focus exclusively on how much money they can make by pillaging the commons and overcharging Nevadans. Taking as much water as one can with no regard for the consequences is blatantly irresponsible. That's not freedom. That's anarchy.

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Don't get me wrong. Money isn't evil. But creating conditions where others will suffer and die for your profits is pure *evil*. And if you take Rural Nevada's water away... that's going to kill whole ecosystems, leave almost no water for future generations, and disable the economies of Rural Nevada. I would say *that* fits the definition of evil.

What we need are water laws that minimize misery.

So, let's start with what is right about Nevada Water Law. Back a century ago; when ranchers, farmers, and miners got together to divvy up Nevada's water, the ranchers and farmers wanted to see that there would be water for their offspring. They knew that water mining would eventually drain the Great Basin. So, they limited how much water could be "used."

They had the right idea, but they were far from truly sustainable thinkers. Nevada Water Law allows water "users" to kill pretty much *everything* dependent upon groundwater in a hydrologic basin. That's ecocide. And it's legal in Nevada.

As a Native American who still hunts and gathers, I see that as essentially an effort to kill off what we can eat for free, to replace it with food we have to pay for.

Don't get me wrong. Ranching, farming, and living in the city are not inherently evil. But everything we do has consequences. And the consequences of using Nevada's groundwater have not been fully considered in Nevada Water Law. Unfortunately, the greedy want to make it worse.

I'm not saying that Nevada's present Water Law is totally irresponsible. But it could be a *lot* more wise. For example; it's essentially the State Engineer's job to *give away* Nevada's water. It is *not* his job to say no. That is inherently systemically irresponsible. One could even argue this is systemic corruption.

Yes, there is mention of environmental and economic protections in Nevada

Water Law. But these protections are effectively there as an afterthought. And moreover, these protections don't really have any teeth. Responsible thinking should be at the *focus* of water law in a desert State. These Nevada Water Law protections should be strengthened, not eliminated.

Of course; this will prove difficult. The takers want to take.

Right from the very start; Nevada Water Law was intentionally *not* written with responsible, sustainable use as a primary concern. Moreover, there are powerful pillage-obsessed opportunists who who want to squeeze Nevadans. They want the price of water to skyrocket, so that they can keep the profits, and we who live here can further enrich them. And when Nevada runs out of water, they can charge even more. "Free trade," to the "growth is good" greedy developers and speculators means anarchy for the rich. That's not law. That's absence of law. That's not order. That's a race to extreme deprivation.

Present Nevada Water Law is fundamentally flawed to result in exploitation and oppression. "First in use – first in right" obviously ignores Native Americans, future generations, and the Environment. And *that* is the key to the fundamental flaw of Nevada Water Law; the definition of "use."

Those who wrote Nevada Water Law specifically left out sustainable "use" as a legal "use." This goes against common sense! But apparently, they did it to keep from having to share with the Indians – and they still don't want to share.

For example: If one can find an unsustainable yet profitable (taxable) "use" for unallotted water, he can have that water for free. But... if your people have lived here sustainably for thousands of years, that's not defined as water "use."
Denied.

Essentially, Nevada Water Law says; you can only have the State's water if you "use" it, and it is only using it if you use it unsustainably. In the long run, that's insanely inviting pillage and deprivation.


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As a Native American who still lives in my rural Native homeland, I see this developing into a trend that could ultimately destroy Rural Nevada so that we will be forced to move to the cities and pay taxes and fees to the very people who took our water. Moreover, Rural Nevada is a target for the rest of the Nation's toxic waste. Is that really what we ultimately want; Las Vegas, Reno, and dozens of toxic waste dumps?

What we need is a system that works, in the long run, to satisfy all of our *needs*, not the *wants* of a few. The Nevada State government has tried this, but unfortunately, the corrupting influences of power and money has led to only a few positive changes.

Moreover, it appears that the Nevada State Engineer is helping the corrupting influences. It appears that the State Engineer utilizes *no long term thinking*. I certainly didn't vote for that. Nobody did.

Groundwater is like money in the bank. If you waste it now, you won't have it when you really need it. And evidently, it's the State Engineer's job to maximize the waste. WTF!



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