



State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF WATER RIGHTS

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October 22, 1992

Utah Lake Water Users

Re: Water Distribution Plan for the Utah Lake Drainage Basin

Dear Water Users:

At the public meeting held on September 29, 1992, I indicated that I would review the comments received on the April 30, 1992 final draft of the proposed distribution plan and let you know whether it is my intent to move ahead with implementing the plan this year or wait until next year. I realize the importance of this decision and have spent a great deal of time reviewing this matter.

I have carefully considered the comments and evaluated the current water supply situation in the basin. As you know, the present water supply conditions are at critical levels. At the public meeting, a number of water users expressed concern about implementing the plan under such extreme drought conditions. If we do not receive above normal precipitation during this winter, we will certainly experience significant water supply problems next summer. The major components of the plan come into effect during drought years. When the water supply is at or above normal conditions, we generally do not have significant distribution problems.

As State Engineer, it is my responsibility to ensure the fair and equitable distribution of water according to the priority dates of the water rights on file with my office. In my opinion, if I do not move ahead with the implementation of the distribution plan, I am not fulfilling my statutory duties. Therefore, it is my decision to direct the river commissioners to begin distributing water on November 1, 1992 under the criteria set forth in the plan. The plan will be implemented on a yearly interim basis. After each year's operation I will meet with the water users to evaluate the operation and will modify the interim plan as necessary. When we are comfortable with the plan, I will issue a final distribution order.

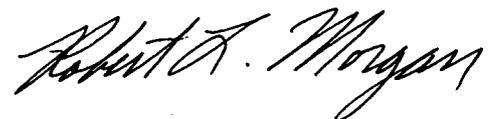
Two issues were raised in the comments which I believe need to be reviewed. The first issue concerns the inactive storage level set for Utah Lake, which was originally proposed at 9.2 feet below compromise. The other issue deals with the total quantity of

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system storage required before converting system storage to priority storage which is set forth in Table 3 of the plan. From our experience this year, I believe that the elevation for the inactive storage level should be raised to 8.7 feet below compromise. At this elevation, the inactive storage capacity is 160,000 acre-feet. Increasing the inactive storage will mitigate some of the operational problems experienced at low lake levels. In reviewing the criteria by which system storage can be converted to priority storage, I realize that the numbers in Table 3 are very conservative. This is necessary in order to protect the prior storage rights in Utah Lake. Therefore, it is my decision that the approach used to calculate the values set forth in Table 3 is reasonable and should not be modified until additional data is collected. You will note that the values for the period from November through March have been changed. This change reflects the effects of changing the inactive storage level from 9.2 feet to 8.7 feet below compromise on the amount of system storage.

I believe that the distribution plan is an excellent approach to addressing the distribution issues within the basin. In my opinion it will promote the wise use of our limited water resources and ensure that vested water rights are protected. Enclosed is a copy of the interim distribution plan which I will be forwarding to the river commissioners with the direction to implement it beginning November 1. I appreciate your input in this process and look forward to working with you in implementing this plan.

Sincerely,



Robert L. Morgan, P.E.
State Engineer

RLM/wk

Enclosure