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DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Division of Water Rights

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Executive Director *State Engineer/Division Director*

September 22, 2004

Dear Water Users:

The purpose of this letter is to keep you apprised of events subsequent to the public meeting held in Kamas, Utah on July 29, 2004 regarding recent research on ground water.

Personnel of the Utah Geological Survey (UGS), the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and this division presented data at that meeting. John Mann of this division reviewed the State Engineer's current policy and past research on the valley. Hugh Hurlow of the UGS outlined the major findings of his report. All presentations are available on the division's website located at <http://waterrights.utah.gov>. Lynette Brooks of the USGS presented an overview of the information in the Technical Publication.

After the presentations, a question was raised concerning the requirement for aquifer tests on all new wells drilled in the Kamas East subdivision. It appears from the ensuing discussion, and the collected data, that such tests no longer serve a useful purpose and the requirement for them ought to be discontinued.

One comment letter was received from Ed Sorenson, President of New Field & North Bench Irrigation Company expressing concern that wells being drilled in Weber Canyon above Oakley are adversely affecting the amount of irrigation water available to water users in the valley. He believes that irrigators are being impacted because the exchange water is being released from reservoirs downstream of Kamas Valley rather than the upstream Smith & Morehouse Reservoir.

Other water users have expressed similar concerns in the past. The Weber River Commissioner and his deputy work closely with water users to insure that the water available in the Weber River is distributed as appropriated. This includes storing and releasing water from reservoirs. The State Engineer's office will continue to monitor water diversions and distribute water by priority. Applications, which propose to drill wells above Kamas Valley, will be carefully considered.

Based on the information presented in the above referenced studies, we are of the opinion that the Kamas Valley aquifer system is not currently experiencing an undue amount of stress that would require any significant changes in the State Engineer's guidelines regarding the development of ground water. The State Engineer's staff will continue to monitor ground-water levels in the area and will respond according to the trends evidenced by the data that is collected. However, two minor changes are warranted as a result of this meeting and an analysis on collected data. First, the requirement for aquifer tests on new wells in the Kamas East subdivision is removed. Second, new water diversions, based on exchange applications, will be permitted for those projects where the point of release of the storage water is upstream of the proposed point of diversion and there are intervening water rights.

I thank you for your past cooperation on this subject and look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Jerry D. Olds, P.E.
State Engineer

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