

Stanley T. Holmes
846 N. East Capitol Blvd.
Salt Lake City, Utah 84103

Governor Gary Herbert
Utah State Capitol
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114

September 27, 2009

Dear Governor Herbert,

I urge you to oppose the currently proposed Agreement for Management of the Snake Valley Groundwater System. This agreement gives a green light to the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) to implement its plan to pipe water to Las Vegas at potentially unsustainable levels from the interconnected aquifer of which Utah's Snake Valley water system is a part. The agreement puts at risk Utah families of the West Desert who depend on already diminishing water supplies for their future even as they depend on you to take a political stand in their defense.

This summer, I attended a public meeting on the Snake Valley Agreement held at the Utah Division of Natural Resources building in Salt Lake City. I was struck at the similarity between the presentation made by Agreement proponents and presentations made 30 years ago by U.S. Air Force officials as they pitched the MX Missile system to residents of Utah and Nevada. The MX team assured citizens that resource requirements had been adequately quantified, and that any adverse impacts could be mitigated.

Then-Governor Scott Matheson --who had been an early MX supporter-- came to realize that the system would quite likely require much greater resources than advertised, and that once a green light had been given, the system would be virtually impossible to contain. Matheson also realized that there are some human and environmental impacts that are unmitigatable.

If you approve the currently proposed Snake Valley agreement with Nevada, SNWA will proceed with a Las Vegas pipeline plan based on assumptions of water availability much higher than would be the case without your tacit agreement to let them tap water "up aquifer" of Snake Valley. Please be aware that once that pipeline is put into operation, Las Vegas and SNWA will get what they want. As water supplies become more scarce in the future, the power of Las Vegas and SNWA will leave the small communities of Utah farmers and ranchers in the dust.

In the best interests of the people of Utah, please withhold your support of any agreement with Nevada affecting the Snake Valley aquifer until after Nevada has made a final decision on a SNWA pipeline plan that does not assume access to Utah water.

I look forward to offering you thanks for taking a stand in favor of rural Utahns in the West Desert.

Sincerely,

Stanley T. Holmes