



# GREAT BASIN WATER NETWORK

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## HUNDREDS PROTEST LAS VEGAS WATER GRAB

Nevadans and Utahns made it clear once again that Las Vegas won't take water from rural Nevada without a fight. More than 200 people and organizations have filed legal protests against the controversial Southern Nevada Water Authority plan to pump and pipe groundwater from rural Spring, Cave, Dry Lake, and Delamar Valleys to Las Vegas. Another 250 protesters joined the Great Basin Water Network's protests and will be represented by GBWN's attorneys. In all, the Nevada State Engineer received more than 950 protests of SNWA's water applications in the four basins.

"When ranchers, tribes, local, state, and federal governments, regional and national conservation organizations, and rural and urban residents of Nevada and Utah all come together in protest of a project, you know the project deserves to be scrapped," said Susan Lynn, Coordinator of the Great Basin Water Network, which led the protest outreach effort. "What's more Great Basin National Park lies partially inside Spring Valley and it would be degraded by SNWA's proposed development. Bottom line: SNWA's pipeline project just doesn't make sense environmentally, financially, or hydrologically. There simply is no extra water for the taking."

Protestants include the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints; Nevada's White Pine and Nye counties; California's Inyo County; Utah's Millard, Juab, and Salt Lake counties; the Goshute, Ely, Elko and Duckwater Shoshone Tribes; the Nevada Department of Wildlife; Nevada Farm Bureau; several Nevada towns and cities; and conservation groups including Defenders of Wildlife, Utah Audubon Council, the Center for Biological Diversity, the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada, and the Toiyabe Chapter of the Sierra Club. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Interior National Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service also filed protests.

"Even though water applications in Snake Valley were not at issue, Utahns and their local government leaders were concerned enough about impacts on Utah to protest the Spring Valley applications," GBWN Utah Coordinator Steve Erickson said. "Tens of thousands of acre feet of groundwater flows into Snake Valley from Spring Valley each year, so depleting the aquifer in Spring will draw down the aquifer in Snake Valley, and that's unacceptable."

The new protests are the latest development in the complex, protracted and hotly contested battle against the multi-billion dollar pipeline project. The protests were in response to the re-publication of water applications originally filed back in 1989. The re-publication was required by

a Nevada Supreme Court ruling (Great Basin Water Network v. Taylor) that voided previous decisions by the Nevada State Engineer granting water rights to SNWA in Spring, Cave, Dry Lake and Delamar Valleys.

SNWA is seeking 90,000 afy in Spring and 30,000 afy in the other valleys. Protestants will have standing to argue their cases against the project in hearings before State Engineer Jason King beginning September 26 and concluding in mid November. A decision is expected in 2012. SNWA's applications for groundwater in Snake Valley, which straddles the Nevada-Utah border, will not be re-published until some time after the State Engineer's ruling on Spring, Cave, Dry Lake and Delamar Valleys..

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