

Since 1984 I have worked in the landscaping industry in Southern Utah. I have come to see firsthand how to conserve water in this unique desert climate. However, trees and shrubs, together with sensible quantities of sod, mean so much to our residents and overall enjoyment of our communities.

Together with others in my industry and the local water suppliers, Southern Utah landscapes are the most efficient in the state. A recent study performed by the Utah Governor's Office of Management and Budget reported that only 17 percent of Washington County's landscapes had vegetative cover compared to 44 percent in Salt Lake County -- the major population center of the state. We have been very smart about water in Washington County.

However, conservation is not the total solution to our water demands. Every citizen and leader in Utah needs to come together and protect Utah's historic contractual water rights and the economy so reliant on water. Part of our legal rights to already allocated water resources is the further development of water resources in the Colorado River basin. The best way to put this valuable resource to work is to build the Lake Powell Pipeline. I admit it is one part of our overall water strategies, but an extremely valuable part. We have no time to waste in developing this resource.

Utah as a whole benefits from development of this valuable resource. After all, Southern Utah is a huge draw to those who wish to recreate or live here. That takes water. As one of the nation's fastest growing areas, we must look forward with sensible approaches to satisfy the need for water. From the first pioneers who came here well over 100 years ago to those coming here currently, we all must plan wisely for the future. As a longtime resident and business owner, former planning commissioner, city council member and current county commissioner elect, I urge all leaders within the great state of Utah to support the Lake Powell Pipeline and encourage FERC to move forward with the project approval process.

Sincerely,
Gil Almquist
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