



DEAN COX, COMMISSIONER | VICTOR IVERSON, COMMISSION, CHAIR | GIL ALMQUIST, COMMISSIONER

September 8, 2020

Mr. Rick Baxter
Bureau of Reclamation
302 East Lakeview Parkway
Provo, UT 84606
lpp@usbr.gov

Re: Washington County's Comment on the Lake Powell Pipeline Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Mr. Baxter:

Washington County is one of the fastest growing regions in the nation and is projected to continue exceeding national and state growth rates in the future. Today, the county is home to nearly 200,000 permanent residents, \$33 billion in property market values and 75,000 jobs. Our economy is stable and growing. Single family home permits have increased 14 percent over last year and we are seeing more and more people chose to live in southern Utah. Growth projections estimate the county's population will more than double by the year 2060.

The county has a long history, spanning nearly two centuries, of planning water resources to meet the needs of its growing population and economy. The county's major population centers depend exclusively on the Virgin River Basin, a small desert tributary of the Colorado River. The basin has served us well over the years, but it is reaching its full development capacity and is closed to further appropriations.

To accommodate the growth that is already occurring and projected in our county, it is essential we augment and diversify our water resources. The Virgin River Basin is insufficient to meet the needs of our growing community and is vulnerable to climate variability. The basin has experienced 12 years of drought during the last two decades; the U.S. Drought Monitor currently lists Washington County in the "extreme drought" level. A second, more reliable water supply is essential.

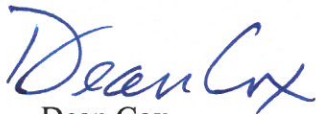
Utah has rights to water in the Colorado River that are available for use in Washington County. The Colorado River is the most reliable water source in the west. The delivery of Colorado River water to Washington County via the Lake Powell Pipeline will provide our communities with a reliable water resource to protect our expanding economy while mitigating potential impacts of climate variability.

Securing a reliable water source for our citizens is our top priority. The Lake Powell Pipeline is the only option that will bring a second water source, meet future demand, and beneficially use existing Colorado River water rights. Project alternatives fail to accomplish these objectives. As stated in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the project is affordable and will be built in a manner that respects the environment.

The Washington County Commission respectfully requests the Bureau of Reclamation issue a Record of Decision in favor of the Southern Alternative alignment so this critical project can move forward.

Sincerely,

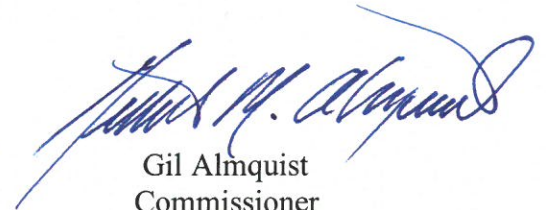
Washington County Commission



Dean Cox
Commissioner



Victor Iverson
Chairman



Gil Almquist
Commissioner