



August 4, 2020

Rick Baxter
Bureau of Reclamation
302 East Lakeview Parkway
Provo, UT 84606

Dear Mr. Baxter:

I serve as the mayor of St. George, Utah, the largest community among the 10 that needs the water that will be delivered through the Lake Powell Pipeline (LPP).

In 2018, St. George was the third fastest-growing metro area in the country. Population growth over the last two decades has surpassed Las Vegas on a per capita basis. Washington County grew 30 percent during the past decade, has averaged eight percent growth annually from 1970-2019 and currently has 180,550-plus residents.

The 2017 population forecast, prepared by the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute at the University of Utah in collaboration with the Utah Governor's Office of Management and Budget, projects Washington County to have the largest increase in population in Utah (229 percent); exceeding 500,000 people by 2065. Historically the growth projections through the Governor's Office have been conservatively low.

In addition to a growing population, we attract more than 6 million visitors to the region annually to enjoy our recreation amenities, warm weather and proximity to some of the nation's great parks. Within driving distance, we have five national parks, seven national monuments, two national recreation areas, six national forests and 43 state parks. Sand Hollow State Park, just 13 miles from St. George, is one of the top visited parks in the state.

St. George is a well-organized and economically vibrant city. Looking ahead, we want a community that has all the quality of life that we're used to, but a place that also has more opportunity for our young people that we're raising and educating, to be able to stay here, with higher wages and job opportunities.

To accomplish our vision, we must be able to supply water to residents and visitors. Our mission is to effectively and efficiently manage and optimize the complete water cycle for the City of St. George. Our greatest concerns are providing water of high enough quality and quantity to enhance the health, environment and enjoyment of the community.

CITY OF ST. GEORGE

The LPP not only introduces a new source of high quality water into our portfolio, it stores it closer to our city. The LPP will transport 86,249 acre feet of water annually from Lake Powell to Sand Hollow Reservoir. Water stored in Sand Hollow and other local reservoirs augments St. George's municipal water supply. Without that supply, St. George would have inadequate water to meet current demands. Outdoor watering would need to be eliminated, which would have significant cost implications to our citizens and be damaging to the environment, property values and our quality of life. In the desert, trees and plants provide a multitude of environmental and ecological benefits, which contribute to air quality, storm water management and wildlife habitat.

Landscapes also shade and cool urban areas, reducing the heat island effect and cooling costs. A study done by Colorado State University shows that when there is limited vegetation in a community, buildings and paved surfaces absorb energy from the sun and cause the surface temperature of urban structures to be 18 to 38°F higher than the ambient air temperatures. Higher air temperatures lead to increased need for cooling systems, straining natural resources including water required to cool our homes and businesses since our city buys hydroelectric energy.

We must be able to provide water in the ongoing drought cycle our region experiences. Southern Utah has had 12 years of drought in the last two decades, leaving our sole source of water, the Virgin River basin, vulnerable and placing us at risk of running out of water.

We are working hard to reduce the amount of water we use. I am proud that St. George has made progress in water conservation. Water demand in Washington County has decreased 30 percent between 2000 and 2018. During that same period, Washington County's population increased more than 70 percent and nearly 100 million tourists visited the county.

That's a profound savings, and it involved taking a lot of small and large steps. The Washington County Water Conservancy District, our wholesale water provider, St. George and other local cities recently invested \$70 million in proven activities to save water. But, conservation alone isn't always enough to meet demand.

Most of our remaining land will be large-scale master developments. We are working with developers to install water efficient landscapes and developing secondary systems for outdoor irrigation. We already use secondary water for golf courses, parks and schools. Additionally, we have:

- Established two gardens with desert plants to educate families and businesses about the benefits and beauty of water-efficient landscapes.
- Paid residents to put in low-flow toilets.
- Hosted hundreds of workshops to educate residents on how to use less water.
- Changed the way people pay for water, to reward residents who conserve.
- Launched a program to find and fix leaky pipes, which wastes water.

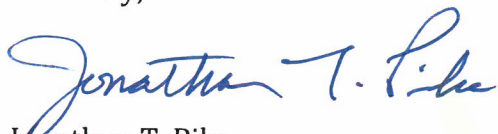
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Ongoing conservation efforts and new technology will help each person in our community use less water in the future.

The city has developed and is using its available water supply. We buy more than half of our water from the Washington County Water Conservancy District. As our community keeps growing, we will rely on the district's water even more. That's why the LPP is so important to us. We need this project to be online in the next decade. The City of St. George requests the Bureau of Reclamation to complete the Environmental Impact Statement for the Lake Powell Pipeline as quickly as possible and issue its Record of Decision for the project.

Sincerely,



Jonathan T. Pike
Mayor