



St. George

THE BRIGHTER SIDE

July 27, 2020

Mr. Rick Baxter
Program Manager
Bureau of Reclamation
Provo Area Office
302 East Lakeview Parkway
Provo, UT 84606

Mr. Baxter,

One of the central values of St. George and surrounding Washington County is agriculture. It makes our corner of the world unique. In a county where 75% of the land is owned by the federal government, private ownership is a hallmark of American individualism. Part of our identity as a region comes from our agriculture. We have over 480 family farms and ranches covering more than 217,000 acres. Together, these families add more than \$7 million in revenue for our county, annually. Their privately owned land gives us open space, clean living, and economic vitality. And, 60% of those farms rely directly upon the Virgin River Basin for their irrigation water.

The current and continuing population boom in Washington County competes with our agricultural heritage. Some people say we should dry up our farms and convert the irrigation water to municipal water. That is not a realistic goal. We need to provide adequate water to both our farmers and our residents. The estimated population growth for Washington County has been nearing 35% for the past ten years. It is projected to stay that course for the next ten years, only slowing slightly in the decades after that. Such growth is likely bringing as many as 500,000 new people to Southwestern Utah by the year 2060. All of these people will need water.

The Lake Powell Pipeline is a responsible proposal that meets the needs of our growing population and our agricultural community. The Virgin River Basin does not have the annual stream flow to match our growing needs. The pipeline offers an alternative to the single source of water we have come to rely upon. Supplementing the Virgin River Basin with an additional 86,249 acre-feet of water from the Colorado River makes sense. It will give agriculture the insurance it needs to continue its productivity well into the future.

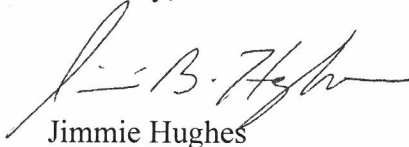
CITY OF ST. GEORGE

July 27, 2020

Page 2

The LPP is the best option for preserving our agriculture heritage in Washington County while meeting the needs of our growing population. What is good for agriculture is good for St. George. Please approve the Lake Powell Pipeline as a Preferred Alternative in the Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jimmie Hughes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jimmie Hughes
Councilman

