

Bryan Thiriot, St. George, UT.

November 06, 2018

P-12966-00: Application for a Preliminary Permit for the Lake Powell Pipeline Project. --UTAH

To whom it may concern,

Throughout my 20-year public sector career, I have worked in regional, state, local, and federal levels of government within the State of Utah. My work experience, family history, and appreciation for Southern Utah have shaped my personal support of the Lake Powell Pipeline delivering water to southwest Utah.

Multiple generations of my family have been in Washington County since the days Brigham Young called them to settle in St. George and Pine Valley in Washington County. My Bracken ancestors came on faith not knowing what or how they would survive. I sense my ancestors are smiling to see that their descendants are living here and that the community they helped establish is still thriving. Their years of suffering and hard work provided an incredible foundation.

A few years ago, while visiting my family's ancestral property near Pine Valley on the Santa Clara River, I was alarmed to see the river's small trickle that helps to provide water to the greater population. I committed to diversifying our water portfolio is essential from this evidence of insufficient water. In fact, this last April 2018 --I walked our family Homesteaded property on the west side of Washington County and in the East Fork Beaver Dam Wash that meanders through our land and waters our fields and orchard, and there was no water from spring and summer and a quarter of our fruit trees died from drought. It simply is not wise or sustainable to have a community rely on one water source, especially one as fickle as the Virgin River basin. Having the water source from the Lake Powell Pipeline as an additional water supply provides a community a level of assurance needed to progress and develop with greater confidence for the future.

As a father, I hope that my own three children will be able to choose to live in this community and raise their children here. The Lake Powell Pipeline will ensure that next generations will have the same opportunities afforded to me.

For any community to survive, it is necessary to bring in supplies, goods, and materials from outside sources. Power, food, gas, building materials, etcetera are all things commonly imported and exported around our country, wouldn't it seem logical that a state could transfer its own water allocation from one region to another?

I marvel at many of the Lake Powell Pipeline critics who, in the past, were supportive of the Central Utah Project (CUP) that pipes Colorado River water to northern areas of the state. I cannot conceive why a project like the CUP was acceptable in Northern Utah but, now, a similar project would not be appropriate for Southern Utah, designated by the U.S. Census as the fastest growing metropolitan area in the country for 2018! For the long-term benefits of Utah as a whole, we should develop and use our state's allocated Colorado River water rights.

I believe that the Lake Powell Pipeline, coupled with strong ongoing conservation efforts, are the key to a sustainable Washington County. I urge FERC to uphold the State of Utah's wishes to develop their allocation of Colorado River water and construct the Lake Powell Pipeline.

Regards,
Bryan Thiriot
Executive Director, Five County Association of Governments