

To the members of the BLM,

I am here today to express my concern about the impacts that the SNWA groundwater pumping will create on the Great Basin area. I along many other volunteers, from many different groups, have given thousands of hours of our time, over the last ten years, to help in the reintroduction of Native Bonneville Cutthroat Trout in the Great Basin National Park and surrounding areas. Those groups include the Southern Nevada Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Trout Unlimited, Members of the Las Vegas & Henderson Fire Departments, DU, RMEF, Mule Deer Foundation and other concerned citizens of southern and central Nevada. We have raised money to buy equipment for studying fish habitat and fish genetics. We have spent many trips to the area assisting National Park employees gather macroinvertebrate information for studies prior to the reintroduction of BCT. We have participated in water sampling and testing. We have helped in fish surveying and provided some of the funds to do genetic testing on the fish to determine their pureness of strain.

After many years of surveys, test and studies, it was found that Mill Creek in GBNP indeed has a very pure strain of Native Bonneville Cutthroats. Some of those fish were later reintroduced into streams where they had been wiped out by floods or other natural disasters. One Example of this is the South Fork of the Big Wash Creek. Other BCTs were reintroduced into streams such as Strawberry Creek, the South Fork of the Baker and Snake Creek where man's earlier blunders wiped them out by introducing nonnative fish. It was thought that the non-native fish could survive along with the native fish and provide better fishing for anglers. After it was too late, we learned that these non-native fish decimated the populations of the native fish to extinction in those streams. It is hard enough to help them survive natural disasters without introducing a man-made disaster. I have personally hiked in to and observed some of the natural springs that create the streams that these fish now live in. These springs are a beautiful site to see in person. They only provide enough water to create small streams. They are dependent on underground aquifers, rainfall and snowfall. We all know that the amount of rain and snowfall has been at drought stages over the last 8-10 years. So they now depend on the existing aquifers more than ever. These springs will dry up if the aquifers are depleted. These streams will dry up without these natural springs. The Native Bonneville Cutthroat Trout will die without sufficient water in these streams.

I have heard the SNWA say there is enough water to go around. Yet they cannot get ranchers to share their water rights so they have had to pay exorbitant amounts to buy out the ranches. Why? Because the ranchers know that once the water is piped out, they will not have enough water to support their livestock and sustain their ranches. The SNWA can assure us all they want but, what if they are wrong. Other areas in the western United States have been given similar assurances only to find the aquifers dry up enough that the land cannot sustain normal plants, stock and wildlife. If they're wrong will they be around to acknowledge that they misled to the public for financial gain. If they're wrong will they agree to stop pumping before they have completely wiped out the area. If they're wrong will they be able to explain to our children and grandchildren why they ruined one of Nevada's oldest living Native species, the Bonneville Cutthroat Trout.

Too many people, have spent too many hours and too many dollars, to have all the work to restore and enhance the Native Bonneville Cutthroat Trout population in the Great Basin area go to waste buy letting the SNWA steal their water. I have only touched one area of concern. It is the one I am most familiar with and the one that my friends, family and children have spent the most time trying to save. There are many other areas that I'm sure will be greatly affected also. Leyman Caves and other surrounding cave systems whose creations and stunning features are formed by underground flows of water. The many different species of plants, birds and wildlife whose lives depend on a dependable water supply. The National Park's system was put into place so that man couldn't ruin some of the natural wonders that exist in the United States of America. Let's not introduce another manmade disaster that will cause more stress and harm to these areas. Please do not let man and the SNWA take a chance of ruining two of our National Treasures, Great Basin National Park and the Native Bonneville Cutthroat Trout. Choose the No-Action Alternative for this DEIS and keep the pipelines away from Great Basin National Park and from Spring and Snake Valleys in White Pine County.

Sincerely, Larry McCormick