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cc
bcc
Subject Pipeline to Las Vegas

Morning,

I just recently read the news that a pipeline from Southern Utah to Las Vegas Nevada is under consideration.

Las Vegas is a unique place, offering jobs to an uncountable number of people who are in and out of the area. On top of that, it is a huge money driver for the state of Nevada. I actually heard a statistic that thanks to the gambling industry of Las Vegas, citizens of the state do not pay payroll taxes. On top of this, Vegas offers other great opportunities for the entire state and its people.

On the other hand, as a graduate from the University of Utah specifically focusing on environmental concerns, Las Vegas also has other serious issues it needs to deal with. Crime for example, traffic congestion in the city, and overall electrical needs also need to be met. On top of this, water is huge issue.

I understand why Las Vegas would like to pipe water from Utah just from highlighting some of the positive points I made above. However, this doesn't take into consideration the inhabitants of Utah. Many Utahns' visit Vegas, and I enjoy a weekend vacation there like many others. However, taking water from underground aquifers poses serious threats to Utah's landscape as well as its people. Just like Nevada, we have a unique type of vegetation with plants known as "xerophytes". These plants can sometimes have taproots that reach all the way to the aquifer to be able to sustain itself. These plants also have roots that branch out in other directions that hold the soil down. In the absence of these plants, Utah would be subject to large frequent dust storms. It is known that a combination of natural elements started the famous Dust Bowl in America during the 1930's. One of these elements was a lack of native vegetation. The people at the time did not know the consequences of clearing most of the grass land for farms, and this resulting in a large dust storms for an entire decade. The government understood these consequences, and they had trees replanted which helped secure the dust to the ground. Mexico City, Mexico, is experiencing huge issues while they continue to pump water from an aquifer underneath the city quicker than the aquifer can recharge itself. The city is literally sinking. In the last 30 years, the city has sank over 20 feet.

I don't wish to see Las Vegas collapse. Actually, I hope for the exact opposite. I recognize the city also has made some efforts to help create a more sustainable environment, such as the type of water used in the fountains in front of hotels. However, if water is the issue at hand, extra water does not need to come from Utah. Instead, retro-fitting appliances that use water, such as sinks, showers, toilets, washers, etc.. could be done. The types of plants growing on the strip could be changed, and self sustaining rain gardens could be used. This list is not at nearly all inclusive, but offer a few suggestions. Not only is this MUCH cheaper than building an entire pipeline, paying the contractors do to it, not to mention the political tape involved, but it makes sense.

I am more than happy to speak to anyone else about this, and also interested in speaking at / attending any public meetings if you would like.

Thanks for your time,

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