

BLM_NV_NVSO_GWProjects

From: Westbrook Janet <jwest0554@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 14, 2012 1:16 PM
To: BLM_NV_NVSO_GWProjects
Subject: Attn: Penny Woods; SNWA Row request
Attachments: FEIS - SNWA ROW.doc; ATT00002.htm

The following are my comments about the SNWA's request to acquire water from 3 rural counties in your state. I would urge you to deny this request, based on your extensive EIR which lists all the effects this project would have on the BLM lands involved and upon the scarce water supplies which are already being used for local purposes and the fact that most of the effects can't be mitigated against.

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14 August 2012

Penny Woods, Project Manager
BLM - Nevada State office
Groundwater Projects Office
1340 Financial Blvd.
Reno, NV 89502
nvgwprojects@blm.gov

Subject: Clark, Lincoln, and White Pine Counties Groundwater Development Project DEIS Comments

Dear Ms. Woods,

I frequently visit the counties in Nevada in question and have seen the local citizen's alarm at what they perceive as a "water grab" by Las Vegas, legal or not. I live in Ridgecrest, CA, Mojave desert just south of the Owens Valley, and have 2 very large (8' and 10') aqueduct pipes running past our town which carry close to 100% of the stream water coming east out of the Sierra Nevada from Olancho to Mono Lake down to Los Angeles, plus significant groundwater pumping in the Owens Valley. I live with and see the effects of a large city appropriating water from local sources. (My own town is "mining" Pleistocene underground water but at least the town is taking steps to reduce demand, and that is working.) The water supply is finite. Growth of populations and agriculture must comply with the reality of water resources.

There is certainly enough information in your FEIS to cause BLM to deny SNWA's request for the ROW project based on damage to the environment, drawdown which can't be refilled, effects on local populations and future development of any kind after their aquifers are depleted to serve Las Vegas, etc. I would remind both BLM and SNWA that the City of Los Angeles is now paying dearly (over \$1 billion so far) to mitigate the damage they have caused to Owens Lake and the Owens Valley as a result of taking the stream and groundwater away from it. The California Courts have demanded that they mitigate the PM₁₀ dust, and stop pumping groundwater when it affects important springs and wetlands, and restore groundwater levels such that vegetation in the Owens Valley is not affected.

I would urge BLM to "do the right thing" for the lands and resources you are mandated to protect and select the "No Action Alternative" for this ROW. This isn't "spare water" - there are plants and animals, small towns, farms and grazing currently dependent upon this water. At least the No Action Alternative won't make matters too much worse for these 3 counties. At the very least, Alternative D looks like it would cause the least amount of environmental disturbances and consequences. Las Vegas doesn't need to grow beyond the water supplies it already has (not your department, I know), and you can emphasize this to them and other growing cities by denying the project.

Sincerely,
Janet Westbrook