

PRESS RELEASE

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Groups Call for Greater Scrutiny of Southern Nevada Water Authority's Pipeline System

Reports Highlight Conservation as a Viable Alternative for Las Vegas Valley

Two reports released today ask tough questions about Southern Nevada Water Authority's (SNWA) planned pipeline and provide sound alternatives to the costly project.

A broad coalition of groups and individuals including public officials, ranchers, farmers, environmentalists, academics, and business owners from Nevada, Utah, and California are raising questions about the feasibility of the pipeline system.

"We need a lot more information," says Bob Fulkerson, executive director of the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada (PLAN), one of the organizations releasing a report today. "I've lived in Nevada my whole life and understand both the rural and urban perspectives. I spent the best days of my youth on our family's ranch in Eureka County, but I've spent most of my life in the city. Water is a serious issue in this state, and the proposed pipeline system would affect all of us. We have to find a way to balance the needs of both rural and urban populations."

PLAN's report *Where does it start? Where will it end? Las Vegas and the Groundwater Development Project*, provides an overview of the potential plans, costs and impacts of the Southern Nevada Water Authority's proposal to extract groundwater from rural Nevada and Utah and send it over 250 miles to Las Vegas.

The huge project will involve construction of pumping stations, overhead power lines, and other infrastructure costing billions of dollars.

Christina Roessler, report author, says, "We wanted to provide information people need to make their own decisions about whether or not the pipeline system is a good idea. It will affect people not only in Nevada, but in Utah because one of the major valleys involved is Snake Valley that is predominantly in Utah. So far, the cost of the project and the impacts of withdrawing huge volumes of groundwater aren't known."

"I don't know what people in cities like Las Vegas think they're going to eat if we destroy ranches and farms by removing the water from rural areas," Snake Valley rancher Dean Baker asks. "I know from watching my springs dry up from pump irrigation that there isn't enough water to supply the pipeline system and to keep the ranches and farms here in business. Ranching and farming have been mainstays of Nevada culture since the first pioneers settled here. I really don't believe most Nevadans want that way of life wiped out."

Alternatives exist. A second report released today produced by Western Resource Advocates' (WRA), *Water in the Urban Southwest: An Updated Water Use Analysis of Albuquerque, Las Vegas Valley and Tucson* shows that conservation measures that have been put in place are working well, but that there are a number of other conservation programs that could reduce Nevada's water demands.

Taryn Hutchins-Cabibi, a Water Policy Analyst with WRA and the report's primary author says, "Based on our study of conservation approaches in the southwest, there is definitely room for significant reduction in water consumption in Las Vegas Valley. Some Las Vegas businesses are already doing the right thing, and this report provides additional cost-effective ways that Las Vegas Valley and others can increase water conservation and efficiency."

Both reports are available at www.westernresources.org, www.planevada.org, and www.greatbasinwater.net/. For print copies please contact the organizations directly.

PLAN is a statewide coalition founded in 1994. PLAN will continue to distribute information about the pipeline project and provide alternative approaches for meeting Las Vegas Valley's growing water demand.

Western Resource Advocates is a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to protecting the Interior West's land, air, and water.