

GBWN PANS "NEW" PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE IN FINAL EIS ON SNWA'S GROUNDWATER PUMPING PROJECT

Citizens in the broad coalition of farmers, environmentalists, tribes, ranchers, hunters and anglers, rural and urban residents in the Great Basin Water Network are giving the Bureau of Land Management an "F" for the additional alternative which excludes a pipeline right of way into Snake Valley, a rural valley shared by Nevada and Utah.

Alternative F was not in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). "The BLM has already studied two other alternatives with no Snake Valley pipeline right-of-way (ROW). What BLM has refused to study is a real alternative for the 300 mile pipeline project, including increasing water supplies for Southern Nevada through significant water efficiency opportunities and desalination," said Abby Johnson of Carson City.

She added, "we'll be checking the final EIS to see if the 96 inch diameter pipeline is still proposed, since the Southern Nevada Water Authority is free to seek water from all over rural Nevada to keep its pipeline full."

Susan Lynn, GBWN coordinator, pointed out that "nothing much has changed in the BLM analysis of the adverse environmental and socioeconomic impacts of the SNWA project. The final EIS continues to show that it is an unsustainable groundwater mining project. Unless it denies SNWA's request for a pipeline ROW, we do not see how the BLM will be able to adequately protect the 12 million acres of public lands in eastern Nevada from massive water depletion and land subsidence, nor continue all the multiple uses and wildlife which depend on healthy public lands, nor protect senior water right users."

Southern Nevada resident, Ann Brauer, notes that the BLM is still relying on a host of missing, incomplete, outdated and unreliable information in the final EIS. Brauer states "the project cost information that was added is based on 2007 dollars. Even the \$15.7 billion project costs will require huge increases in water rates when customers just got hit with paying the ever-increasing costs of the 3rd straw project in Lake Mead."

Great Basin Water Network and its allies will be submitting additional information to the BLM during the 60-day comment period on the final EIS. Rose Strickland of Reno stated, "this information will add to the thousands of public comments to the BLM on the draft EIS which argue that the SNWA groundwater project is not needed, would not provide reliable water for municipal and industrial uses, is not financially feasible, and would cause unacceptable environmental, cultural and socioeconomic harm in the four targeted rural valleys."

"We'll be studying the 5000+ page document further to determine if the BLM was responsive to public comments on the Draft EIS," said Lynn. "We'll be looking at information gaps; sufficiency; purpose and need; legal and policy issues; changes to the 'irreversible and irretrievable impacts' section, as well as direct and cumulative impacts to people and resources that the Federal agencies are charged with protecting for future generations."