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ADVOCACY GROUP URGES TOP WATER OFFICIAL TO REVISE EASTERN NV PIPELINE DECISION WITHOUT ADDITIONAL HEARINGS

CARSON CITY, NV – Nevada’s top water official, the State Engineer, is holding a status conference with the other parties to a state lawsuit. The case challenged the water rights granted to the Southern Nevada Water Authority for a proposed 300-mile pipeline from Eastern Nevada to Las Vegas. Some of the entities, including the Great Basin Water Network, are calling for immediate action by the State Engineer to stop the project.

“The State Engineer has all of the facts he needs to make a prudent decision,” says Howard Watts III, Communications Specialist for Great Basin Water Network. “The facts of the case call for the denial of the applications by SNWA.”

The status conference is the latest step in a legal dispute spanning 10 years. Water rights granted in 2006 and 2008 were successfully challenged in court by Great Basin Water Network, White Pine County, the Confederated Tribes of the Goshute, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and others.

A new round of hearings was conducted in 2011, and the resulting decision was again challenged. District Court Judge Robert Estes sent the decision back to the State Engineer to correct deficiencies in monitoring and mitigation plans for pumping impacts. The Supreme Court rejected appeals to Judge Estes’ decision in 2015 and 2016. Now the State Engineer is deciding how to proceed. He could modify his decision, reject the applications, or conduct another round of hearings. The Water Network thinks that is not necessary.

“SNWA made it clear that all the information has been laid out in the last hearing. The judge ruled that the law was not properly applied and a poor decision was made,” Watts says. “The solution is to fix the decision. To go through a fourth hearing in ten years sounds like the definition of insanity, and a waste of the taxpayers’ money. If you can’t get something right in three tries, it should be three strikes you’re out.”

The Great Basin Water Network was formed to protect the water resources of the Great Basin for current and future residents – human, animal and plant. We bring disparate communities together to preserve and protect the West’s environment, economies, communities, and cultures. The network includes urban and rural people, ranchers, conservationists, Native Americans, and government and business leaders.

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