

Governor Will Not Sign Snake Valley Water Agreement

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SALT LAKE CITY - For nearly four years the State of Utah has been negotiating an agreement between Utah and Nevada that addresses the management of the Snake Valley groundwater system that straddles the Utah-Nevada border. Today Utah Governor Gary R. Herbert announced his decision to not sign that agreement.

"My decision was made as I visited with the good people who live in Western Utah-those most affected by the outcomes," Governor Herbert said. "I have also visited with local officials and county commissioners, even as recently as yesterday. A majority of local residents do not support the agreement with Nevada. Therefore, I cannot in good conscience sign the agreement because I won't impose a solution on those most impacted that they themselves cannot support."

Utah's process has been deliberative and methodical. The Governor appreciates that many residents of western Utah have been actively engaged, working with local officials to find a solution. He also acknowledges the work and expertise of water, environmental, and legal experts who have provided valuable analysis in this uniquely complicated situation.

"There is no more complex and emotional issue with which I have grappled as governor of this great state," said the Governor. "I appreciate all who have engaged in good faith in this effort, particularly the State of Nevada, to find a mutually-agreeable solution. The fact that I will not sign this agreement does not change our water priorities as a state. We will continue to do everything we can to protect Utah's water, protect individual water rights, and protect Utah's environment and way of life."

The focus of the draft agreement is the Basin and Range aquifer in Snake Valley. The north-south running valley is nearly 120 miles long and over 15 miles wide, bound by the Snake Range and Deep Creek mountains to the west and the Confusion Range to the east. Utah communities in Snake Valley include Callao, Trout Creek, Partoun, EskDale, Burbank, Gandy, Garrison and Border. Impacted counties include Juab, Millard, Beaver, and Tooele.

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