# What is the Lake Powell Pipeline?

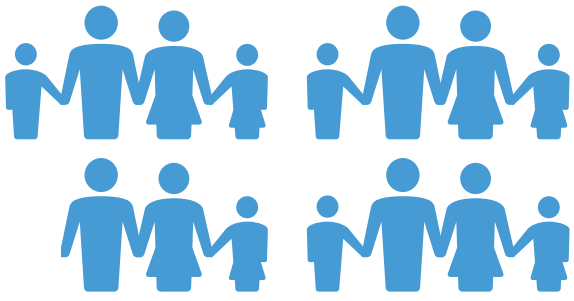
The Lake Powell Pipeline is the largest new diversion of the Colorado River and is being proposed by Utah's Division of Water Resources, an agency under Governor Gary Herbert. The pipeline would pump 28 billion gallons of water 2000 feet uphill across 140 miles of desert to St. George, Utah for municipal use. This multi-billion dollar project would divert Colorado River water out of Lake Powell Reservoir, immediately upstream of the Grand Canyon.


Proposed Lake Powell Pipeline

# How Many Utahns Will this Water Support?

The 28 billion gallons of Lake Powell Pipeline water is enough to provide for the annual use of 700,000 average Americans, but the water would be used by just 180,000 residents of St. George, Utah. This inequity of per person water use is because Utahns are America's #1, highest users of municipal water, per person according to the USGS.

## 28 Billion Gallons of Water is Enough For:



**700,000**
**Average Americans**

**(OR)**

**180,000**
**St. George, Utah**
**Residents**

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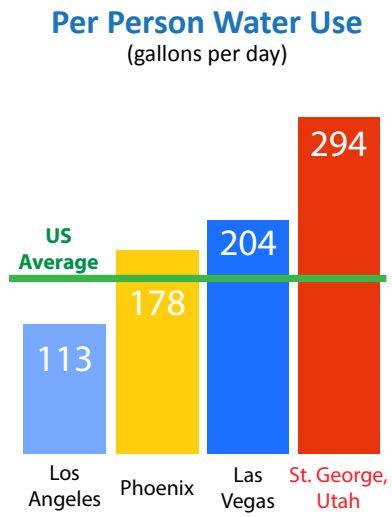
# Why Do Utahns Waste So Much Water?

The recipients of the proposed Lake Powell Pipeline's water are among the biggest water users (per person) in the U.S. because they have America's cheapest water rates. These cheap rates encourage water waste because they do not give residents a financial incentive to conserve water.

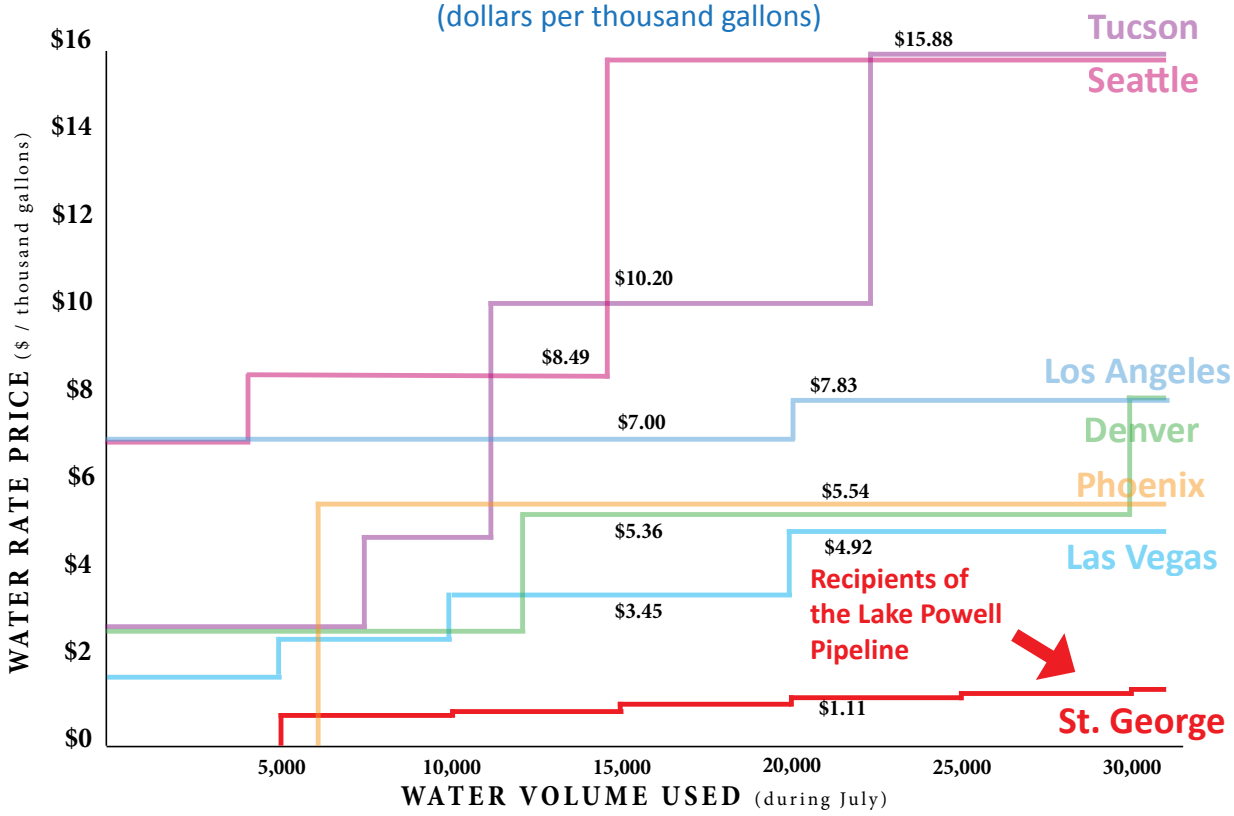



Source: 2011 Lake Powell Pipeline Water Needs Assessment, Utah Division of Water Resources

**Left**: Recipients of the Lake Powell Pipeline, shown in red, are among the Nation's highest water users.

**Below**: St. George's high water use occurs because the area has some of the lowest water rates in the U.S., which encourages water waste.

## Water Prices in Western Cities

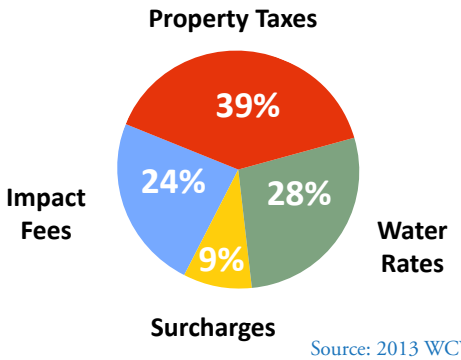


# Why Do the Recipients of the Pipeline Have Such Cheap Water?

St. George's cheap rates exist because the water supplier collects large amounts of property taxes to lower the price of water which encourages many to waste water. Since this water supplier receives more money from property taxes than from selling water, the agency is able to artificially lower water rates and encourage high use. The collection of property taxes that go directly to water suppliers is a practice unique to Utah water agencies.

**Right**: The St. George water supplier receives more money from property taxes than from selling water. Property taxes are used by the water supplier to artificially lower the price of water, thereby encouraging water waste. These taxes explain why St. George has such cheap rates, as shown on page 2.

**Washington County Water District Revenues**

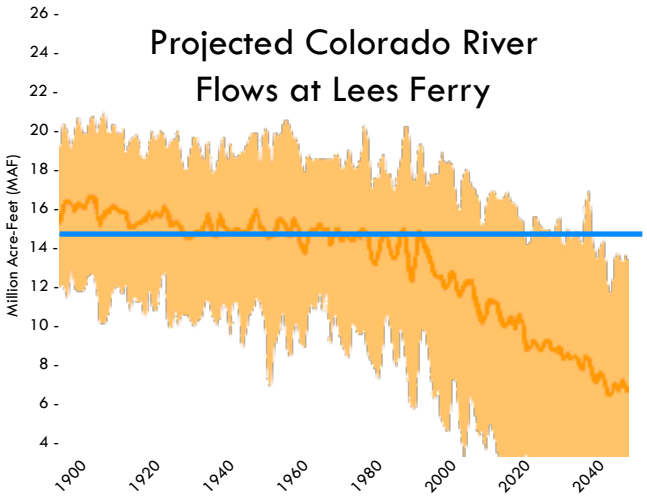



Source: 2013 WCWD Audited Financial Statement

# A Warmer Future Means Less Water

Over 80 percent of the Colorado River Basin's flows come from snowmelt and mostly from the headwater states. Unfortunately, increased air temperatures are expected to reduce this snowpack and lower Colorado River streamflows by 9-30 percent in coming decades.

New diversions like the Lake Powell Pipeline will further exacerbate water supply problems for millions of residents downstream.




**Left:** One of many alarming projections of Colorado River flows. The orange line is the average of computer simulations, the orange cloud shows the 10% to 90% range of simulations and the blue line is the water level of the 1922 Colorado River Compact. Source: Hoerling, M. and J. Eischeid, 2007.

# Inexpensive Alternatives to the Lake Powell Pipeline

Many less expensive water sources exist which could provide water for Utahns that are not being considered by proponents of the Lake Powell Pipeline. A 2015 Legislative Audit of the Utah Division of Water Resources confirmed this fact and outlined the water sources being ignored by this agency. These include:

**Water Conservation.** Even though Utah is America's #1, highest municipal water user, according to the U.S.G.S., Utah's water conservation goal is to reduce water use by just 1% this year. By contrast, California's water conservation goal is to reduce water use 25% this year. The Audit criticized Utah's lack of water conservation progress and noted the St. George area is among the country's highest water users but is not planning to conserve a single drop of water after 2025, yet they forecast a shortage by 2030.

**Surplus Agricultural Water.** Another source of water comes when urban growth replaces agricultural lands, creating a surplus of water formerly used to irrigate crops. State documents show the St. George area can expect at least 40,000 acre-feet of unused agricultural water to be available in the future.

**Removing Water Wasting Subsidies.** The least expensive source of water could come from changing tax policy. Since the St. George water supplier receives more money collecting property taxes than from selling water, eliminating property taxes would ensure that all users pay the full cost of their water use, including large government water users and churches, which do not pay property taxes.

These water sources are ignored in the state's future water use calculations seemingly to create a false need for Lake Powell Pipeline water. The explanation for this narrow-minded planning is one of interstate politics. Utah is not using its full share of Colorado River water and this water agency wants to keep other states from using this water. At the Utah Legislature, Utah water leaders concede the project's 'true' purpose is to keep downstream states from using "Utah's share" of the Colorado River.

**Left:** An agricultural canal in St. George, Utah. As homes continue to replace farmlands this water surplus will grow, explaining why the proposed recipients of the Lake Powell Pipeline have the ability to expand their water supply by converting water formerly used for agriculture. A water pipeline will not stop farmland from being developed.

**The legislative audit is available at le.utah.gov/audit/15_01rpt.pdf**

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