



For Immediate Release

Utah Submits Application for Massive Colorado River Diversion

\$2 Billion Pipeline Being Proposed for America’s Most Wasteful Water Users

Members of the media are invited to dial in for a teleconference at 2:00 pm Pacific Time, Thursday Dec 3 Details page 2

The State of Utah submitted its application today to the federal government for approval of the largest new diversion of water from the Colorado River.

The proposed Lake Powell Pipeline would divert 86,000 acre-feet of Colorado River water for municipal use in Southwest Utah. The multi-billion dollar pipeline would pump this water 2,000 feet uphill across 140 miles of desert to deliver the equivalent annual water usage of 700,000 average Americans to just 180,000 people in St. George, Utah.

This water use inequity can be explained by the extremely high water use of St. George residents, who are using 294 gallons per capita day, roughly twice the water use of Phoenix, Albuquerque and Denver residents, per person.

The proponent of the pipeline, the Utah Division of Water Resources, has spent 8 years and \$27 million on the application and claims the pipeline is needed to prevent St. George from running out of water. Critics are lining up to question this claim:

“The Lake Powell Pipeline is an unnecessary and grotesquely expensive waste of taxpayer money,” said former Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Dan Beard. **“Southwest Utah has hundreds of alternatives for addressing their future water problems and the justification for the pipeline is based on fictitious and bloated water consumption figures that even the experts at the Utah Legislature dispute.”**

“The Lake Powell Pipeline is a complete nightmare,” said Zach Frankel, Executive Director of Utah Rivers Council. **“The biggest proposed diversion of the Colorado River during an epic drought, going to the nation’s most wasteful water users, with a staggering price tag, just to keep communities outside Utah from using this water.”**

“The Lake Powell Pipeline is a billion-dollar boondoggle that would have disastrous environmental impacts on the Colorado River,” said Gary Wockner, Executive Director of Save the Colorado. **“The Colorado is already stretched to the breaking point – water supplies are at the brink in Las Vegas, Arizona, and Southern California. Taking more water out of this river is completely nonsensical.”**

Located immediately upstream of the Grand Canyon, the diversion would reduce flows available for fish and wildlife species over hundreds of miles of the Colorado River and make restoration efforts at the Colorado Delta much more difficult. It would also impact the millions of residents throughout the Southwest who are much more conscientious with their water use.

The 86,000 acre-feet of water from the Lake Powell Pipeline is enough water for...



“The pipeline is unfortunate, and incredibly irresponsible considering drought conditions across the West, for Utah to spend billions of dollars to deliver Colorado River water to America’s most wasteful water users,” said Pete Nichols, National Director for the Waterkeeper Alliance.

The would-be recipients of pipeline water have some of the cheapest water rates in the nation, paying only a small fraction of the price for water that Los Angeles residents pay. These cheap rates explain why St. George has some of the highest per-person water use in the entire U.S.

“Adjusted for inflation, the Lake Powell Pipeline will cost as much as it did to make Hoover Dam operational,” said John Weisheit, Executive Director of Living Rivers the Colorado Riverkeeper. **In 1934, there was about 8 million acre-feet of surplus in the Colorado River basin. That surplus vanished in 2003.”**

Critics also point to the inflation of water use data by the Division of Water Resources as one of many reasons why the pipeline isn’t necessary, as well as the many inexpensive alternatives which are being ignored. These alternatives are documented in a May 2015 Legislative Audit which found that water conservation is not being implemented as aggressively as many other western cities, including Las Vegas.

For example, while California is trying to reduce water use by 25% this year, Utah is trying to reduce municipal water use by just 1%, even though Utah residents are America’s biggest users of municipal water (per person), according to the U.S.G.S.

The Division is submitting their application to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the decision making process is anticipated to take several years.

“The LPP proposal should be immediately withdrawn. If not, FERC should kill the project,” said Beard.

**TeleConference for Media
with National Conservation Leaders & Water Experts
on Proposed Lake Powell Pipeline**

**2:00 Pacific Time
Thursday, Dec 3**

A thankfully short press conference to hear some details and ask questions about Utah’s proposal to build the largest new diversion of Colorado River water.

Dial: 866-740-1260

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For more information (801) 699-1856