

UINTAH COUNTY



STATE OF UTAH

Our past is the nation's future

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June 8, 2005

Jerry Olds, PE, Division Director
Department of Natural Resources
Division of Water Rights
P.O. Box 146300
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-3600

RECEIVED

JUN 10 2005

**WATER RIGHTS
SALT LAKE**

RE: Upper Colorado River Basin, Current Water
Rights Issues - Uintah Basin

Dear Mr. Olds:

On April 20, 2005 a meeting was held in Vernal by your office regarding Upper Colorado River Basin current water rights issues. At that meeting participants were given the opportunity to provide comments on the issues.

The following are Uintah County's comments regarding these issues:

Most of Utah is water short, thus its economy and well being of its residents is dependent on the availability of a dependable water supply for both current and future demands. Uintah County is no exception. Growth of the County's economy and populations in the County are dependent on water rights that are held by the county and it's residents or rights they are able to acquire.

It is in the County's best interest that existing water rights, developed or not, are maintained for both current and future use.

Uintah County wants the economic value of its water to remain in the County. To accomplish this the State Engineer must do everything within its power and influence on legislature to maintain existing water rights, both developed, and undeveloped. This can be accomplished through extensions, time limits on construction, and beneficial use.

Uintah County does not view acquisition of agriculture water rights as a desired source of water to meet future municipal and industrial use. The County's capacity to maintain a diversified economy is dependent on maintaining a strong agriculture segment.

Of both local and national concern is the areas extensive oil shale deposits. Water is critical to its development and associated infrastructure.

To prevent retirement of agricultural water rights and to provide for future development and growth, the county will be dependent on the development of rights held by the Uintah Water Conservation Districts and others.

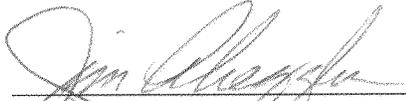
Facilities for storage and development of area water rights has been promised and discussed but has not come to pass. Although promised in the Central Utah Project, there are no such facilities between Steinaker and Starvation Reservoirs. The development of such storage and facilities is critical to Uintah County's needs. The delays in providing such facilities are outside of Uintah County's control. An extension on construction and development of these rights is critical and in the best interest of the County, State, and with respect to oil shale development, the Nation.

The development of water rights to meet present and future needs is a prime concern of Uintah County and the assistance of your office and its influence on legislature is critical to meeting these needs. We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss with you how Uintah County can best protect its water and develop its use.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

UINTAH COUNTY COMMISSION



Jim Abegglen, Chairman



Michael J. McKee



David J. Haslem