

ACTION ALERT:

YOUR COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND ELECTED OFFICIALS WANT TO INCREASE YOUR TAXES AND WATER RATES!

TELL YOUR COUNTY COMMISSIONERS YOU SUPPORT COMMON-SENSE, COST-EFFECTIVE, NON-DIVERSION AWSA ALTERNATIVES THAT SECURE OUR WATER FUTURE AFFORDABLY AND KEEP THE GILA RIVER FREE-FLOWING!

In response to a trumped up threat by Senator John Arthur Smith to pipe the Gila River to Las Cruces, pressure is being applied to local governments to support a large-scale diversion and pipeline project that will have profound implications to the Gila River, as well as raise taxes and increase water rates.

Secret meetings have been taking place between state and local government officials to cut a back room deal on the Arizona Water Settlements Act (AWSA). These meetings are not open to the public, subverting the public process that citizens in Southwestern New Mexico have participated in the last several years. The multi-stakeholder planning process under the AWSA resulted in a range of non-diversion projects being put forward for consideration. The analysis of these projects has not been completed yet.

Grant County commissioner Gabe Ramos was involved in a February 12 meeting with the State Engineer's Deming Office and other local government officials that was unannounced and closed to the public. At this meeting, participants worked on amendments to an earlier Deming AWSA proposal. This new secret proposal outlines a speculative and expensive project to divert and pipe the Gila River to Deming via Silver City and the Mining District. There is pressure being applied to communities to withdraw their local AWSA proposals and to support this new project instead.

Please tell Sen. John Arthur Smith, the Interstate Stream Commission, and your county commissioners that you DON'T SUPPORT the new diversion project for the following reasons:

• This project is expensive.

- \$2 million in exchange costs every year to repay the Gila River Indian Community for their Gila water that NM would divert;
- \$323 million (or more) to build a diversion and pipeline - more than double the promised \$128 million federal subsidy;
- \$195 million - the amount taxpayers and water users will have to come up with to fill the funding gap for diversion and pipeline;
- \$3.7 million per year (or more) for yearly Operation and Maintenance of diversion and pipeline.

• AWSA subsidy isn't enough to cover the construction cost of a diversion leaving taxpayers and water users to foot the bill -

The AWSA subsidy will cover only 40% of the estimated cost of construction. The additional cost would be shouldered by local taxpayers and burden local government with debt. Water rates for water users will increase. At a time when federal, state and local budgets are spread thin and businesses are suffering, a diversion project outstrips our financial resources.

• Building a pipeline to Deming increases the chances of exporting Gila River water and other water rights into the Rio Grande.

• A diversion/storage/pipeline project would destroy the ecological values of the Gila River that provide economic benefit to the region from recreation and tourism.

Tell Senator John Arthur Smith, the Interstate Stream Commission and county commissioners that you DO SUPPORT common-sense, cost-effective non-diversion alternatives that secure our water future at low cost and keep the Gila River flowing.

PLEASE ACT TODAY!

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