

DAVID N. ZOOK
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

NORTH MAIN STREET
LOGAN, UT 84321
435-755-1850
WWW.CACHECOUNTY.ORG



COUNTY COUNCIL
DAVID L. ERICKSON, *CHAIR*
BARBARA Y. TIDWELL, *VICE CHAIR*
KATHRYN A BEUS
SANDI GOODLANDER
NOLAN P. GUNNELL
MARK R. HURD
KARL B. WARD

April 26, 2023

**Contact: Micah Safsten
435-755-1840**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Cache County Council has written a letter to the office of the State Engineer, Teresa Wilhelmsen, expressing concern over a proposed policy from her office that places a moratorium on all new water appropriations in Cache County. This is despite the fact that Proclamation 2022-01, given by Governor Spencer Cox last November, allowed for new appropriations on small amounts of water, such as those for single family homes.

The County Council is asking that before this policy is implemented, that the State Engineer reevaluate a 1999 study from her office of Cache Valley groundwater. This study indicated that 25,000 acre-feet of groundwater was present under Cache Valley. Most of that water has not been appropriated since that time, and very little of it ends up in the Great Salt Lake.

“We concede that with 20 years of drought since that study, conditions have likely changed. Still, it is important that these far-reaching decisions are based on data, and if a significant amount of unappropriated water that does not contribute to the Great Salt Lake exists under our valley, we assert that the people of Cache County have a right to use it,” writes the Council.

The Cache County Council looks forward to working together with state officials to ensure sufficient water remains for the people of Cache Valley, while also ensuring the Great Salt Lake has enough to meet its needs.

The full letter can be found below.

###

DAVID N. ZOOK
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

NORTH MAIN STREET
LOGAN, UT 84321
435-755-1850
WWW.CACHECOUNTY.ORG



COUNTY COUNCIL
DAVID L. ERICKSON, *CHAIR*
BARBARA Y. TIDWELL, *VICE CHAIR*
KATHRYN A BEUS
SANDI GOODLANDER
NOLAN P. GUNNELL
MARK R. HURD
KARL B. WARD

April 25, 2023

Teresa Wilhelmsen
Utah Division of Water Rights
Subject: Cache County (Area 25) Policy
1594 West North Temple Suite 220
P.O. Box 146300
Salt Lake City UT 84114-6300

Ms. Wilhelmsen,

We are writing out of concern for the people of Cache County, who we represent, and concern over the proposed policy change of your office to close new consumptive water appropriations of any size in Area 25. This policy would prohibit any new development in Cache County, unless that development is part of a municipal system or is able to purchase existing water rights.

We appreciate the efforts of the Department of Natural Resources and the Legislature in preserving our state's water, but we are also worried about the effect this policy will have on the growth of Cache County and wonder if such a policy is necessary here. This policy also expands the moratorium set forth in Proclamation 2022-01 in a manner inconsistent with our state's system of constitutional governance. While Governor Cox has a right to set this policy as a duly elected official, accountable to the voters of Utah, your office, respectfully, does not.

In 1999, your office conducted a groundwater study in Cache County and concluded that there were 25,000 acre feet of unappropriated water available in our county. This water is part of a closed aquifer that does not influence the Great Salt Lake, outside of a few springs that might run into the Bear River or its tributaries. Since that study was completed, only 7,000 acre feet of that water has been appropriated, suggesting that a large remainder of unappropriated ground water remains under our valley. The proposed policy prohibits anyone from accessing that water, despite the fact that this aquifer contributes very little to the Great Salt Lake.

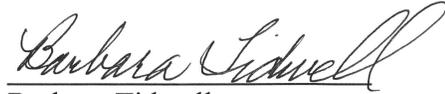
Before access to this water is permanently cut off, we ask that the 1999 study of Cache Valley groundwater be reevaluated. We concede that with 20 years of drought since that study, conditions have likely changed. Still, it is important that these far-reaching decisions are based on data, and if a significant amount of unappropriated water that does not contribute to the Great Salt Lake exists under our valley, we assert that the people of Cache County have a right to use it.

Thank you, again, for your work on behalf of the people of Utah. We hope to continue to work together in solving these problems.

Sincerely,



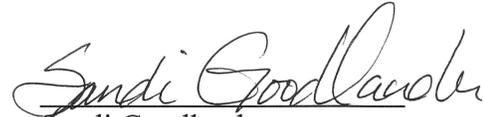
David Erickson
Council Chair



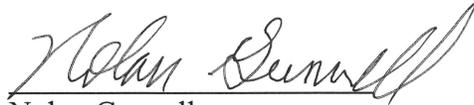
Barbara Tidwell
Council Vice Chair



Kathryn Beus
Councilwoman



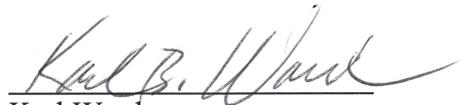
Sandi Goodlander
Councilwoman



Nolan Gunnell
Councilman



Mark Hurd
Councilman



Karl Ward
Councilman

CC Governor Spencer Cox
Executive Director Joel Ferry
Senator Chris Wilson
Senator Scott Sandall
Representative Dan Johnson
Representative Casey Snider
Representative Mike Petersen