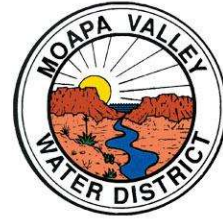


NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 19, 2024

Landmark agreement ensures water resources for M.V.

Overton, NV - The Moapa Valley Water District, Southern Nevada Water Authority and Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints joined in a landmark agreement on Thursday, July 18 to ensure long-term water security to the Moapa Valley community.

In the agreement, MVWD is acquiring 2,329.55 acre-feet annually (afa) of some of the most senior and secure groundwater rights in the Warm Springs area from The Church for a total of \$6 million.

To finance the purchase, MVWD is utilizing two sources of funding: a \$3 million state grant program and a \$3 million zero-percent interest loan from SNWA.

The grant program, administered by the Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, was established to encourage the "retirement" of groundwater rights in the state's over-appropriated hydrologic groundwater basins. The program is 100 percent grant monies; so there would be no financial obligation necessary from MVWD in this portion of funding.

The Lower White River Flow System (LWRFS), which includes the Warm Springs area where MVWD sources Moapa Valley's potable water supply - is an over-appropriated basin with about 50,000 afa in committed groundwater rights previously issued by the state.

However, a 2020 order by the State Engineer set a limit on groundwater pumping from the LWRFS at no more than 8,000 afa system-wide.

That includes the MVWD primary water source at Arrow Canyon near Warm Springs. The MVWD has 7,200 afa of permitted groundwater at Arrow Canyon. Though these permitted rights date back as far as 1983, they are not considered senior rights in the LWRFS.

On the other hand, the water rights that MVWD is purchasing from The Church are some of the most senior rights in the system.

Thus, MVWD will retire 2,329.55 afa of its rights at Arrow Canyon. The state grant funding will be used towards purchasing the senior rights owned by the Church to replace the retired rights. The permitted priority date of the more senior water will assure MVWD can continue servicing Moapa Valley's current and future needs.

“By retiring an equal amount of water rights, the parties in this agreement will help reduce the over-appropriations in the LWRFS by 2,329.55 afa, which benefits all parties,” said MVWD general manager Joe Davis. “In the process, the Moapa Valley’s main source of potable water will be made secure for the future.”

The **other** funds to purchase the Church water rights will be supplied by SNWA. In a separate financing agreement, SNWA agreed to **support** MVWD’s acquisition of the Church water with a zero-percent interest loan. MVWD agrees to repay the loan over a 15 year term at \$200,000 per year.

In a board meeting held in Las Vegas on Thursday morning, SNWA board members unanimously approved the agreements.

“I’m going to disclose that I represent the Moapa Valley area,” said County Commissioner Marilyn Kirkpatrick, who is also the SNWA Board Chairwoman. “This has long been a conversation for that community. They are good partners and I think that this is a good asset in partnership for all of us to have.”

“This enables us to avert what would become a real crisis for the thousands of people that live out there in those (Moapa Valley) communities,” said County Commissioner Jim Gibson, who also serves on the SNWA board. “This really does solve that problem for the community, and I think it is important enough that it is well worth the \$3 million.”

The MVWD board also unanimously approved the agreements in a board meeting held later on Thursday afternoon in Overton.

Board member Ryan Wheeler expressed the Board’s appreciation for the MVWD staff, SNWA and the Church for working through a complex agreement to come to a positive outcome for the community.

“This is a big moment for us as a water district,” Wheeler said. “By this agreement, we are securing water to the Moapa Valley forever. We are moving our groundwater rights into a senior position; where before we didn’t have that. So this secures long-term delivery of water resources for existing residents and new residents in our community.”

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