UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

March 7, 2008

Penny Woods
Groundwater Projects Manager
Bureau of Land Management (NV-910)
P.O. Box 12000
Reno, NV 89520

Subject: Final Environmental Impact Statement for Kane Springs Valley Groundwater Development Project, Lincoln County, Nevada (CEQ# 20080039)

Dear Ms. Woods,

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the above project. Our review and comments are pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and our NEPA review authority under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

We rated the Draft EIS (DEIS) for the Kane Springs Valley Groundwater Development Project as Environmental Concerns – Insufficient Information (EC-2) due to concerns with the cumulative impacts of the proposed project in conjunction with reasonably foreseeable future residential, commercial, groundwater, and energy development projects in the region; all of which anticipate use of the same carbonate-rock aquifer. We continue to have these concerns based upon the many pending water right applications and uncertainties regarding the long-term sustainable yield of this aquifer.

We are disappointed that the FEIS did not include the requested additional information on water use efficiency, tool-kit of supply and demand management measures, and back-up water supplies. We recommend this information be included in the Record of Decision. We acknowledge the responsibility of the Nevada State Engineer and Nevada Department of Water Resources over Nevada water rights and water resources. We also recognize that the related Coyote Springs Investments (CSI) Development project is a separate action and will use the Kane Springs Valley water as a supplemental water supply.

The proposed project and CSI Development are located in the Mojave Desert characterized by low humidity, minimal annual rainfall, and scarce water supply sources. We believe full disclosure of the reliability and efficient use of these scarce water sources in this EIS would have better served the decisionmakers and public in determining the most appropriate water supply development actions to achieve a long-term reliable and sustainable water supply.

We continue to urge the Bureau of Land Management, Cooperating Agencies, Lincoln County Water District, Vidler Water Company, Coyote Springs Investments, and other water right applicants to develop a regional groundwater framework to ensure efficient long-term sustainable use of the deep carbonate-rock aquifer and avoidance of adverse impacts to third parties and surface and groundwater quality and quantity. We continue to recommend that Kane Springs Valley project water be utilized only after a clear demonstration by beneficiaries of effective use of in-basin supplies and application of aggressive water use efficiency, conservation, and reuse measures. We recommend the Bureau of Land Management make a commitment in the Record of Decision to work with the above entities to make certain that water supply development decisions and actions achieve a reliable and enduring water supply for the future.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this FEIS. Please send one copy of the Record of Decision to the above address (mail code: CED-2). If you have any questions, please call me at 415-972-3846 or Laura Fujii, of my staff, at 415-972-3852 or fujii.laura@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

Nova Blazej, Manager
Environmental Review Office

Cc: Jeff Weeks, BLM, Ely District Office
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