

Letter and responses on Lake Powell Pipeline

A group of economists from several Utah universities submitted a letter to Gov. Gary Herbert and other state leaders suggesting Washington County is likely unable to repay any debt accrued in funding the Lake Powell Pipeline. An economist that has worked on the specifics of the pipeline plan disagrees, as do members of the Utah Division of Water Resources and the Washington County Water Conservancy District. Below is a link to the letter and emailed responses from the district and the state.



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Sandstone cliffs line the horizon as clouds are reflected in the calm waters of Lake Powell. As the weather warms and more and more visitors head out to explore the beauty found at Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, safety is an issue that should be kept in mind. (Photo: Jud Burkett / The Spectrum & Daily News)

Click [here](#) to read the economists' letter

Response from Washington County Water Conservancy District

The analysis in the letter dated October 26, 2015 by University of Utah economists regarding the funding and repayment of the Lake Powell Pipeline uses inaccurate data and fails to follow the financing terms specified in the Lake Powell Pipeline Development Act.

We have provided clarification to these economists regarding key inaccuracies in their past analyses and these inaccuracies have not been corrected. We welcome conversations about funding the Lake Powell Pipeline, but we will not condone the distribution of inaccurate information. Our responsibility to the public is too great. An outstanding invitation to meet with the economists to share information, ideas and financing models remains open.

Response from the Utah Division of Water Resources

We welcome feedback from any group or individual who has an interest in the Lake Powell Pipeline. We would love to sit down with the author's to collaborate and clarify some things.

The legislature passed the Lake Powell Development Act in 2006 and tasked the Division of Water Resources to manage its planning and development.

There are questions that will be explored in further depth as this study progresses. We look forward to continued collaboration with multiple parties as the process moves forward.

We recognize that projects are expensive to build; however, we look forward to sitting down with those who put this letter together to clarify how they came to these numbers. They are higher than other estimates we have seen. It is important to recognize the benefit associated with the cost. When economic and clean energy enhancements are taken into consideration, there are clear benefits to be seen.

Our population projections are based on the most recent Governor's office projections. We have to use the best numbers we have available to us. We also have a responsibility to ensure something comes out when an increasing population turns the tap on. We need to conserve, convert agriculture where applicable and build projects when necessary.

We invite the authors of the letter to sit down with us and talk. It is important that those who have an interest in the project strive to talk to each other, not past each other, even if there is disagreement.