

Vote NO on HB297

\$9.6 million with permanent funding from General Fund to ignore climate change

HB297 creates a shadowy new government agency to advance the \$2.4 billion Lake Powell Pipeline & ignite a water war with six other western states. The bill ignores the realities of climate change and its shrinking of our snowpacks and reservoirs. The bill advances the false claim that Utah has unused Colorado River rights. Utah does not have any unused Colorado River water because climate change is shrinking our water supply. The fiscal note is \$9.6 million and \$600,000 every year after that.

What is HB297?

The new water agency would fight other states in the Colorado River Basin and continue to ignore climate change, which is shrinking the flows of the Colorado River. The Colorado River has dropped 20% since 2000 because of climate change, but lobbyists behind HB297 claim Utah has a surplus of Colorado River water, which is not the case. Utah has no water surplus.

Other states aren't stealing Utah's water, there is less snow coming out of the sky. Utah's right to use the upper Colorado River is still 23%, but the pie to divide is getting smaller because there is less water. Claims to the contrary are based on ignorance of the law and science, or a willful denial of climate change. Utah has used ALL OF its water rights in the Colorado River.

If Utah withdraws anymore water from the Colorado River, it will impact existing users of Utah's water. Flow reductions from climate change will continue to reduce Utah's allocation, putting us at risk of overdrawing our legal right. If Utah overdrafts its allocation, current Utah water users will face mandatory cutbacks including among farmers, cities and tribes. This new water agency's pursuit of projects like the Lake Powell Pipeline threatens agricultural, tribal, and municipal water users across Utah.

Amendment Suggestions

- Require that the new agency produce an annual climate change report quantifying Utah's allocation of the Colorado River.
- Require the new agency prioritize water conservation over new development projects as a means of securing Utah's water future and work to reduce Utah's dependence on the Colorado River to prepare for climate change induced shortages.

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*For Acknowledging Climate Change
For Protecting Water Users
For Public Transparency*