



Senator Feinstein Calls for Further Examination of Proposed Honey Lake Valley Water Projects

November 18, 2005

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) has called upon Gale Norton, Secretary of the Department of the Interior, to postpone final approval of two water projects in Honey Lake Valley which straddles Nevada and California. The water projects would deliver approximately 11,500 acre feet of water per year to an area north of Reno, Nevada, from Honey Lake Valley groundwater.

“Honey Lake Valley contains over 3,000 residences and about 100 farmers and ranchers who rely on an adequate supply of groundwater for drinking water wells and agricultural needs,” Senator Feinstein said. **“A similar project proposed in the early 1990s raised discrepancies about the amount of groundwater the aquifer could support with increased pumping out of Honey Lake Valley as well as concerns about the quality of groundwater if increased pumping was permitted due to groundwater contamination at Sierra Army Depot. I believe it would be a mistake to approve the water projects until these issues are resolved.”**

Following is the text of a letter that Senator Feinstein sent to Secretary Norton:

The Honorable Gale Norton
US Department of Interior
1849 C Street
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Norton:

I am writing to express serious concern with two water projects that are being evaluating as part of the North Valleys Rights of Way Projects by the Bureau of Land Management’s Carson City Office.

I understand these projects are designed to construct wells and transmission systems with the intent to deliver approximately 11,500 acre feet of water per year to an area north of Reno, Nevada. It is my understanding that most of the water for the projects would come from groundwater in Honey Lake Valley which straddles California and Nevada.

Lassen County officials tell me that Honey Lake Valley contains over 3,000 residences and about 100 farmers and ranchers who rely on an adequate supply of groundwater for drinking water wells and agricultural needs.

A similar project proposed in the early 1990s raised discrepancies about the amount of groundwater the aquifer could support with increased pumping out of Honey Lake Valley as well as concerns about the quality of groundwater if increased pumping was permitted due to groundwater contamination at Sierra Army Depot. I believe it would be a mistake to approve the water projects until these issues are resolved.

I look forward to your response addressing these issues and thank you for consideration. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Michael Walker of my San Francisco Office (415) 393-0707.

Sincerely,

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

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