

## Inyo County Statement Re: IWVGA GSP Vote

On behalf of Inyo County I'm here to explain our intended "NO" vote on the proposed GSP.

We all recognize that the decades of unsustainable water use and overdraft in this basin have brought us to this point. And that reducing water use to the safe yield will impose an incredible hardship on the Indian Wells Groundwater Basin constituency. So Inyo County supports the concept of importing water into this Basin. But Inyo County does not support fixing this self-inflicted crisis with a project that threatens the long term health of the Inyo County environment and economy. And we've now received multiple comment letters from Mono County, tribes, and environmental groups, echoing our concerns.

And there are additional reasons for Inyo County's position:

Including this plan is misleading to the public. LADWP clearly articulated to this agency - in no uncertain terms - that "LADWP will not wheel water and will not sell water to the IWVGA." Period.

This Board is also informed by LADWP that they will not entertain a water-banking project without Inyo County's public support. Obviously that support does not exist.

A couple points here to make clear: (1st) the GSP LADWP import project is a "recharge" project that requires an exchange of water – not a water banking project. And this "recharge" project does not reflect the true amount and cost of water that would be needed even if it was legally possible. Because even if they could sell us water, there's zero chance LA would do that on a 1:1 basis – especially considering that we'll have cornered ourselves into this position. Our own water acquisition experts – the ones we signed up to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars to – make this point. But it's been buried in the back of this GSP draft. And without a valid cost estimate, which we recognize is a requirement for this GSP, the plan becomes vulnerable. Speaking of valid cost estimates, when you get up to 2:1 and 3:1 for water costs, all of the sudden the AVEK option becomes a lower annual cost.

But regardless, for a banking project, this basin would need LADWP to bank somewhere around an average of 50k acre feet of water A YEAR to get the 5k feet of recharge to stay. All of that just to save one part of this basin's economy – and to let agriculture die on the vine.

Which brings me to the next reason for Inyo County's "No" vote:

Our future. The real import option here – although with a substantial infrastructure cost - is the AVEK project. AVEK will be a reliable partner– which, as Inyo County learned from its century's worth of experience dealing with water issues, "reliability" is not a given. And AVEK provides a solution that actually allows this basin to continue to be a growing military base and agricultural economy. That pipeline will bring water for as many pistachios and other crops as the water market would allow. Sure - some ag operations will need to furlough while the AVEK project is under development, but there would be a future for everyone, including agriculture. We should not let ourselves be distracted by a hopeless project that does not provide for a collective future.

So, just to be clear: Inyo County does not support a project that further solidifies its status as a resource colony. Inyo County does not support a project that takes water from a managed and regulated basin to fix a neighbors' depleted aquifer caused by decades of unsustainable water practices. Inyo County does not support a project that the supposed partner isn't even willing to explore, and that we've ignored the true costs for. Inyo County does not support a project that misleads the public into a futile chase that dead-ends with composting toilets. For all of these reasons and others we expressly object to the inclusion of the LADWP import project and take the position that it is a violation of the terms of section 4.04 of the JPA.

What Inyo County does support is a project that addresses the tough reality facing this basin head on, and provides the potential for the economy in this basin to grow, and the people in this basin to thrive. We look forward to continuing to work with our partners here to help make the AVEK project, and other solutions, a reality.