



SOUTHERN NEVADA WATER AUTHORITY

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June 16, 2008

The Honorable Dirk Kempthorne
Secretary of the Interior
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Kempthorne:

As the agency responsible for providing water to purveyors that collectively serve more than 2 million residents and 40 million annual visitors, the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) has a keen interest in issues with the potential to affect the community's water supply. The Colorado River, as you know, currently represents approximately 90 percent of Southern Nevada's municipal water supply. Protecting the quality of that source is of the utmost importance to our organization.

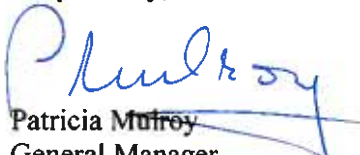
We have become aware of an increasing number of uranium mining claims throughout the West, including many concentrated in the vicinity of the Grand Canyon National Park. While I am certain you will receive feedback from others related to broader environmental and aesthetic issues, our interest is specific to the preservation of water quality in the Colorado River.

The federal Safe Drinking Water Act includes strict regulations pertaining to radionuclides, including uranium, in drinking water supplies. The uranium mill tailings in southern Utah, which have been the subject of considerable consternation for many years, contribute measurable quantities of that contaminant into the Colorado River near Moab. This situation is exacerbated by the ongoing drought, which has reduced the level of dilution. Treatment for uranium on a municipal scale is both technologically challenging and expensive. Therefore, it is important to the SNWA that additional contributions of uranium from new sources be minimized so that our ability to meet Safe Drinking Water Act standards is not jeopardized.

Questions have been raised about the adequacy of the Mining Law of 1872 as it relates to protecting the environment and water quality; those concerns are beyond our agency's purview. However, I respectfully request that Interior carefully evaluate the implications for water quality in the Colorado River before authorizing mining operations within its watershed. Additionally, as a Colorado River stakeholder, the SNWA would appreciate being afforded the opportunity to participate in the environmental review process.

Thank you in advance for your consideration on this matter. Please contact me at (702) 258-3104 if I can provide any additional information.

Respectfully,


Patricia Mulroy
General Manager

SNWA MEMBER AGENCIES

Big Bend Water District • Boulder City • Clark County Water Reclamation District • City of Henderson • City of Las Vegas • City of North Las Vegas • Las Vegas Valley Water District