



CONFEDERATED TRIBES
of the
GOSHUTE RESERVATION

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**Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation Join Coalition
Lawsuit against BLM's Authorization of the Southern Nevada Water Authority's Massive
Groundwater Mining and Pipeline Project**

Ibapah, Utah – The Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation (CTGR) joined the Great Basin Water Network's recent [lawsuit](#) against the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Department of Interior (DOI) last week. The lawsuit challenges BLM's decision to grant a right-of-way for a water pipeline that would destroy irreplaceable cultural and natural resources.

"We cannot look the other way when the future of our people and homelands are in the hands of those who have their priorities mixed up," stated CTGR Tribal Chairperson Madeline Greymountain.

"The federal government has failed in its trust responsibility, therefore CTGR has no recourse but to file suit against BLM for failure to protect our interests, which is a legal and moral obligation of the highest fiduciary standard."

The lawsuit challenges BLM's December 2012 Record of Decision (ROD) authorizing the Southern Nevada Water Authority's (SNWA's) massive Groundwater Development Project (GWD Project) and pipeline right-of-way (ROW). SNWA intends to construct and operate a vast pipeline system to transport precious groundwater from the ancestral lands of Goshute and Shoshone people in central-eastern Nevada to the Las Vegas Valley.

The Plaintiffs, which include a broad coalition of Tribes, ranchers, farmers and environmentalists, claim that SNWA's pipeline and GWD Project would cause serious, irreparable harm to the environment, and that the current landscape would disappear forever.

"Where was our federal trustee when we needed them?" asked Chairwoman Greymountain.

“Without any notification or government-to-government consultation, federal agencies signed away our Tribal rights and resources by entering Stipulated Agreements with SNWA,” Chairwoman Greymountain continued. “In fact, they withdrew Tribal protests in the Nevada State Engineer’s proceeding without the Tribe’s consent,” she added. “To add insult to injury, the federal agencies did not bother showing up at the 6-week trial before the State Engineer.”

“Yet again, the Tribes were left to do the job of the federal agencies,” Chairwoman Greymountain stated.

“SNWA’s empty promises to monitor and mitigate damages, as part of those Stipulated Agreements, were found to be without merit and unenforceable,” Greymountain continued. “Those Stipulated Agreements have allowed the SNWA to charge forward on their sweepingly destructive project with repeated federal approvals at the expense of Indian people.”

The Plaintiffs also claim that SNWA’s pipeline would harm areas of particular cultural, religious, and ceremonial importance to the Tribe.

“To our people’s detriment, SNWA’s groundwater mining project would destroy our Tribe’s most sacred of all places, the Swamp Cedars Massacre Site,” stated Chairwoman Greymountain. “Swamp Cedars is the location of three different massacres of our Indian ancestors, and one of the largest recorded massacres of Indian people by the United States government.”

“Any significant groundwater pumping in Spring Valley will lower the water table and irreparably harm the cultural landscape,” Chairwoman Greymountain continued. “If the Swamp Cedar trees are killed, so is our sacred site.”

Simeon Herskovits and Iris Thornton, attorneys for the Great Basin Water Network, filed the lawsuit in the United States District Court, District of Nevada, on February 12, 2014.