

Montezuma Valley Irrigation Co.

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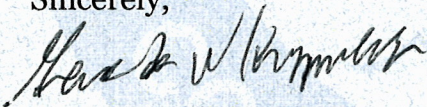
May 9, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

Montezuma Valley Irrigation Company Board of Directors voted in their regular meeting held on May 9, 2017 to support the Water Rights Protection Act. This legislation seeks to protect from federal overreach those western communities, businesses, farmers and ranchers who rely on privately held water rights for their livelihood. It would do so by prohibiting federal agencies from extorting water rights through the use of permits, leases, and other land management arrangements, for which it would otherwise have to pay just compensation under the 5th Amendment of the Constitution. The bill also places strict limits on any future federal administrative policy development where State water rights are concerned.

In 2014 the USFS proposed a Groundwater Directive that would have expanded the agency's reach over groundwater and established new bureaucratic hurdles to interfere with private water users' ability to access their water. The goal of the directive was to further federalize water resources, erode state authority, and pave the way for unilateral mandates on state water resources while overriding decades of long standing law and policy that states, and States alone, hold jurisdiction over their groundwater. Though the USFS ultimately withdrew its controversial Groundwater Directive, there are no guarantees that the Directive, or something similar, won't be back in the future. This legislation will prevent the USFS from taking actions that would adversely affect these historic State water rights and mute the effect any future Directive would have on future development while providing certainty for Western landowners.

Sincerely,



Gerald Koppenhafer
Board President