



March 20, 2024

The Honorable Chuck Gray, Secretary of State
Secretary of State's Office
Herschler Building East, 122 W. 25th Street, Suites 100
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002

RE: Line-Item Veto of SF0075/Senate Enrolled Act No. 71 Omnibus water bill-construction

Dear Secretary Gray,

An immense amount of work goes into the development of the omnibus water bills, both construction and planning. And rightly so, as the projects these bills fund are essential to the future of the communities they impact. Guiding the wise use of our water resources is one of the most important functions of state government. The livelihoods of Wyoming people depend on having access to water, and these water projects are critically important to the wellbeing and prosperity of our communities. From the Wyoming Water Development Commission, the Water Development Office (WWDO), and the Legislature's Select Water Committee, to irrigation districts and project sponsors from all across the state, the yearly cycle to produce this legislation is a hefty undertaking. As I have mentioned before, these water bills have been a consistent example of how to responsibly utilize Wyoming's resources to invest in the state's water infrastructure.

The purpose of my line-item veto on Senate Enrolled Act No. 71 is merely a technical one. In an amendment adopted later in the process to increase the flexibility of Water Development Accounts with the additional Water 1 and Water 2 funds made possible by American Rescue Plan Act funds, a reference error was added to the bill which directed to an unrelated part of the bill. Removing this reference should not alter the purpose or intent of this amendment. Therefore, I am delivering this bill to you with my signature but with a line-item veto noted in Section 1, page 8.

I do want to take this opportunity to call attention to the process in which projects, small or otherwise, are chosen. It is extremely important that water projects across the state receive the same consideration when it comes time for the bills and funding authorizations to be finalized. The WWDO's process grades all projects according to their merits, but I ask for a full review of how funds are balanced and distributed throughout the state. Funding for these projects comes from state severance taxes, which belong to everyone in Wyoming. Whether it is coincidence or

purposeful, I would warn against a single district or area receiving inordinate attention or being left out. This may come down to helping more districts learn how to participate in this program.

Again, my deepest appreciation goes out to everyone that coordinates and supports these projects, year in and year out. I look forward to the work that will come out of the next general session.

Sincerely,



Mark Gordon
Governor

MG:nr:kh

cc: The Honorable Ogden Driskill, President of the Senate w/copy of SEA No. 71
The Honorable Albert Sommers, Speaker of the House w/copy of SEA No. 71
Chief Clerk, Wyoming Senate w/copy of SEA No. 71
Chief Clerk, Wyoming House of Representatives w/copy of SEA No. 71

ENROLLED ACT NO. 71, SENATE

SIXTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WYOMING
2024 BUDGET SESSION

(A) There is appropriated from water development accounts I, II and III from monies previously obligated for projects that may be recaptured with current unobligated American Rescue Plan Act funds to the commission six million dollars (\$6,000,000.00) or as much thereof as is necessary to carry out the statewide adding of redundancy of water delivery systems ~~as specified in paragraph (e)(iii) of this subsection.~~ Unexpended funds appropriated under this subparagraph shall revert to water development accounts I, II and III on July 1, 2029.

99-3-2904. Level III construction projects - rehabilitation.

(a) Authorization is granted for the Level III rehabilitation construction projects identified in this section subject to the general conditions specified in W.S. 99-3-104, provided that W.S. 99-3-104(a)(iii) shall not apply to the projects identified in this section unless required by W.S. 41-2-121.

(b) Project - Bridger Valley JPB Tank Replacement 2024:

(i) Project sponsor: Bridger Valley Joint Powers Board;

(ii) Project purpose: Municipal and rural domestic water supply;

(iii) Project description: Design and construction of a water storage tank, structures and appurtenances necessary to make the project function in the manner intended;