

HUMBOLDT RIVER BASIN WATER AUTHORITY

OVERVIEW OF ORGANIZATION AND KEY INITIATIVES

**Legislative Commission's Committee to Study the Use, Allocation
and Management of Water Resources**



April 26, 2006

EXHIBIT B – WATER RESOURCES
Meeting Date: 04-26-06
Document consists of 15 slides.
Entire Exhibit Provided

TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED

Basin Characteristics

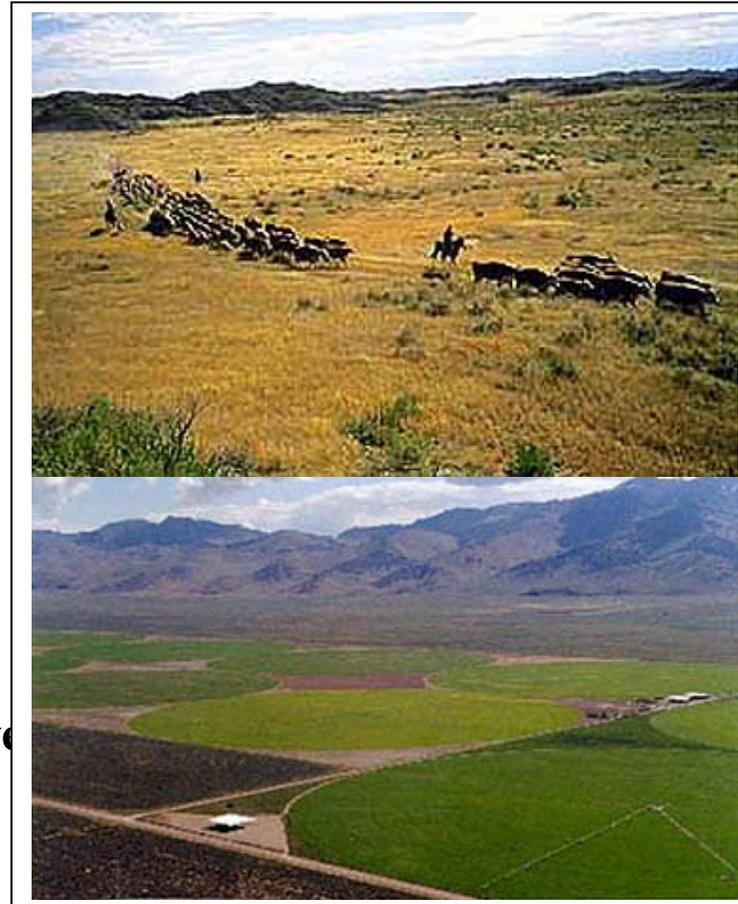
Formation of the Authority

Board of Directors

Roles and Responsibilities

SB 62 Water Rights Protection Initiative

Possible Legislative Issues



HUMBOLDT RIVER BASIN CHARACTERISTICS

- **Drainage area of 7,410 square miles or 4,742,000 acres**
- **Represents approximately 7 percent of Nevada's land area**
- **Approximately 80,000 people reside within the Basin today**
- **During the past 20 years, the population within the Basin has more than doubled**
- **Annual average flow of the Humboldt River is 296,000 ac. ft.**
- **There are approximately 690,000 ac. ft. of decreed and permitted water rights within the entire Humboldt River Basin**
- **Highly efficient water use is key to meeting demand which greatly exceeds annual average flows**
- **Contains largest gold mines in North America**
- **Annual variations in flow produce economic and environmental uncertainty**

FORMATION OF THE AUTHORITY

- **Formed by Elko, Eureka, Lander, Humboldt and Pershing County Commissions**
- **Interlocal Agreement developed in April of 1993**
- **Organized pursuant to Interlocal Cooperation Act (NRS 277.080 and 277.170)**
- **Counties each contribute \$6,000 - \$8,000 annually**
- **Fifteen Member Board of Directors meets every 3 months**
- **Board Members Appointed by Member County Commissions**
- **Meetings Held Throughout the Humboldt Basin**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Humboldt County

- John Milton, III, County Commissioner
- Fred Stewart, Rancher
- Paul Miller, Businessman

Eureka County

- Donna Bailey, County Commissioner
- Rita Stitzel, Rancher
- Carl Slagowski, Rancher

Lander County

- Mickey Yarbro, County Commissioner
- Louis Lani, Businessman
- Brad Kelly, County Commissioner

Elko County

- Warren Russell, County Commissioner
- John Ellison, County Commissioner
- Jerry Parker, Businessman

Pershing County

- Daren Bloyd, County Commissioner
- Richard McDougal, Businessman
- Bennie Hodges, Pershing Co. Water Cons. District



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Recognize and protect all existing decreed and certificated water rights**
- **Formulate positions for presentation to relevant local, state, and federal agencies**
- **Monitor water supply and demand within the Basin**
- **Monitor the extent to which proposals to develop and export Humboldt River Basin water may adversely affect the water balance for member counties within the Authority**
- **Monitor recommendations for water management and conservation plans for consumptive and non-consumptive uses of ground and surface waters originating or passing through member counties**
- **Encourage existing water right holder participation in water supply and management issues of concern to Member counties**

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES Cont'd.

- **Recommend appropriate federal and state legislation for the management of surface and ground water within the Humboldt River Basin**
- **Conserve the levels and quality of ground water within recharge area to the Humboldt River Basin**
- **Conserve the levels and flows of surface waters within the Humboldt River Basin**
- **Protect and conserve the environmental balance of the Humboldt River Basin and recharge area ecosystem**
- **Review and comment on proposals for cooperative programs and management of the water resources of the Humboldt River Basin**
- **Make secure and protect present developments within the Humboldt River Basin**

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES Cont'd.

- **Provide a secure foundation for future investment and development within the Humboldt River Basin**
- **Facilitate the development and maintenance of a common base of data and information regarding the use and management of Humboldt River Basin water resources**
- **Facilitate early coordination and cooperation between Member counties regarding proposals for intra-basin transfers of Humboldt River Basin water**



SB 62 WATER RIGHTS PROTECTION INITIATIVES

- **Data Gaps Analysis**
 - Identify data required by State Engineer to allocate and manage water resource quantity
 - Identify data required by Nevada Division of Environmental Protection to manage water quality
 - Compile and analyze existing data and determine data gaps and recommendations for data collection
 - Desert Research Institute to complete by February 2007

- **Vested Water Rights Educational Program**
 - Goal: To increase the number of filings with the Nevada State Engineer for claims of vested water rights.
 - Objectives:
 - To enhance the Nevada State Engineer's awareness of existing claims for vested water rights.
 - Improved understanding of vested water rights.
 - Improved understanding of process for filing a claim for vested water rights.
 - Improved understanding of data needs and sources to substantiate a claim for vested water rights.
 - Enhance the availability of technical assistance for developing claims of vested water rights.
 - Develop educational materials for use in workshops on vested water rights.
 - Conduct workshops on vested water rights in Elko, Eureka, Battle Mountain, Winnemucca and Lovelock.

- **Vested Water Rights Educational Program Cont'd.**
 - Role of HRBWA:
 - Provide funding needed to accomplish goals and objectives.
 - Project/contract management.
 - Advice on design and implementation of vested water rights educational initiative.
 - Monitor filings for claims of vested water rights with the Nevada State Engineer.
 - Role of Associate Sponsors: (Nevada Cattlemen's Association, Nevada Farm Bureau, Nevada Grazing Boards, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension)
 - Notification of members and interested parties of workshops.
 - Advice in design and implementation of vested water rights educational initiative.

- **Vested Water Rights Educational Program Cont'd.**
 - Possible Role of Nevada Water Resources Association:
 - Design and implementation of vested water rights educational initiative.
 - Development of educational materials.
 - Promotion of initial workshops (Elko, Eureka, Battle Mountain, Winnemucca and Lovelock).
 - Facilitation of initial workshops.
- **Encourage County-Level Forecasts of Water Required for Economic Futures**
 - Identify extent to which information required to support water demand forecasts exists for each HRBWA county
 - Prepare recommendations for additional work needed in each county

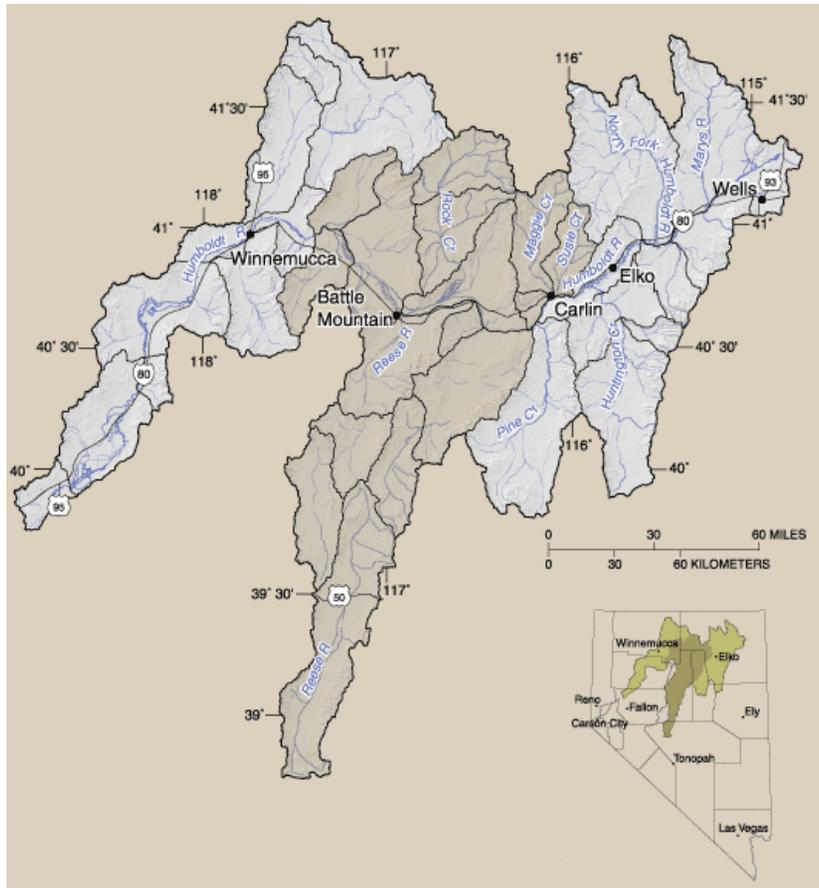
POSSIBLE LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

- **Appropriation of water from springs and seeps for wildlife purposes**
- **Locate industry with significant demand for water in areas with available water supply (encourage rural area economic development)**
- **Acquisition of water rights to support Argenta Marsh development by NDOW**
- **Appropriations to:**
 - Improve data available to support designation by Nevada Division of Environmental Protection of beneficial uses and water quality standards for Humboldt River system
 - Enhance data available to support water allocation and management decisions by Nevada State Engineer

POSSIBLE LEGISLATIVE ISSUES Cont'd.

- Expand information regarding inter-basin flow and surface/ground water interaction





MAP OF THE HUMBOLDT RIVER BASIN

SOURCE: Humboldt River Basin Assessment, 1995. United States Geological Survey.