

Cicely Bunker

Professor Phelps

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*Responsible water policy and growth- can the two coexist?*

In Rachel Christiansen's interview titled *Responsible water policy and growth- can the two coexist?* with John Berggren, a water conservation analyst at Western Resource Advocates, tackles the issue of whether the Colorado river basin states, of which Nevada is one, can continue growing as rapidly as they are while maintaining responsible water conservation practices. Some of the problems brought up by Ms. Christiansen address the responsibility the basin states have to each other to practice water conservation as well as whether the responsibility falls to the state as a whole or the localities and municipalities involved in the day to day processes of conservation.

John Berggren answers the issue of state responsibility head on. He says that while it is the state's job to make laws that will honor the Drought Contingency Plan (DCP), it is up to the local governments to implement them and create sustainable practices. Mr. Berggren states that Southern Nevada has done such an excellent job of creating and maintaining practices that it doesn't use all of its allocated water. This means that building developers are incorporating low flow technology indoors for showers, toilets, and faucets as well as desert landscaping outdoors that doesn't require much water to maintain. Another way Southern Nevada has decreased its impact on the water levels is incentivizing those with large lawns to replace them with a more water conscious option such as fake grass or desert landscape. While Mr. Berggren didn't

comment on a state who was leading the charge of water conservation, it was clear in his responses that he felt Nevada was doing an outstanding job compared to other states. The other issue brought up by Ms. Christiansen was whether snow packs, like the one seen in 2018, would have a significant impact on the water available to the region. The simple answer from Mr. Berggren was “No”. However, he did go on to explain that the snow packs and heavy rainfall years are very helpful in relieving pressure on water conservation, it won’t solve any of the problems in the long term. He continues by saying that the DCP will be redone in 2021 and will have a longer period of impact than the one currently in place causing the basin states to think about ways they can manage their conservation over long periods of time. Long term conservation is the key, according to Mr. Berggren.

A big part of the talk of conservation revolves around federalism. The basin states have come together to create a federal agreement holding them accountable for specific conservation efforts, but the implementation falls to the states to pass laws and localities to implement the laws. An overarching theme during the whole interview was this responsibility the states have to each other because of the DCP agreement. In addition to being responsible to the federal government for breaking compliance, the states are responsible to each other. If one upper basin state takes more than its allotted share of water, it creates shortages for the states in the lower basin causing severe droughts in places already hugely affected by warming climates. Without the cooperation between states and the oversight of the federal government, creating a balanced water conservation relationship wouldn’t be possible and the states could become greedy, taking all the water for itself/themselves leaving the states further down the river in very difficult positions.

Rachel Christiansen and John Berggren seem to share the belief that while water levels are not declining, there needs to be a solution to start replenishing water supplies in order to have viable water for the next generations. The issues in water conservation are mostly handled at the local and state level, but they are ultimately problems that could affect the whole nation if handled improperly or measures to combat droughts aren't effective. It is up to the lawmakers to make sure their state is pulling their own weight in the conservation efforts as well as being an active spokesperson with higher governments to ensure everyone is on the same page and are fighting the same fight together as a unified force. It is as a unified force the states will bring about water conservation efforts that won't just mitigate water overuse, but eventually create such sustainable practices that the pressure of droughts could be reversed.