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## **UTAH'S WATER STORAGE PREVENTS STATE OF EMERGENCY ON PUBLIC WATER SYSTEMS**

Utah Governor Gary Herbert signed an Executive Order on October 15 declaring a state of emergency due to drought. The order allows state and federal resources for drought-affected communities and agricultural producers. The Washington County Water Conservancy District (district) supports this effort and appreciates the governor's awareness of water's essential role in all facets of our lives—from providing food and drink to supporting jobs, industry and a high quality of life.

“This low water year could have put the entire state of Utah in a drought emergency if it weren't for one thing – water storage,” said Ron Thompson, general manager of the district. “Utah is blessed to have nearly 100 reservoirs that store water close to communities, ensuring our citizens and businesses have the water needed to survive.”

Reservoirs exist to store surplus water for use in periods of drought – their primary function is to supply water to sustain the population and economy. Secondary benefits include recreational, environmental, financial and social purposes.

Recent media reports have noted that Utah's reservoirs are currently below average levels. “Water managers sleep easier when reservoirs are full, but reservoirs weren't designed to be full all the time,” said Thompson. “It's normal to see highs and lows. Keeping reservoir levels as high as possible is a community effort. We can, and all should, be a little more mindful of how much water we use knowing that what we save today will be available for us tomorrow.”

Washington County, the driest region of the state, entered 2018 with a “below dismal” snow year with only eight percent of normal snowpack. Fortunately, 2017 was a good water year and most of the county's local reservoirs were full going into 2018. “Washington County residents are literally living off reservoir storage this year,” said Thompson.

Current reservoir levels in the county are: Quail Creek 57 percent, Sand Hollow 75 percent, Gunlock 38 percent, Ivins 54 percent and Kolob 0 percent.

### ***About Washington County Water Conservancy District***

Washington County Water Conservancy District is a not-for-profit public agency established in 1962 to manage Southern Utah's regional water needs. The district oversees the development, stabilization, management, acquisition and conservation of water resources in Washington County in an ongoing effort to provide a safe, reliable water supply for current and future generations. Visit [www.wcvcd.org](http://www.wcvcd.org) for more information.