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Success of Central Utah Project Shows Value of Long-Term Water Projects

Generates \$5.9 billion of Utah GDP since 1960

OREM, UTAH – An analysis conducted by the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute on the Central Utah Water Conservancy District's (CUWCD) Central Utah Project (CUP) demonstrates the value of long-term water projects to communities, tax payers, and the economy.

The Gardner Institute studied the economic impacts of the Central Utah Project from 1960-2020. CUP distributes Colorado River water to Salt Lake, Utah, Wasatch and Duchesne counties, accounting for 20% of Utah residents. The project is managed by the Central Utah Water Conservancy District, the largest water conservancy district in the state.

"The execution of the Central Utah Project has allowed the Wasatch Front to continue to thrive and become a desirable location for families and businesses," said Gene Shawcroft, General Manager of the Central Utah Water Conservancy District. "This in-depth study has confirmed that we would not enjoy the same quality of life without this project."

The Central Utah Project has been a large federal investment in the state, and the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute analyzed what the project would look like without it.

"The Central Utah Project has been a \$2.5 billion federal infrastructure investment in the state," said John Downen, deputy director of economic and public policy research at the Gardner Institute and lead author of the study. "We examined the economic impacts of the 50+ year construction of the CUP, and conducted a counterfactual analysis of how things would look had there been no federal funding. The construction of the network of diversions, dams, tunnels, and pipelines generated approximately \$5.9 billion in state GDP from 1960 to 2017, and the water provided supports close to 660,000 Utahns. Without this water, consumption rates would have to be one-third lower in Salt Lake, Utah, Wasatch, and Duchesne counties."

The Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute found:

- **659,000+ Utahns** in Salt Lake, Utah, Wasatch and Duchesne counties receive water as a direct result of this project
- **9,130+ jobs** created through direct and indirect construction roles over last 60 years
- Approximately **\$5.9 billion of Utah GDP** generated by CUP construction expenditures from 1960-2017

Federal appropriations paid back by users positioned the Central Utah Project to be where it is today. The study showed that had the state taken a different approach to funding:

- Infrastructure construction would be 26 years behind schedule

- State funding would have covered only 44% of the actual federal funding

For the full policy brief, visit the [Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute website](#).

ABOUT THE GARDNER POLICY INSTITUTE

The Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute serves Utah by preparing economic, demographic and public policy research that helps the state prosper. We are Utah's demographic experts, leaders on the Utah economy, and specialists on public policy and survey research. We are an honest broker of INFORMED RESEARCH, which guides INFORMED DISCUSSIONS, and leads to INFORMED DECISIONS™. For more information, please visit gardner.utah.edu or call 801-587-3717.

ABOUT CENTRAL UTAH WATER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

Central Utah Water's primary responsibility is to develop, conserve and deliver clean water to customers in eight counties. The district does this through the operation and management of the vast Central Utah Project and a network of facilities including water treatment facilities, pipelines and dams.

CUWCD.com

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