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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Rescission Notice; Cove-East Fork Virgin River Watershed Plan Environmental Impact Statement, Kane County, Utah

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

ACTION: Notice; rescission.

SUMMARY: The NRCS Utah State Office, in coordination with the Kane County Water Conservancy District and the Washington County Water Conservancy District, is rescinding the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (Unique Identification Number: EISX-005-53-049-1288324567) for the Cove-East Fork Virgin River Watershed Plan, Kane County, Utah, which was published in the Federal Register on March 29, 2022. NRCS has determined that additional environmental and economic analyses are necessary to identify viable alternatives.

DATES: Effective upon publication, this notice rescinds the NOI to prepare an EIS (87 FR 17979), which was published in the Federal Register on March 29, 2022.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ammon Boswell; telephone: (435) 459-1621; email: ammon.boswell@usda.gov. Individuals with disabilities who require alternative means for communication should contact the USDA Target Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and text telephone (TTY)) or dial 711 for Telecommunications Relay Service (both voice and text telephone users can initiate this call from any telephone).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The NRCS Utah State Office, in coordination with the Kane County Water Conservancy District and the Washington County Water Conservancy District, and consistent with the requirements of 7 CFR 1b.7, is issuing this notice to advise Federal, State, and local government agencies and the public that NRCS

will continue the planning process to determine whether an EIS is needed for the Cove-East Fork Virgin River Watershed Plan. The project area is located within the East Fork of the Virgin River in Southern Utah. This notice rescinds the NOI to prepare an EIS (87 FR 17979), published on March 29, 2022 (EIS Unique Identification Number: EISX-005-53-049-1288324567).

During the watershed planning process, NRCS evaluated several alternatives. The preferred alternative included development of a 6,000-acre-foot reservoir with appurtenances, as well as a recreation area, irrigation pipelines, and a booster pump station. Based on comments received on the Draft EIS following publication of the Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register* on September 18, 2026 (91 FR 59129), NRCS determined that additional environmental and economic analyses are needed to further refine the evaluation of the proposed action and confirm consistency with applicable program authorities and requirements. Upon completion of those analyses and the associated program review, NRCS will determine whether the project meets applicable program requirements and evaluate the appropriate level of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review. If NRCS determines that preparation of an EIS remains the appropriate level of NEPA review, NRCS will publish a new NOI. Watershed planning is authorized by the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954 (Pub. L. 83566), as amended, and the Flood Control Act of 1944 (Pub. L. 78-534).

Travis Mote,
Acting Utah State Conservationist,
Natural Resources Conservation Service.

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