

# COMMUNITY WATER COALITION

November 4, 2011

Dear Citizens Water Advisory Committee Members,

The Tucson Water Service Area Policy is a sound policy, balancing economic development with water and ecosystem conservation to ensure a secure and healthy future for Tucson. The following are recommendations from the Community Water Coalition to preserve and enhance that policy:

- Before considering substantial changes to the policy it needs to be given a reasonably long trial period. Given the scale of climate, population, and economic cycles, a single year is an inadequate length of time to test the policy; more time is needed before substantial changes are made.
- Water saved through water conservation actions should be dedicated to environmental needs, not used to balance the "water checkbook" nor be set aside to support future growth.

This water should be designated to, 1) restore key elements of ecological systems such as riparian vegetation, in-stream baseflow, and sustainable groundwater resources; 2) irrigate urban green corridors to increase our tree canopy and edible landscape, and reduce the urban heat island effect; 3) irrigate urban agriculture to increase local food security; and 4) restore the regional aquifer to provide a buffer against the uncertainty of future water supplies.

- When determining available water supplies to support Tucson's current population and potential growth, the water necessary for a healthy watershed (both groundwater and surface water) needs to be considered. In fact, a healthy watershed will best support the Tucson population moving forward, especially with future uncertainties due to climate change, drought, and rising energy costs to transport water from distant watersheds.
- Prioritizing the health of the environment and Tucson's water supply is essential to long-term, sustainable economic development.

In regards to specific proposed amendments put forth at recent public meetings, the Community Water Coalition recommends the following:

- Service Area Expansion: The water service area needs to be maintained at its current size. If expansion of water service in one area is deemed necessary, for example the southwest, then the water service area needs to be reduced elsewhere to compensate.
- Infill Definition: Revising the definition of infill within the water policy, by redefining an infill parcel as 20 *net* acres of development from 20 *gross* acres, is reasonable.

- Grandfathering: It is inconsistent and inequitable to offer exceptions to grandfathered projects, and it would undermine the basic premise of the policy to expand water service to areas outside the current water service boundary.
- Review Process: The policy provides for an adequate and transparent review process as written; changes or amendments to the process are not needed.

Additionally, the Community Water Coalition is considering the implications of wheeling agreements in the current water policy, and we will be providing comment on that issue to CWAC in the near future.

The Community Water Coalition appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Tucson Water Service Area Policy, and we are available to answer questions and participate in future discussions and policy revisions. For more information, you may contact the following CWC representatives: Ron Proctor, ronproctor@hotmail.com; Lisa Shipek, lshipek@watershedmg.org; and Dr. Ed Verburg, eaverburg@yahoo.com.

Thank you for carefully considering our recommendations.

Sincerely,

The Community Water Coalition

Randy Serraglio, Center for Biological Diversity  
Carolyn Campbell, Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection  
Chris McVie, Desert Watch  
Bill McDorman, Native Seed Search  
Peggy Hutchison, Primavera Foundation  
Gayle Hartmann, Save the Scenic Santa Ritas  
Ron Proctor, Sustainable Tucson  
Dr. Paul Green, Tucson Audubon Society  
Dr. Ed Verburg, Tucson Mountains Association  
Lisa Shipek, Watershed Management Group

Cc:

Mayor Bob Walkup  
Regina Romero, Ward 1  
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Richard Fimbres, Ward 5  
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