

Tucson Citizen

Advisory panel for regional water policies on supervisors' agenda

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The Old West adage "whiskey is for drinking, water is for fighting over" still applies.

Available water supplies eventually will determine the extent of growth in the metropolitan area.

A joint Pima County-Tucson advisory committee to develop regional policies on water issues is on the agenda for Tuesday's Board of Supervisors' meeting.

"This particular effort should be primarily viewed as early, initial steps related to regional cooperation on water issues, with the ultimate goal being to assure a sustainable community water source given continuing pressure on water supply caused by population growth," Pima County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry said in a memorandum to supervisors Friday.

The City Council approved the concept Feb. 20.

A first phase of the joint study would inventory and assess existing infrastructure for both potable water and wastewater - which increasingly will figure into the regional water supply equation as treated effluent.

A second phase would look at formulating regional policies for water resource development and conservation programs.

Board Chairman Richard Elías and Supervisor Sharon Bronson worked with Councilwoman Karin Uhlich in gaining joint acceptance by the two local governing bodies for the proposal.

"If the city, county, other providers, environmentalists, businesses and others cooperate in good faith, we can create a water planning process that will be right for the Tucson region," states a Feb. 19 letter from the Southern Arizona Leadership Council to Huckelberry.

The organization represents business interests in the region.

Huckelberry agreed that achieving regional cooperation on the use and conservation of water supplies will be difficult.

"Remembering it took 20 years to achieve regional consensus on transportation, the difficulty of reaching consensus on water cannot be understated," he said.

"It will be more difficult than transportation."

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you go:

What: Pima County Board of Supervisors meeting

When: 9 a.m. Tuesday

Where: Pima County Administration Building, 130 W. Congress Street.