

## Melaney Seacat

---

**From:** Beth Gorman  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 17, 2008 7:59 AM  
**To:** Melaney Seacat  
**Subject:** FW: Action Alert: City-County Water Study

Hi Melaney:  
 In case you are not in touch with this community group.  
 Beth

---

**From:** Kai Goodwillie [mailto:chuparosaa@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 17, 2008 7:06 AM  
**To:** info@sustainabletucson.org  
**Subject:** Action Alert: City-County Water Study

Dear Sustainable Tucson members:

We have put up two new community alerts on the ST home-page — [www.sustainabletucson.org](http://www.sustainabletucson.org)

First, is an invitation to participate in the Joint City-County Water Study with us by submitting your input into what the goals of the study should be and attending the meetings if possible. Read our alert for details. Below, Core team member Madeline Kiser has laid out a series of points which ST will be advocating. You may use any of our material as a guide in your comments.

Second, is a "must read" report on the unfolding sustainability emergency called, "Climate: Code Red." ST is forming a group around this topic and will use this report to guide a community campaign for promoting responses to these emerging challenges. Again go to the ST website to read and hear about this report.

Thank you for all your sustainability efforts.  
 The ST Core Team

### **Key points for our response to the City/County's request for written input about its water study.**

At this critical moment, when there is much uncertainty about how climate change will affect both surface and groundwater; when the connections between prices and supplies of energy and of water are not well understood; and when we don't know the full costs/benefits of some of the alternatives we're looking to explore like effluent, desalinization, importing water from elsewhere and cloud seeding, a sound county/city study needs to do the following:

**1) Ensure that a range of scenarios related to water supply, worst to best, be created by a team of local, state and also outside experts with experience in holistic and adaptive water management (to complement experts with more traditional engineering and economic backgrounds).** Given that we live in a time of great uncertainty - when the *New York Times Magazine* refers to water supply in the West as a potentially "catastrophic" situation, and when the Scripps report receives front-page coverage - what are the various scenarios we might face, and how soon? In effect, phase V of the current study should be incorporated as part of Phase I. **The fact that respected national water experts and newspapers are suggesting that our situation might be more severe than are local and state experts and news sources is helping create distrust among the public, in our experts, government officials, and**

04/17/2008

the press. Moreover, many of our water documents don't advocate for what, internationally, is being upheld as sound water management in a time of climate change: a holistic adaptive approach, which places the environment's and human right to water at center of water laws, science and policies.

In effect, we should hold our key scientific documents about water supplies and quality to the same standards top scientific journals hold potential authors: we need some form of rigorous peer review, to ensure that we're facing the hardest as well as mildest possible scenarios as best as we can. \*

**2) The study should also ensure that all high-tech options we are considering be evaluated for their potential social and environmental as well as economic costs/benefits.** Here too, local and state experts should be joined by outside experts with experience in holistic and adaptive management strategies, to complement more traditional engineering and economic approaches.

**3) Given the range of scenarios we might face, and the potential for rapid change in our region, in Phase I of the study we need to articulate our shared values** - again, in keeping with the growing international trend to designate the environment's and human right (including future generations') to water as lead values; and to uphold the precautionary principle: the core of adaptive management.

**4) A clear, understandable document which presents the range of scenarios we might face; articulates holistic and humanitarian values related to water; and clearly and transparently evaluates potential high-tech solutions in terms of their potential social, environmental and economic costs/benefits, needs to be presented to the public in a variety of media.** Youth and marginal neighborhoods - sectors not actively participating in current debates, though they could be most vulnerable to the changes upon us - should in particular be sought out.

**5) Our neighborhood associations could expand to include water task forces . We should also create a cross-sector regional water advisory group,** which includes environmentalists, business leaders, neighborhood leaders, young people, and many other, very diverse, sectors.

**6) The City/County study group should, as part of its mission, conduct a global "best practices" regional water management study,** drawing on experiences inside Arizona, the US, and internationally. Results of this comparative study should be published in the press and presented at public meetings. We need a basis of comparison, a context, in which to place our own efforts at this critical moment.

\* There are many water experts and agencies known for promoting a holistic, adaptive management approach to water in a time of rapid climate change. We could turn to them to provide outside peer review, or to make suggestions about others to turn to. Peer review could - excitingly - include a range of diverse experts, with engineering as well as holistic and adaptive approaches to water management. A few sources might include:

Sandra Postel and Brian Richter, authors of "Rivers for Life: Managing Water for People and Nature." Dr. Richter leads Nature Conservancy's fresh water program. Sandra Postel directs the Global Water Policy Project.

<http://www.globalwaterpolicy.org/> <http://www.nature.org/initiatives/freshwater/contact/richter.html>  
IUCN/World Conservation Union's environmental flows task force. <http://www.eflownet.org/index.cfm?linkcategoryid=1&Fuse-Action=main>

Peter Gleick and the Pacific Institute <http://www.pacinst.org/>

-----