

My name is Jane Evans. I was born and raised in Tucson. For the last 30 years I have run a business in the city of Tucson. I have been an active volunteer for numerous organizations as well as a volunteer for city and state appointments. I tell you this because I feel it is important for you as a committee to understand that there are stakeholders in this water mess that have spent their lives living as some may say in this 'hot stinking desert'.

In the 1980's while working hard with the Arizona Native Plant Society to help create the series of booklets designed to give people smart choices about which desert plants do well in our area I really believed that Tucson was on the right path. Lawn consumption began to drop, beautiful plants from deserts around the world could be seen growing throughout the city.

Those days changed in the 90's when developers flooded our beautiful valley and pretended that there was no water shortage here. Lawns became the norm again after all the hard work we did to teach people about the desert. The city stood by encouraging this development and pretending we had water to spare. Didn't we know the CAP would save us all? It is common thinking now that CAP will not save us if we don't pay attention to this little problem called uncontrolled growth. Decision makers in Tucson and this region have to accept the fact that a growth based economy is not sustainable in The Sonoran Desert.

We can teach new comers about conservation but that is not an option to sustainability. For Tucson to remain a sustainable community its residents must have enough water to live and thrive in a pleasant environment. I am not going to give up my vegetable garden so more people can move here. Families are not going to give up their back yard swimming pool so snowbirds can have their second home in the foothills with a pool that barely sees use. It is a well known fact that tree lined streets and well vegetated neighborhoods reduce summer temperatures by as much as 5 degrees. A vegetable garden and or a swimming pool are normal desires for anyone living anywhere. It is not right that growth in an area that does not have enough water to sustain that growth would take these normal life pleasures away from people that already exist in the area.

I am always amazed when I hear people on water committees talk about their mandate to find new water sources. We all know that reasonable water sources have been found and are already being used. The only new water source I can imagine anyone finding in the Tucson area is effluent. Prop. 200 was soundly defeated in the last election but make no mistake those of us that voted for it did so not because we thought it would necessarily pass but we wanted our voice to come out loud and clear **WE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN DRINKING EFFLUENT SO MORE PEOPLE CAN COME AND LIVE IN THIS REGION!**

Reading a quote from the Water Resources Research Center document 'Water in the Tucson Area Seeking Sustainability'

“Effluent use currently meets about five percent of municipal water demand. Of the 69,400 acre-feet of effluent produced at the Ina Road and Roger Road wastewater treatment plants in 1998, about 13,000 acre-feet was reused, with the rest discharged to the Santa Cruz River channel, where some 96 percent eventually recharges the aquifer within TAMA.”

This report is several years old so the numbers have changed but if you heard this statement it says 96% of the treated effluent eventually recharges the aquifer we all use. If you start using that water that recharge is lost.

In the same report this statement was made also:

“It is important to note, however, that given Tucson’s projected population growth, no level of water conservation, even if involving all types of water users, will be sufficient to ensure a balanced water budget.”

Is anyone listening or reading these reports?

One of the most important outcomes from this committee must be that education can and will occur for the public so at the end of the process the public feels a sense of comfort and trust. The public must be made to feel that the water manager decision makers know what they are doing and are operating in the interest of the entire public not just the public that pushes money in their direction.

This comfort and trust is going to be hard to gain. Our policy makers have been living under the illusion that water will just be found to solve our problems. Who is going to have the guts it takes to stand up to our officials in denial, SABAHA and the Tucson Realtors Association?

We would not be the first community in our country to charge fair impact fees on new development. People choosing to live here would actually pay the true cost of their move. Developers gobble up land anywhere they find willing municipalities that offer enough incentives to fill their pockets. When that land is gone they move on. Those same municipalities are left holding the bag just as Tucson and the surrounding area is today.

I must reiterate: Someone has to have the guts to say to the policy makers **THIS REGION HAS TO ACCEPT THE FACT THAT A GROWTH BASED ECONOMY IS NOT SUSTAINABLE IN THE SONORAN DESERT!**